



RAILS

Refugee and Immigration
Legal Service

2018–2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service

Welcome

RAILS is the only community legal centre in Queensland that specialises in providing free immigration legal assistance and community legal education to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Now, and under its initial name of South Brisbane Community Legal Service, RAILS has been operating for almost 40 years.

We believe that access to justice is a basic right for all people. Appropriate legal assistance and representation, and understanding of the law, are essential for everyone to ensure access to justice. In the field of immigration law, these can help people live in safety and be free from danger or harm. We strive to provide migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in Queensland with opportunity to ensure their rights, regardless of disadvantage.

RAILS is accredited by Community Legal Centres Australia and obtains core funding from State and Commonwealth governments.



RAILS

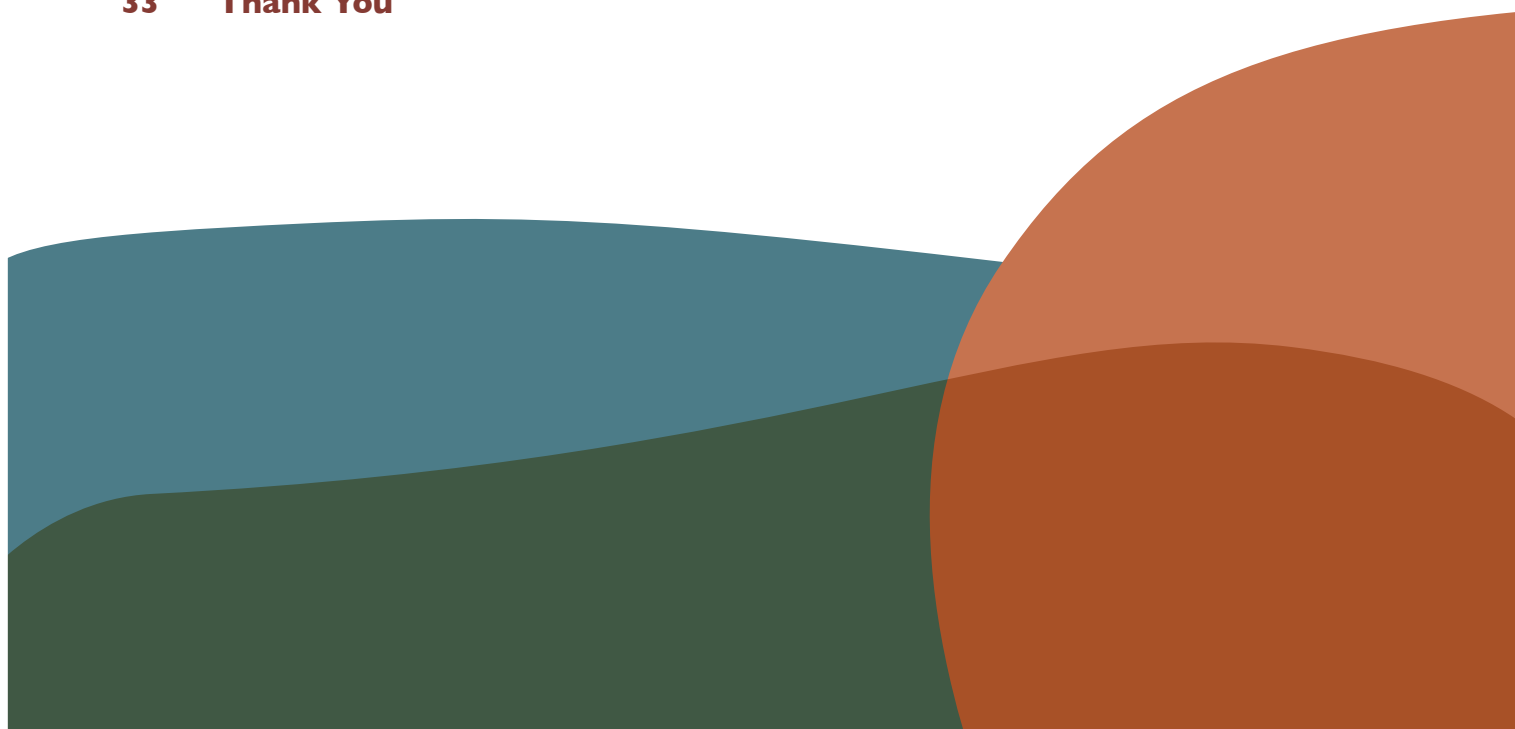
Refugee and Immigration
Legal Service

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of country throughout Australia, particularly the peoples on whose land we live and work, and their continuing connection to land, waterways and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to Elders past, present, and emerging.

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Liveworm Studio | Griffith University

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President's Report

RAILS has always experienced high demand for services and 2018-19 has been no exception to this. As the only community legal centre specialising in refugee and immigration law in Queensland, RAILS has a wide area to cover and a large and diverse community in need of assistance.

RAILS' clients are amongst the most disadvantaged members of the Queensland community. In 2018-19, we supported clients across the state, from Logan to Goodna, Toowoomba, Townsville and Cairns; and from our Brisbane offices. In total, we have provided access to justice, legal services, and legal education for more than 3,000 people in many ways.

Our services have never been more vital for a community that faces reduced opportunities for support in many other areas of their lives and in an increasingly negative environment.

RAILS has an impact far beyond what might seem possible given our funding and size. This is achieved through our ability to mobilise support from the Queensland legal community, especially through the amazing generosity of legal educators, students, volunteer migration agents and solicitors and fantastic pro bono support provided by law firms, barristers, and individual solicitors and migration agents.

RAILS' staff members have the capacity and skill to work effectively with volunteers across a range of locations, areas of law, and abilities and finding ways to provide all our

supporters with constructive opportunities to contribute. This allows every \$1 we receive in funding to result in many times that value in services delivered.

The high quality of the assistance provided is only possible because of the skill and hard work of our staff team, ably led by our Director, Greg Mackay. We were also pleased to welcome Kylie McGrath back to RAILS as Principal Solicitor in January. Work in a community legal centre is challenging and requires our staff to display immense flexibility, compassion and skill. They continue to do this with good humour and with tremendous commitment to their work. On behalf of the Management Committee, I would like to recognise and thank the staff for another year of exceptional work.

The RAILS Management Committee is grateful for support from all funders, particularly the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department and the Departments of Social Services and Home Affairs (Immigration and Citizenship Services Group), Legal Aid Queensland, and the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Our funding is always subject to some uncertainty, and this year is no different. In this environment the funding we receive from community organisations and individual donors is particularly valuable. I would like to thank all those who have contributed, especially Presentation Sisters for their contributions to the vital Unrepresented Asylum Seeker project.

A key part of our strategy is to increase RAILS' long term sustainability and our capacity to generate additional funding. I'd definitely encourage anyone who values RAILS' work to make a financial contribution – you can be sure it will be well spent!

I would finally like to thank my colleagues on the Management Committee who have been such effective stewards of RAILS in this and in previous years. In particular, I would like to recognise Marg O'Donnell, Bernadette Callaghan and Belinda Taylor who are stepping down from the Management Committee this year, all of whom have been dedicated contributors to RAILS.

Our Vision

Making justice accessible to a diverse community.

Our Mission

Provide a holistic and sustainable legal service for vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees and migrants through legal assistance, education and advocacy.

Our Values

- Access to justice
- Client-centred
- Ethical practice
 - Diversity
- Independence

Our Goals

Provide a community based legal service that meets the needs of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Improve the capacity of the community to promote and deliver greater access to justice for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Promote a humanitarian approach in the formulation and administration of law, policy and procedures as they affect asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

Provide an innovative, quality and cost effective legal service.

Greg Mackay

Director's Report

I would like to recognise the integral role we play in the lives of many people. Many of our clients have experienced displacement from their countries, communities, and families. They are often traumatised and resource poor. Our work is typically time sensitive and often urgent. It ensures people are better able to find a pathway to protection. Our role in this regard has never been more critical.

RAILS has continued to provide specialist immigration legal services to people who are experiencing disadvantage and disconnection. It is a much-needed service to many asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants. It is particularly so given the times of uncertainty and rapid changes in the legal, policy, and funding landscape. Our delivery of services has been to a high standard. We have delivered services in culturally and individually appropriate ways. As we aim to support our vibrant and diverse community each year, this annual report highlights the very important services and programs that RAILS provides.

Our work continues to focus on the key areas of protection visas, the family violence provisions, and refugee family reunion. Within refugee and immigration law, it is the focus on protection visas that is seen as RAILS' raison d'être. An important element of the work that the Unrepresented Asylum Seeker Program does is the clinic held at RAILS, with the assistance of pro bono partners, to help people reapply for TPVs and SHEVs. We particularly acknowledge Presentation Sisters for their ongoing financial assistance for this work.

There have been very few changes in staffing this year. We were pleased to welcome our incoming Principal Solicitor, Kylie McGrath, in January 2019. Kylie has taken up the role after several years working as a Solicitor at RAILS. We also had to temporarily farewell Stacey Parker, Lawyer and Pro Bono Coordinator, who went on a year's maternity leave. We were sad to see the UAS Paralegal, Angelene Counter, leaving for a full-time role in another Community Legal Centre; we welcomed Phoebe Nind into the role. Sadly, after doing great work, Zoe Brereton and George Carrington finished in part-time paralegal roles - I was pleased that Cristina Prieto Salvador took up the part-time Policy & Projects Paralegal role, leading us through our Accreditation process as well as a host of other projects. Rob Lachowicz continues to very ably hold the education portfolio. This is in two parts; one being continuing professional development sessions for internal and

external migration agents. The other is community legal education comprised of many training programs which are delivered to community workers and client groups, particularly young people.

RAILS is truly fortunate to have a committee of management comprised of people with knowledge of the field and related areas and with strong commitment to the organisation and its purpose. The committee serves to protect and promote RAILS' purpose and direction.

Our staffing is comprised of solicitors and migration agents, and administrative staff, all of whom work knowing that the quality of their efforts bears on the stability of clients' lives in Australia. I am appreciative that we have highly competent people in these roles. Staff members have maintained very high standards and this in the face of challenging departmental changes and decisions, hearing the disturbing stories of clients' experiences, and facing often tight timelines.

The demand for high quality legal services continues to exceed what we can provide. However, the generous level of volunteer support greatly helps us in responding to these demands. Please read the 'Thank You' column where we recognise the fantastic pro bono support provided to RAILS throughout the year.

RAILS will be confronting several challenges over the coming years. We will be seeking to diversify our funding sources, to build on our new branding so that our website and social media involvement captures interest, tells our story, and, just as importantly, concentrates supporters' attention on our need to be less reliant on government funding. While those challenges face us, we can rely on staff members who have high levels of competence and professionalism to continue the critical programmatic work. I am confident the organisation will ride the changing political, legislative and funding environments to continue to serve people well. Furthermore, the notion of social justice truly underpins the work we do. RAILS' organisational quality derives from ensuring service offerings are targeted, relevant, and potent.

89 % are financially disadvantaged

28 % have no income

2018 - 2019 Snapshot



28
Staff members



Hosted 7
Practical
Legal Training
students



Worked across 7 outreach locations



Represented
600 clients



Gave 12 CPD sessions



Provided 2725 legal
advice appointments



Provided
239 referrals



Provided information
on 928 occasions

Principal Solicitor's Report

The start of this financial year marked the end of an era for the Refugee and Immigration Legal Service. It was the first year in twenty-four years that we did not receive specific funding to represent asylum seekers who had arrived in Australia by plane to make their applications for a refugee visa. The writing had been on the wall in relation to this for several years. We had already lost specific funding to represent these asylum seekers at the Tribunal level and had been under increasing pressure to release confidential client information. Ultimately, we had to walk away from the funding for this reason. It was much more important that RAILS protect client's confidential and legally privileged information than continue to receive this specific stream of funding.

This funding contraction has had a huge impact on the RAILS casework team this financial year as we endeavour to continue to meet the needs of this core client group. RAILS continues to offer full representation to the most vulnerable of these clients. For others, we aim to be able to provide meaningful assistance at each stage of the refugee visa application process. This latter approach is certainly challenging, for clients, their supporters and advocates as well as for RAILS caseworkers. We hope that, in the upcoming financial year, we can implement a new clinic model to utilise volunteer law students and lawyers to more proactively meet the legal needs of these asylum seekers.

This financial year we have also seen the temporary protection visas granted to asylum seekers who have arrived in Australia by boat begin to expire. We are pleased to have been able to establish a clinic that assists these clients to apply for a further temporary form of protection visa. For asylum seekers who arrived in Australia by boat, we are also increasingly providing representation at the Federal Circuit Court and Federal Court level to those who have yet to be granted a protection visa. We are also proud to have been able to design and commence a new position, the Legal Support Coordinator role, that seeks to coordinate the legal needs of unrepresented asylum seekers who have arrived in Australia by boat.

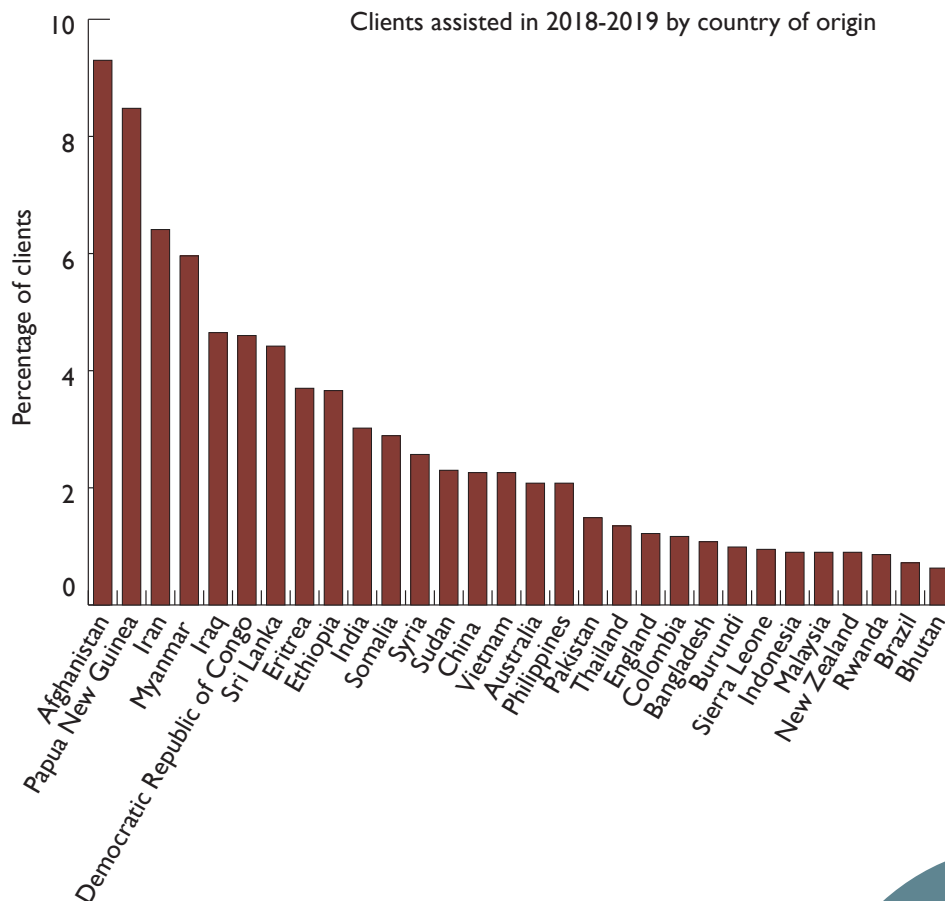
In our core areas of work of protection visas, the family violence provisions, and refugee family reunion, our caseworkers are finding it increasingly challenging to achieve successful outcomes for clients. We are increasingly having to write multiple complex submissions, to make complaints that decisions of the Department have or will be impacted by legal error and to take matters to the Federal Circuit Court.

Outside of these core areas, a political focus by decision makers on the integrity of the visa system and on visas and citizenship as a privilege rather than a right are creating new areas of need that we seek to respond to. We are seeing Aboriginal Australians having their visas cancelled and being placed in immigration detention centres. We have been heavily involved in litigating this matter in the High Court. We are seeing people of Papua New Guinean descent being notified that their Australian passports and citizenship certificates were issued in error forty years ago - we are making visa and citizenship applications on their behalf. We are confronted by actual or potential visa cancellations including of refugees and humanitarian entrants on the basis of incorrect information, as well as by citizenship refusals and delays. We are providing advice in these areas and proactively looking for new ways and new funds to provide more substantive assistance.

I would like to sincerely thank each of the RAILS Caseworkers for continuing to meet the challenges that arise from these changes in funding, law, practice and process. Bunu Gautum, Susan Hogarth, Valentina Jung, Tim Madigan, Imke McCall, Rachael Molnar, Stacey Parker, Grace Prince, Noel Reeves, Neha Vaidyanathan, thank you for your legal expertise, commitment, professionalism, flexibility, empathy, resilience and support to me and each other.

I would like to make particular mention of Noel Reeves and Tim Madigan who stepped into the role of Principal Solicitor for the first half of this financial year. I would also like to thank the RAILS' paralegals and all of the volunteers who play such an integral role in the provision of RAILS' casework. Special thanks also to Glennis Gill who commits so many hours each and every week to supporting me in my role.

Country Information



From July 2018 - June 2019 RAILS represented 600 clients and provided 2721 legal advice appointments to clients from 115 countries including:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Republic of, Cook Islands, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, England, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, France, French Guiana, Gaza Strip and West Bank, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Laos, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of South Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Stateless, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tokelau, Tonga, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

National Partnership Agreement

We receive funding through the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Legal Assistance Services. Through this agreement, the Australian Government provides funds to states and territories to distribute to legal aid commissions and community legal centres.

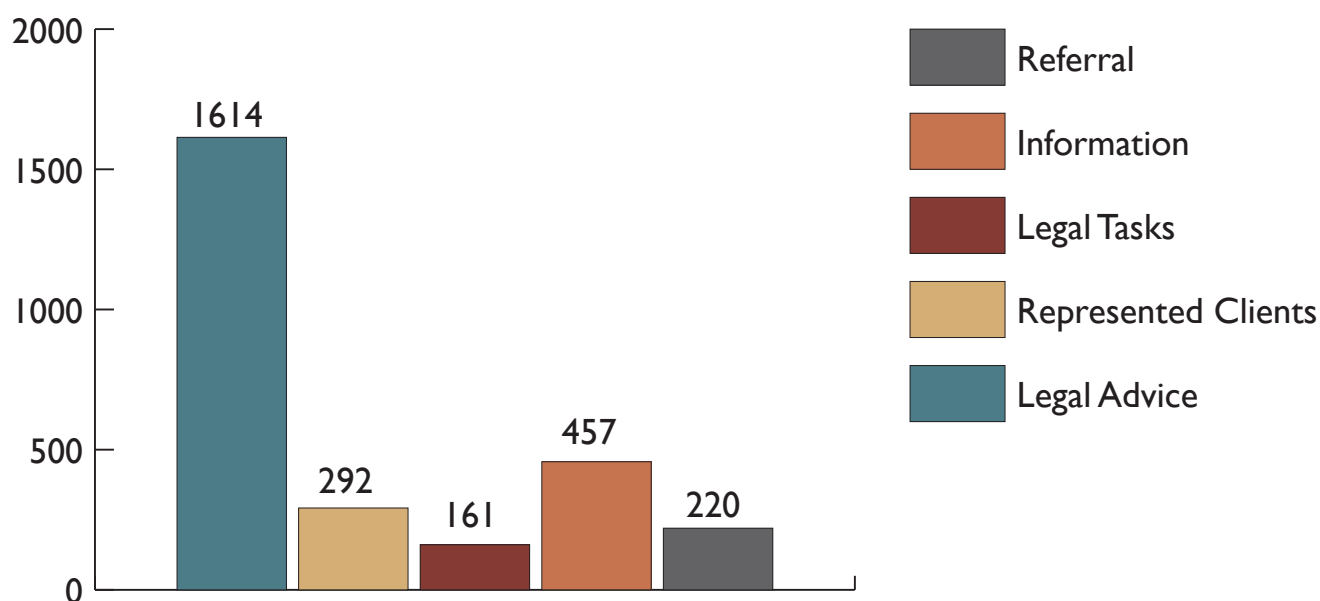
NPA funding allows us to assist people by giving them free immigration advice, ongoing assistance and referrals. Our twice weekly Evening Advice Sessions (EAS) are also funded with NPA funds. Read more about EAS in 'Free legal advice', page 24. It also provides resources to respond to Government requests for input on matters of law reform.

We represent people, funded through NPA, to make visa applications where clients have experienced family violence. We also represent people in appeals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) and at judicial review in the courts. They also include requests for the Minister or Assistant Minister to personally intervene in matters of public interest. This is where people have no other legal option (including allowing clients with Australian citizen children) to remain on shore.

In the year 2017-18, we gave up IAAAS funding (see Principal Solicitor's report). This year, we continued to assist clients who had been funded through IAAAS, as their matters were not finalised. These are people seeking asylum in Australia. Their matters include visa applications, appeals to the AAT, judicial review and requests for the Minister or Assistant Minister to personally intervene. We were able to assist them under NPA funding.

However, demand for representation services to the Department of Home Affairs, the AAT or the Federal Courts continues to exceed our capacity to assist. NPA representation is conditional on both the financial means of clients and the merits of their matter. Our casework guidelines are consistent with NPA priority client groups. These include migrants who have experienced family violence, those from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people seeking asylum in Australia, people with disabilities, children and young people, and those at risk of homelessness.

Client services (NPA) July 2018 - June 2019



Refugee Family Reunion

People who flee their country to seek asylum often leave their families behind. Routes to safety are long, dangerous and expensive. They hope that they will be able to reunite with their loved ones once they are living in safety. However, the wait can be for years.

Family separation has grave consequences for refugees trying to start their lives in a new country. Without their families, refugees lack emotional support and a sense of community. Many come from countries suffering ongoing conflict, so they know that their wives, husbands and children are exposed daily to poverty and violence. This has a severe impact on refugees' health and ability to adapt.

What is Refugee Family Reunion?

Our Refugee Family Reunion (RFR) program assists refugees in Queensland who want to bring their displaced family members to Australia. RFR is a program funded by the Commonwealth Government.

Our RFR team includes caseworkers Noel Reeves, Tim Madigan and Grace Prince.

Demand for the RFR program is very high. To meet this demand, we provide services in our Brisbane office, both in person and by telephone, and at outreach clinics throughout Queensland. Read more about our outreach services in 'Outreach work', page 13.

Who are our clients?

Our clients are refugees living in Queensland who want to bring their family to Australia. They come from all over the world, including the Congo, Sudan, Afghanistan and Myanmar. **These countries have the highest rates of displaced people on Earth.**

Many of our clients have families who have fled armed conflict and are living in neighbouring countries. For example, since 2016, many of our RFR clients are from Syria and Iraq. Most of them are Christians or members of other ethnic minorities, as these are the two most persecuted groups in the Middle East.

Other clients are women who do not have a husband or other male family member to protect them. All over the world, women without male protection are subject to violence and abuse and at risk of exploitation. Many of the female clients seen at the Toowoomba RFR clinic are Congolese women who have been widowed during the ongoing Congolese war.

What work do we do?

There are two ways refugees can bring relatives to Australia:

1. Humanitarian resettlement program: this program is free and can be applied for by anyone. However, there is a fixed number of people who can be approved each year.
2. Family visa program: this option is expensive and limited to certain types of relatives. However, it has a higher degree of success and more appeal avenues.

Most clients apply for the humanitarian program, as they cannot afford other visa options. However, some clients also apply for the family visa program to sponsor the same relative and increase their hopes of success. Two applications can run at the same time and will not impact each other's development.

Our work depends on the individual needs and circumstances of the clients.

All refugees living in Queensland can receive free legal RFR advice. In the individual advice sessions, which can take place in person or by telephone, we explain the different visa options and give them the application form and a useful checklist to ensure that all steps are met.

In some cases, after initial advice, we work with the client through the whole visa application process. We then draft statements, gather evidence, write detailed legal submissions and represent them in front of the Department of Home Affairs. Sadly, we cannot do this for everyone, as our funds are limited. We can only provide ongoing casework to people who meet our casework guidelines.

Refugee Family Reunion	
Legal advice	737
Legal tasks	150
Clients represented	220

Continued

Refugee Family Reunion

Teenage son reunited with his parents

Sawa and Nasim fled their home in western Iraq with their teenage son Sami, running away from ISIS. They spent months in a makeshift refugee camp.

Sawa and Nasim's future was uncertain and they did not know when they would have a place to call home again. They decided to send their teenage son to stay with his uncle in Europe, where he would be safe. Sawa and Nasim hoped that they could relocate to Europe if their son was given asylum there. However, shortly after Sami left, Sawa and Nasim were given protection in Australia and relocated there.

For weeks, they had no contact with Sami. They feared that he had been abducted by extremists or killed on the dangerous route to Europe from Iraq. Sawa and Nasim thought that they would never see their son again. However, Sami ended up arriving in Europe and contacting his parents. We assisted Sawa and Nasim in making a visa application to sponsor him to come to Australia. The family finally reunited after being separated for months.

(Names have been changed to protect confidentiality.)

Outreach work

When refugees arrive in Australia, they generally speak little English. They have to adapt to a culture and a way of living that are, in many cases, dramatically different from theirs. Often, they are also suffering from the traumatic experiences that have seen them recognised as refugees. Many lack the confidence to navigate roads or public transport systems. Their experience of trauma means they are more comfortable in familiar surroundings and are better able to recount their stories. This is why it is so important for us to offer services in places which refugees are familiar with.

As part of our RFR program, we conduct outreach clinics at several places in Queensland. We assist refugees who are in their first five years in Australia. We conduct the clinics at the settlement services that support refugees after their arrival. Last year, we had clinics at:

Continued

Refugee Family Reunion

Woolloongabba: in the offices of Multicultural Australia, every week

Logan: in the offices of Access Community Services, every week

Goodna: in the offices of Access Community Services, every fortnight

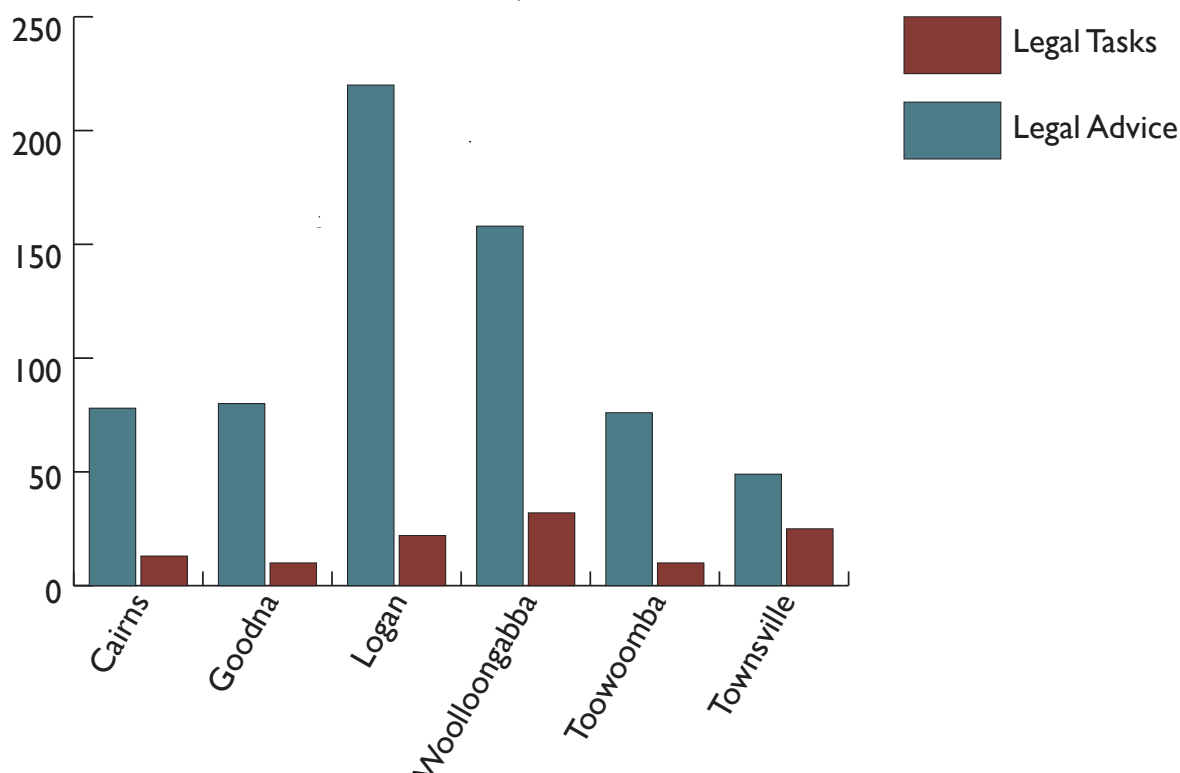
Toowoomba: in the offices of Multicultural Australia every month

Townsville: in the offices of the Townsville Multicultural Support Group, every two months

Cairns: in the offices of Centacare, every two months.

Outreach clinics are particularly important for those clients who live in regional areas, such as Townsville, Cairns or Toowoomba. Visa options for their family members are complex. Furthermore, their place of residence often means that the visa applications they sponsor can be prioritised by the Department of Home Affairs. Without our clinics, they would have no other opportunity to receive free, face-to-face legal advice, and access to justice.

Client services (RFR by outreach) July 2018 - June 2019



Permanent Protection

Millions of people worldwide flee their country because they fear for their safety. They leave their families, friends, and homes behind in the hope that they will be able to rebuild their lives free from danger.

In Australia, people who seek asylum and arrived in the country with a valid visa can apply for permanent protection. There are two ways they can be given protection in Australia:

1. Be recognised as refugees: a refugee is a person who fears returning to their home country because if they do, they could be seriously harmed or persecuted. The reason for the harm must be at least one of the following: race, nationality, religion, political opinion, or membership of a particular social group (for example, homosexual people in Afghanistan or HIV positive people in Papua New Guinea).

2. Be recognised as someone who needs complementary protection: a person needs complementary protection if there is a real risk that they will suffer significant harm (like torture or forced marriage, for example) if they return to their home country.

The process to be given protection is long. Applicants have to recount the traumatic experiences that they have lived, and do so in an interview with the Department of Home Affairs. The Australian migration system is complex and subject to frequent reform. Navigating it poses a great challenge, especially for people who face cultural and linguistic barriers.

What work do we do?

We give free legal advice to people who live in Queensland and want to apply for protection. We give advice face-to-face in our Brisbane office or by telephone. In the individual advice session, we explain to people seeking asylum the criteria to be given protection and the steps in the application process.

Sometimes, after giving advice, we can offer further assistance. Sadly, because our resources are limited, we can only give further assistance to people who meet our casework guidelines. We help them fill out a protection visa application (the form is 33 pages long!) and draft a statutory declaration. We also provide legal submissions and attend the client's interview with the Department of Home Affairs.

We help many people based in regional Queensland. In these cases, caseworkers do most of their work over the telephone. They sometimes meet the client for the first time at their protection visa interview.

If the Department refuses a visa application, the decision can be reviewed by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. We offer advice, assistance and representation to people who want to appeal a refusal.

Who are our clients?

Our clients face many barriers and are in situations of disadvantage and vulnerability. Some are homeless, have children to look after or live regionally. Many of them have experienced trauma in their home countries and have mental health issues. They sometimes find it hard to remember exact details and dates and they struggle to tell their story.

We work closely with psychologists, psychiatrists, and support workers to better assist our clients. We also use interpreters to make sure that clients can tell their story and understand the visa application process.

Permanent Protection Visas

Legal advice	577
Legal tasks	108
Clients represented	229

Permanent Protection

Woman from Papua New Guinea finally living in safety

PNG is one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a woman. Tessie is just one of the many PNG women who needs protection abroad because authorities in her country do not protect her from violence.

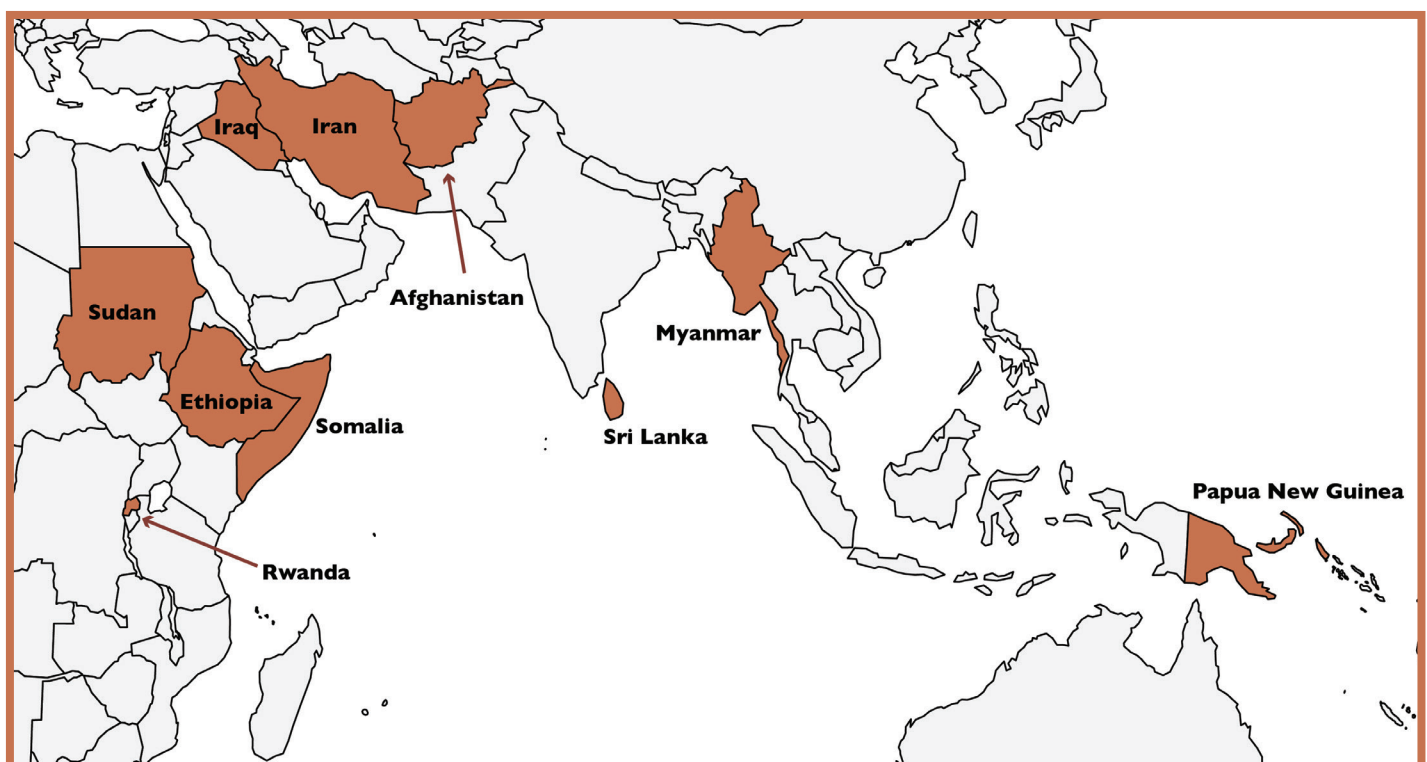
Tessie had a successful career in PNG. She met Thomas and they started dating. However, Thomas became violent towards her. Tessie is still suffering the physical and psychological consequences of the mistreatment. Family violence and abuse of women are endemic in PNG. Tessie fears for her life if she had to return to PNG.

We assisted Tessie in her protection visa application. Due to her trauma and regional residence, assisting her was challenging for our caseworkers. However, she has now been granted a permanent visa and can stay in safety in Australia.

(Her name has been changed to protect confidentiality.)

Where do RAILS protection visa clients come from?

Between July 2018 and June 2019 RAILS assisted clients seeking protection from 39 countries. The map below shows the countries where most of our protection visa clients originate.



Family and Domestic Violence

People who apply for a partner visa normally need to stay with their partner and sponsor to be granted permanent residency. However, if they experience domestic violence, they do not need to stay in their relationship. They can leave the abusive relationship and still be granted permanent residency in Australia. People who have applied for a partner visa can also be granted permanent residency after leaving their relationship if they had a child with their sponsor or if their sponsoring partner died.

Many women who are experiencing domestic violence at the hands of their sponsors do not know that they can leave the relationship. Sometimes, their partners have applied for the visa online, and women do not understand or have control over the visa application process. In these cases, they also do not receive communications from the Department. This lack of control is often compounded by an inability to speak functional English. This leaves many women disadvantaged and exposed to harm.

713

of our clients have experienced domestic violence or are at risk of experiencing it

42.6%

of them had children

51.3%

of them were homeless or at risk of homelessness

127 of our clients had experienced domestic violence or were at risk of experiencing it, had children AND were homeless or at risk of homelessness

18% increase in clients who had experienced domestic violence or were at risk of experiencing it. *Compared to 2016-17*

Continued

Family and Domestic Violence

How do we help?

We provide legal assistance to women who have applied for a partner visa and experienced family violence at the hands of their sponsors. We also provide assistance to people who have children with their sponsors and have left the relationship.

Our work in this field is funded by the National Partnership Agreement (NPA) on Legal Assistance Services 2017-20 and by Legal Aid Queensland.

What do we do?

When a person who lives in Queensland contacts us or is referred to us by a women's refuge or support agency, we give them legal advice about their visa options.

After giving legal advice, we can usually continue to assist women in the application process. We work with them to prove that their relationship was genuine before it finished. We also help them prove that they suffered family violence. In many occasions, women have to re-visit their trauma to provide very detailed descriptions of the violence they experienced. They also need to provide reports from professionals in the sector (like psychologists and doctors) who attest to their personal situation. We work closely with those experts to assist in gathering evidence. We are grateful for the support from expert agencies and professionals who work with us to support women through the application process.

Family and Domestic Violence	
Legal advice	508
Legal tasks	63
Clients represented	253

Overcoming obstacles to achieve justice

Sometimes it is not just the legal complexity, but also the client's vulnerable situation that can make family violence cases more difficult.

This year, we assisted Daisy to obtain a permanent partner visa. She had suffered extreme sexual violence at the hands of her ex-partner. Daisy was highly traumatised by the violence and struggled to talk about her experiences. She was so scared of potential repercussions from her ex-partner that she did not want to apply for a Domestic Violence Protection Order against him. Through continuous empathy and diligence, we instead helped her draft a compelling statement of her experience and obtain supporting evidence from other professionals working with her.

We faced further challenges because we were unable to contact or locate Daisy for a period of time. Having exhausted all options, we were about to make the difficult decision to close her case. It was then that the relationship of trust and mutual support that we had built with other community support services paid off. In an effort to locate Daisy, her support worker from a community organisation drove to her last known address. There, she was told that Daisy had moved to a remote area with no phone service. Through a collaborative process and a true demonstration of community spirit, a word-of-mouth message eventually reached Daisy and she travelled to a nearby town to contact us.

When her application was finalised, Daisy was rewarded with a grant of a permanent visa at first instance. After receiving her decision, Daisy visited our office to express her extreme gratitude. She can now take real steps to re-build her life after surviving her abusive relationship.

Temporary Protection

People seeking asylum in Australia who arrived by boat and without a valid visa between 13 August 2012 and 1 January 2014 face an incredible challenge to access justice.

This group of up to 30,000 people Australia-wide (about 2,700 in Queensland) is defined by how and when they arrived in the country. They can only access temporary forms of protection. If they are accepted as refugees, they can stay in Australia for three years (with a Temporary Protection Visa) or for five years (with a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa). After that short period, they have to apply for protection again. If the application is unsuccessful, they risk having to return to the country they fear. This leaves many people in a situation of extreme vulnerability and uncertainty.

TPV and SHEV applicants are extremely marginalised. Many of them do not speak English and come from very different cultures. The group includes families with young children, single parents, women who have experienced family violence and illiterate people. Many of them, including children, have been diagnosed with mental illness arising from their past experiences. In Australia, they are just hoping to live in peace. To achieve this, they need legal assistance. However, many of them cannot afford to pay private migration agents and their need for legal support is unfunded.

What do we do about this?

We give free legal assistance to refugees who live in all Queensland. We do this through our Unrepresented Asylum Seeker (UAS) project.

As part of the UAS project, we give free legal advice and representation. We do this face-to-face at our Brisbane office or by telephone. To assist as many people as possible, we established a legal clinic operating out of Indooroopilly Uniting Church. This year, we have started an evening TPV-SHEV re-application clinic in our Brisbane office. Read more about these in 'Legal clinics', page 20).

The UAS project is coordinated by RAILS solicitor Neha Vaidyanathan. Solicitors Imke McCall and Valentina Jung and paralegals Angelene Counter (until March) and Phoebe Nind (from February) were also part of the team in the last year. Imke is now acting UAS Coordinator until early next year, when Neha returns from leave.

The UAS project is funded by donations and by our own savings.

In 2019, we also became part of the Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance project. This project provides basic support to people holding or applying for these types of temporary visas. Read more about this in 'Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance project', page 20).

Our work in the last year

The Temporary Protection Visas expire three years after they are granted. This means that this year, many people have had to re-apply for protection. We gave them legal advice, explaining to them what their options were. We also drafted statements in which they explained their fears and experiences. In many cases, we were able to provide continuing assistance and represent them at their visa interview. We also wrote legal submissions to support their case.

We assisted people who had obtained a refusal decision from the Department. The review application in front of the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA) is almost their last chance to be able to remain in safety.

If the IAA's decision is negative, some can apply for review at the Federal Circuit Court (FCC). However, chances of success at the FCC are low. We established the CARES referral service with Salvos Legal Humanitarian and the Indooroopilly Uniting Church. Through this service, we ask barristers for pro-bono opinion on matters refused by the IAA. Where barristers thought that the case could be successful, either we or Salvos Legal Humanitarian worked together with them as instructing solicitors.

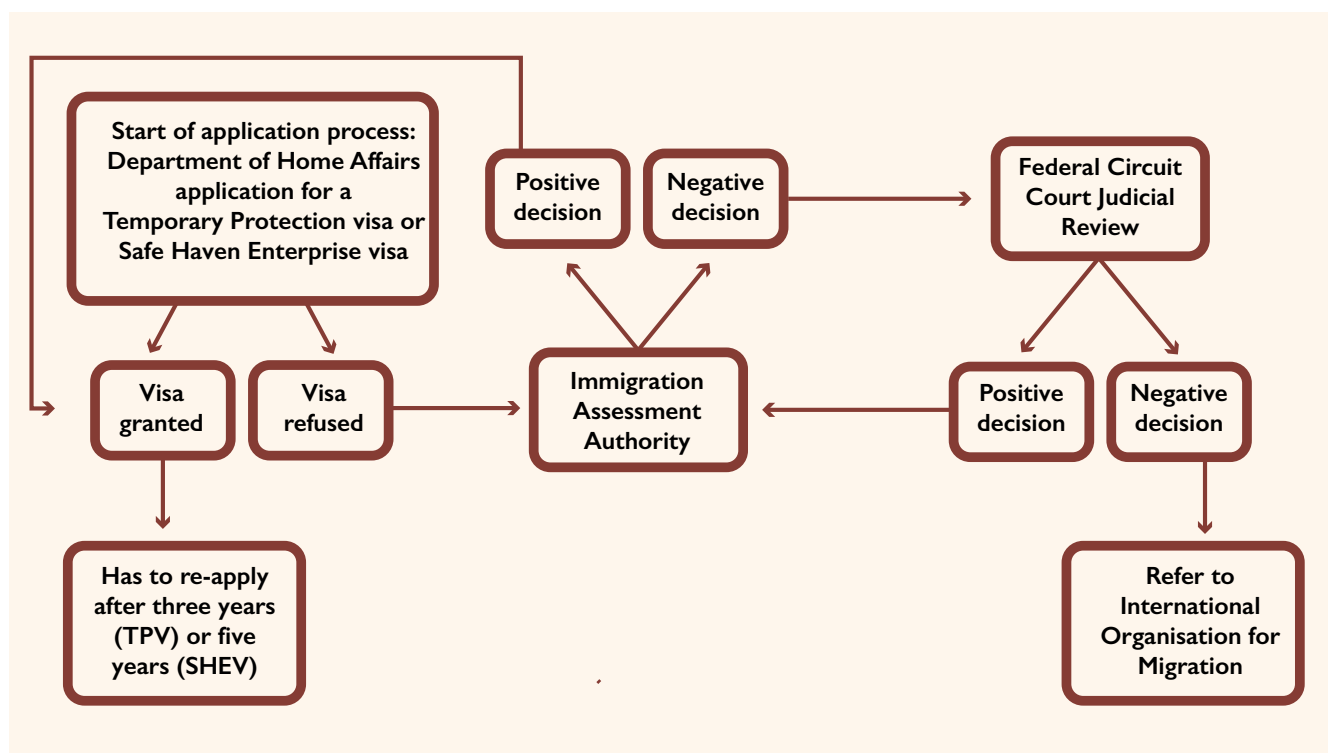
Temporary Protection Visas

Legal advice	369
Legal tasks	62
Clients represented	61

Continued

Temporary Protection

TPV and SHEV application process



Tamil Sri Lankan fleeing torture and imprisonment

For 27 years, a civil war between the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil (LTTE) and government forces raged in Sri Lanka. Pakash had never been involved with LTTE, but because of his Tamil ethnicity, he was imprisoned for years in Sri Lanka. Whilst in jail, he suffered horrific torture at the hands of the military. After his release, he continued to be harmed by authorities.

We assisted Pakash on his application for protection. However, despite the strong medical evidence, his visa application was refused. We assisted him in his appeal in front of the IAA. The good news is that he was subsequently granted a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa.

In 2023, Pakash will have to apply for protection again; this forces him to re-live his experience of torture and trauma. Pakash is still suffering the psychological and physical consequences of it. It is foreseeable that the re-application process will have a negative impact on his health and well-being.

(His name has been changed to protect confidentiality.)

Temporary Protection

Legal Clinics

Clinics facilitate people's access to essential legal services. Through them, we can reach people in locations other than our office and at times other than our usual opening hours. It also allows us to benefit from the work of volunteer lawyers who work with us.

TPV/SHEV clinic at Indooroopilly Uniting Church

We started the Indooroopilly Uniting Church clinic in July 2017, in partnership with Indooroopilly Uniting Church. It has continued to take place over the past year, every Thursday between 2 pm and 5 pm. People can attend the clinic on a drop-in basis.

At the clinic, one of our solicitors gives crucial immigration legal advice to TPV and SHEV visa holders and applicants. When needed, we also refer them to services for everyday living assistance.

A large majority of clients who come to the clinic require advice on judicial review processes. Such assistance has been crucial for this large group of asylum seekers, who have limited to no other legal assistance at this stage. We have given them legal advice and coordinated pro bono legal assistance by engaging with Salvos Legal Humanitarian and LawRight, and more recently undertaking merits assessment for clients who require representation at the Federal Circuit Court.

In the past year, RAILS solicitors Imke McCall and Valentina Jung were the solicitors at the clinic.

TPV/SHEV re-application clinics at our West End office

At the end of the year, we started the TPV/SHEV re-application clinics in our office in West End. They take place every Tuesday from 6 pm to 8 pm. People in need of assistance have to book an appointment to attend these clinics. In their appointment, re-applicants see a volunteer lawyer who helps them complete the application and prepare their statement of claims.

These clinics are made possible through the assistance of volunteer lawyers from several corporate law firms. Before the start of the clinic, we provided training sessions so they were able to support people in this very vulnerable group.

Big thanks to Allens, LawRight, Norton Rose Fullbright, Herbert Smith Freehills, Kingwood Mallesons, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated and the individual lawyers from other law firms who attend the clinics.

Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance Program

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) program was established in mid-2019 and will run for the next two years. This program is funded by the Queensland Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs.

The ASRA program will support people who hold or have applied for a Temporary Protection Visa or a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa. Six community organisations, coordinated by Asylum Circle, will deliver services to this very vulnerable group. Services include mental health support, emergency assistance with food and other services, housing support, employment advice and health advocacy. The organisations involved are Australian Red Cross, Multicultural Australia, QPASTT, Mercy Community Services, World Wellness Group and RAILS.

All organisations will offer their services at a shared space. People in need of support will be able to see the different agencies without having to travel to different locations. The three core hubs will be at Indooroopilly Uniting Church, Romero Centre at Dutton Park and Access in Logan. Additional regional hubs will be established as the program develops.

Through the year we were involved in all stages of the application and negotiation process and we were awarded funding for a full-time Legal Support Coordinator. The Legal Support Coordinator will provide a single point of contact for people accessing the hubs in need of legal support. We have worked hard on shaping this new role and are excited to welcome our long-term legal volunteer Emma Fell into the role. We are sure that she will do a great job and we are excited by this opportunity to further support such a vulnerable client group.

Community Support Program

People who suffer substantial discrimination that amounts to gross violation of human rights in their country of origin can be granted a visa to move to Australia under the Special Humanitarian Program (SHP). The SHP includes different visa types with different criteria. Most of the visas on the program are free, and refugees and humanitarian visa holders who live in Australia can sponsor their displaced family members to come to Australia under this program. However, when the person being sponsored is not an immediate family member, the visa application is usually refused. This means that people who want to sponsor their parents or siblings, for example, are not usually successful.

What is the Community Support Program?

The Community Support Program (CSP) falls under the Special Humanitarian Program. CSP enables individuals and organisations to sponsor someone in humanitarian need so that they can move to Australia with a humanitarian visa. People who apply for it need to have an offer of employment to work in Australia and speak good English. They also need to be sponsored by a community organisation (known as 'Australian Proposing Organisation'), which will assist them upon arrival. Finally, an Australian permanent resident or citizen needs to offer to provide support upon their arrival, including financial.

As opposed to other visas in the SHP, the cost of this visa is very high. However, CSP allows families to sponsor non-immediate family members overseas. In many cases, this is the only opportunity that many refugees have to re-unite with their family and to assist them to move from places of displacement and danger.

What work do we do?

We provide legal services to the Australian Proposing Organisations (APO). In the last year, we have assisted Illawarra Multicultural Services (IMS), in New South Wales, and Multicultural Australia, in Queensland. We give them advice about the prospects of success of the applications. If deemed successful, we also draft statements of claims, write legal submissions and help the Australian sponsor in gathering relevant evidence.

In this year, we gave 64 CSP advices and provided statements of claims and legal submissions for 42 CSP cases. Most of the people we assisted were Afghan and Iraqi families residing in Pakistan or Iran.

In 2019, we reorganised the way that the CSP work we do was managed. In April 2019, RAILS solicitor Susan Hogarth started coordinating the CSP area and giving advice and assistance in most cases. Before this, other RAILS caseworkers were also involved in the program. We thank Grace Prince, Tim Madigan, Noel Reeves, Valentina Jung and Rachael Molnar for their work.

Community Legal Education

Our legal education practice aims to be responsive to need, engaging and effective, and is developed collaboratively with communities and practitioners. Our programs are designed around education principles endorsed by Community Legal Centres Australia.

Continuing Professional Development Program

Our CPD program ensures staff, volunteers and the wider profession maintain professional standards and registration.

Our monthly workshops covered protection visas, visa cancellations; effective advocacy, family violence, working with vulnerable clients, skilled visas, and ethics.

We thank private practitioners and RAILS staff members who assisted in presenting the sessions.

Worker Training

We delivered training to a range of sector workers, including pro-bono legal volunteers, CLC workers and staff from refugee settlement, asylum seeker support and family violence services. Our workshops, seminars and webinars included refugee law, supporting asylum seekers, family violence and regulation of migration agents.

We also partnered with the Dispute Resolution Branch of the Department of Justice on conflict resolution training to Police Cultural Liaison Officers and gave a session to the Judicial Council on Cultural Diversity.

We delivered professional skills workshops to our Legal Clinic law students from Bond University, Griffith University and University of Queensland.

Community Education

We delivered legal education to new arrivals, asylum seekers, protection visa holders, TAFE students and community groups covering refugee law, citizenship, family violence, criminal and consumer law.

School Legal Education

Through a Department of Social Services Fostering Integration Grant we continued our 'Law Rap education program to Yeronga and Milpera State Schools. We work innovatively using music, role plays and English language activities to teach students about the legal system, consumer law, human rights, and laws around families, relationships, police and courts.

In a partnership with QPS and the AFL we created the 'Fair Play' program which uses sport as a metaphor to explore the legal system, discrimination, sexual harassment and crime prevention. The program was delivered to African-background student leaders at Yeronga State School.

Resources

Our legal education resources are distributed through staff and agencies, and more broadly through our website and YouTube channel.

Last year we produced Fact Sheets in English and four other languages about reapplying for temporary protection visas, refugee family reunion; visa cancellation and a kit for boat arrival asylum seekers about judicial review.

We also developed 'Men Managing Change', a series of powerful micro-videos in ten languages made in a Men's Shed in collaboration with South Community Hub.

Networks

We continue to work closely with a range of community and government stakeholders including the LAQ Legal Aid Forum where CLC education workers share CLE project information and strategies.

Education Statistics 2018-19

In 2018-19 RAILS presented 109 education sessions to 1739 participants. This included 26 community legal education sessions to 509 participants, 28 sessions to 694 legal and community workers and 55 legal education sessions to the highly multicultural Milpera and Yeronga Schools.

Legal Education in Numbers

Education resources
4 factsheets
in 4 languages
4 videos
in 9 languages



Continuing professional
development
12 sessions
to 303 participants



General legal
education
21 sessions
to 315 individuals



Worker's training
16 sessions to
391 professionals

Our work with Queensland Schools



Yeronga State School
26 sessions to 30 students

Milpera State School
29 sessions to 60 students
5 Fairplay sessions to 13 students



Free Legal Advice

We had a very busy year giving free legal immigration and family law advice. This free legal advice is for people who live in Queensland. The variety of matters we assisted with continued to challenge Solicitors/Migration Agents and volunteer advisors alike.

We offer Evening Advice Sessions twice per week at our office in West End and weekly at Access in Logan. At these sessions, volunteer lawyers and migration agents assist clients in general immigration law issues. Some of these issues were visa cancellations, partner visas, citizenship, student visas and humanitarian visas. We also gave advice to many people who received Requests for Further Information from the Department of Home Affairs. If necessary, our caseworkers followed up on the advice after the session.

In the last year, we continued our partnership with Legal Aid Queensland to offer family law advice. Once per fortnight, a LAQ solicitor came to our office to give legal advice to our clients in matters like divorce, property settlement and custody of children. Having this clinic means that our family violence clients can access both family law and migration law under one roof, at one time.

We also provide free legal immigration advice by telephone. This is especially important, since many of our clients do not live in Brisbane and cannot come to our office. Some of the matters we advised on were related to protection and humanitarian visas, refugee family reunion and partner visas. We also gave advice in more generalist immigration matters, like carer or student visas.

We continued to provide free legal advice in several locations in Queensland through the Family Reunion Program. This year, we established a new RFR clinic in Inala. Read more about this in 'Outreach work', page 13. We continued to provide free legal advice to holders and applicants of temporary forms of protection through our UAS program. Read more in 'Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise visas', page 18.

We are grateful to have such dedicated volunteer advisors and EAS coordinators and we thank them for their assistance in the past year! We could not have managed to do it without your support. See you in 2019-20!

Free Legal Advice (EAS)

Legal advice (West End)	336
Legal advice (Logan)	140
Legal tasks	19

What else has been happening?

We updated our branding!

After many years of green and white, we updated our branding!

We worked in developing the new branding over 2018, and it was launched in November 2018. In our logo, each organic shape represents one of the four different sectors of our work (legal advice, legal education, advocacy and representation, and law and policy reform) and the constantly changing and adaptive nature of our work. They are placed in the arrangement of a square, as all sides are equal, to represent justice and equality. The shapes overlap to portray the interconnectedness of the sectors and a community feel. The shape and colours were chosen to appear more friendly, approachable and grounded.

As part of our updated branding, we worked hard during the year to develop a new website, which, at the time of writing, is live.

We worked hard on our National Accreditation Scheme improvement plan

The National Accreditation Scheme supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services and promotes a culture of continuous quality improvement.

In the past year, we worked on our Improvement Plan, reporting to Community Legal Centres Queensland (CLCQ) and providing evidence of our progress. We successfully completed all primary requirements! A remarkable amount of work was done to update WHS practice, our information management and privacy and confidentiality policies and our advice and casework policy and guidelines.

Thanks to CLCQ for their support and guidance during this process!

We joined the Thursdays in Black campaign

In March 2019, we joined the Thursdays in Black campaign to make a stand for the right of women to live in a world without violence, rape and fear.

We wear black on Thursdays as a symbol of solidarity with victims and survivors and to call for a world without violence.



Harriet Lomas

University Student Clinics

Every semester, students from the University of Queensland, Griffith University and Bond University take part in our student legal clinics. The universities select their students, who participate as part of a law degree subject. Clinic students undergo a 2-day induction process. After that, they are supervised by an allocated Solicitor/Migration Agent. Students do legal research, draft legal correspondence and submissions, assist with administrative tasks and complete application forms and statements with clients.

This year, 24 UQ students, 12 Griffith University students and 2 Bond University students completed student legal clinics with us.

Reflection from Harriet Lomas, a clinic student from the University of Queensland

Commencing the legal clinic at RAILS was a comfortable and supported transition. The first two weeks of our clinic time included orientation workshops led by the Education Officer, Robert, and Principal Solicitor, Kylie. The students from UQ and Griffith divided into groups and gave presentations on three topics: Refugee Family Reunion, Family Violence, and Protection Visas. These presentations provided us with introductory information regarding visa classes and their requirements. Throughout the clinic, when describing my tasks for that day, my supervising solicitor was thorough and patient in giving detailed explanations. She had an open door, allowing us to enter to ask questions at any time.

Working at RAILS allowed me to develop practical legal skills. During the semester-long clinic, we were given increasingly complex tasks. My supervisor allowed me to observe a client conference in my second week. In the latter weeks of the clinic, another student and I were able to conduct a client conference ourselves. The purpose of this was to identify evidence relevant to the client's application. We also undertook legal research (with a focus on researching country information), working with interpreters, filling-in government forms and collating evidence. Throughout this time, I was able to observe the progression of client cases. My supervisor ensured that we were exposed to a wide variety of tasks at various steps in the visa application process. In addition, I assisted my supervisor with various administrative tasks.

I was able to gain a broader understanding of political issues around the globe and appreciate the reasons for which people seek asylum. This came about through conducting country research, reading submissions and speaking to clients. Similarly, I now have a better understanding of the legislative frameworks and procedures that the government implements to pursue Australia's immigration policy. Based on the experiences I had at RAILS, I now feel better placed to critically examine such immigration policy decisions and understand their practical implications. Additionally, my semester-long clinic at RAILS opened my eyes to the possibility of pursuing a career in the community legal sector, an avenue which I was not aware of prior to participating in this clinic. I would like to thank everyone at RAILS for providing us with this fantastic opportunity, which has been one of the best experiences I have had during my degree.

Volunteers' Stories

Over the past year, 158 people volunteered with us. We could not have done the work we did without their dedication and commitment. Thank you! Below are some of their stories.

Abinaya Ketheeswaran

Before I began volunteering at RAILS in December 2018, I was just a naïve, eager law student who had minimal exposure to the realities of the legal field. Since then, I have had the pleasure of working alongside such inspiring and hardworking staff members on matters pertaining to refugee family reunification. What began as a mere desire to help my community quickly transitioned into a powerful sense of duty to advocate for vulnerable Australians.

RAILS makes me feel important. Valued, even. While my peers at law firms were photocopying, I was drafting submissions and interviewing clients. As a young law student, it is incredibly special to have the opportunity to witness the direct impact your work has on people's lives and share life-changing moments with clients.

Perhaps the most meaningful part of my experience with RAILS has been building strong relationships with the wonderful staff. From my short but momentous time at RAILS, I have found sincerity, dedication and spirit in my many mentors and colleagues – something I hope to live by in the future.

Rose Mosavi

As an Iranian-Australian, I found RAILS to be an important step in my personal and professional development. I had wanted to volunteer at RAILS since the beginning of my dual degree, and commenced as a full-time Practical Legal Training (PLT) student in May 2018. After PLT, I continued as a day volunteer until April 2019.

It was a great opportunity to receive in-depth training and gain challenging work experience. This has been invaluable in my career since leaving RAILS.

Most importantly, RAILS is a community. Not just in terms of being a Community Legal Centre, and the services that entails, but also in its workplace. The experience I gained went further than the work I performed. I was mentored by brilliant solicitors, developed my confidence at a crucial point of my career and made lasting friendships with like-minded law students.

I am immensely grateful for my time at RAILS and have taken these experiences and friendships with me moving to my present role as an Associate in the General Division of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Saibal Karr

I volunteered at RAILS from September 2018 until July 2019 in the Unrepresented Asylum Seeker project. Volunteering at RAILS made me aware of many issues that vulnerable people seeking asylum in Australia face which I was not aware of. After completing my legal studies, I wanted to expand my skills in Refugee and Immigration Law and was fortunate to get an opportunity at RAILS.

I was able to assist in drafting submissions for protection visa applications, conducting client interviews and undertaking a variety of legal research tasks. The lawyers and staff at RAILS were very supportive and I was able to improve myself through constructive feedback. I was also able to attend various workshops on cultural competency training and continuing professional development which helped me gain skills in assisting people from diverse multicultural backgrounds. I am currently pursuing a Master of Social Work Studies at UQ and hope to use my legal and social work skills to continue assisting people in this area. Overall, I was very satisfied with being part of an organisation that goes a long way in making a difference in the lives of vulnerable people seeking to call Australia home.

Treasurer's Report

RAILS has achieved another balanced financial year. This has not without its challenges as this is the first year RAILS has not had IAAAS funding. This was funding from the Department of Home Affairs for assisting people arriving in Australia on a visa and seeking protection. We had to discontinue our work in this area as we were not able to disclose potentially identifying client information in our reports to the Department.

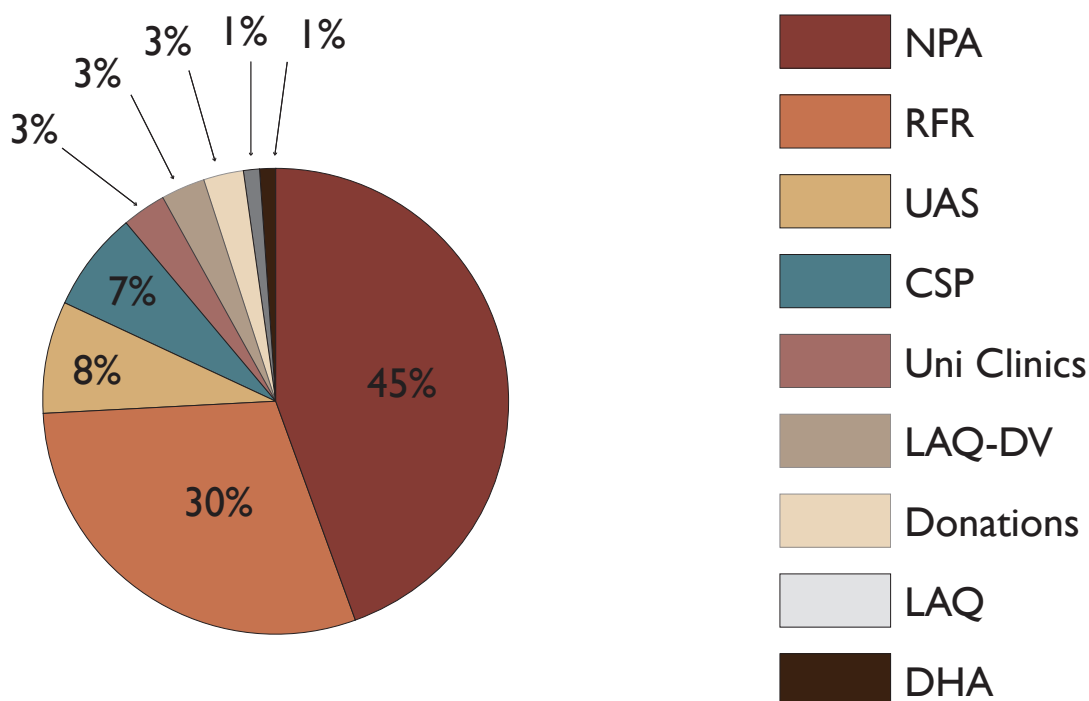
We have met budgeted milestones in the majority of our service areas and continued to provide quality legal services. We ended the year with a deficit of \$14,427 for 2019, decreasing net assets by \$14,427. Despite this decrease in net assets, RAILS is in a sound financial position to face any future funding challenges.

The organisation now has a very strong current ratio of 3.4, which gives an indication of how well RAILS is placed to pay debts as they fall due. RAILS will go into the 2019 financial year with a very strong cash position, which will assist the organisation to meet the budgeted expectations.

Much of the financial soundness is due to the generous donations of individuals and organisations. Such donations have been made to support our Unrepresented Asylum Seeker program, which is also supported by our reserves.

Praise must be given to RAILS' Finance Officer Mei Wang and RAILS' Director Greg Mackay, who have produced both accurate and timely end of month reporting. Financial reports have greatly assisted the Management Committee in decision making.

Funding Sources 2018-2019



Acknowledgements

National Partnership Agreement Funding – combined State and Commonwealth funding forming the financial core of Community Legal Centres

Through this funding, RAILS is able to provide generalist immigration advice and legal representation at the Department of Home Affairs, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal and the Federal Courts. Our clients have often experienced family violence, are at risk of homelessness and fear returning to their country of origin.

Commonwealth Department of Social Security – Settlement Grants Program

Through funding from the Department of Social Services, our Refugee Family Reunion program assists recently arrived refugees to reunite with close family members who are still overseas.

Legal Aid Queensland

Funding from Legal Aid Queensland allows RAILS to provide legal assistance to applicants for permanent residency whose applications have been affected by their experience of domestic violence.

University of Queensland, Griffith University, and Bond University

Each university semester we are funded by UQ (UQ Pro Bono Centre), Griffith University, and Bond University to provide Legal Clinics for law students. This gives students experience in working in a legal service and in practice skills, undertaking migration law related tasks, as well as learning about professional responsibilities.

Donations from individuals and organisations so that people without government funded legal support can be assisted in applying for protection

RAILS' Unrepresented Asylum Seeker program continued throughout 2018-19. In collaboration with our sister services throughout Australia, the UAS assists the 32,000 'legacy caseload' of asylum seekers who travelled to Australia by boat and are unable to access government-funded legal assistance. The UAS has been operating for five years, funded by community donations and RAILS, with a contribution this year from the Queensland Justice and Attorney General's department.

Management Committee Profiles

Paul Tavatgis

President

Paul has extensive experience at senior management levels within the not-for-profit sector, including self regulatory bodies, charities and fundraising agencies and has supported the fundraising sector in developing effective self-regulation and compliance mechanisms.

He is the Director of Whipbird Consulting and works with many charities in support of their fundraising and compliance goals.

He has been a member of our Management Committee at various times since 1997 and became President of the Management Committee in November 2018, having previously held positions as Secretary, Treasurer, and President.

Belinda Taylor

Treasurer

Belinda currently works as Finance Manager with Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health. Belinda has over 25 years experience in Business Services and Auditing and has held senior roles in several large multinational companies in Sydney and Brisbane.

Belinda has a Bachelor of Science from Sydney University, an Associate Diploma in Business Accounting, and is a member of the National Institute of Accountants.

Belinda joined our Management Committee in 2014 and was appointed as Treasurer in November 2014.

Bernadette Callaghan

Secretary

Bernadette has been Secretary of our Management Committee since 2018. She is also the President of the Management Committee of Sisters Inside.

Early in her career, Bernadette was employed by the Federated Clerks Union as an organiser from 1976 until 1982. She was elected as Secretary of the Union in November 1982 and remained in that position until the end of 1994, when she started working as a barrister.

In September 2002, Bernadette was appointed a Magistrate and retired from that position in July 2018.

Peter Billings

Member

Peter is an Associate Professor at the TC Beirne School of Law, the University of Queensland, and a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is a legal scholar with teaching and research interests in Administrative Law, Immigration and Refugee Law, Social Welfare Law and Human Rights, and he is a passionate advocate for refugees' rights.

He has been published widely in leading law journals in Australia, UK, USA and in several edited collections. His academic work influences and informs other academics, legal practitioners, legislators, policy-makers and media.

Continued

Management Committee Profiles

Matt Black

Member

Matt is a barrister in private practice. He advises and appears for a range of private and government clients in both state and federal jurisdictions. During his time at the Bar, Matt has also undertaken appointments as Official Visitor and Inspector under the Corrective Services Act 2006 (Qld) and teaching administrative law as a casual lecturer with the College of Law in Brisbane.

Before coming to the Bar, Matt was an in-house lawyer at Centrelink. He has previously performed legal or research roles for the Land and Resources Tribunal, the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and the Australian Institute of Criminology.

He has been a member of our Management Committee since November 2018.

Nitra Kidson

Member

Nitra is a barrister in private practice and specialises in public law, particularly administrative law and native title. Nitra first joined RAILS, then known as the South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service

as a solicitor/caseworker in 1995. Nitra advocated on behalf of clients and represented the organisation on the Board of the Refugee Council and at many other forums.

Margaret O'Donnell

Member

Margaret holds numerous appointments including Executive Coach for McCarthy Mentoring and has held various government positions including Director-General for Arts Queensland, Director-General of Equity and Fair Trading, the Director-General for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development, the Legal Ombudsman of Victoria and the Director of the Queensland Office for the Federal Office for the Status of Women.

She is a member of several other boards, including SANE Australia and Breast Cancer Trials (Formerly known as the Breast Cancer Institute of Australia and the Australia and New Zealand Breast Cancer Trials Group). She previously served as the Chair of Legal Aid Queensland and the Chair of Australian Festival of Chamber of Music.

Tony Woodyatt

Member

Tony has been director of the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated (now called LawRight). He has been involved in legal and public policy work since 1976. Among other roles, he has worked as the manager for Crime Prevention Queensland, and has been Director of Caxton Legal Centre, Director of Research for the Parliamentary Criminal Justice Committee and solicitor and coordinator of Prisoner's Legal Service.

He has also held term appointments as Executive Director of the Queensland Police Service Review, General Counsel for The Queensland Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Project Officer, Office of Fair Trading and periods in private practice in Brisbane and as a locum solicitor in rural North Queensland.

He has been a member of our Management Committee since February 2019.

Hiwa Zandi

Member

Hiwa is a practicing lawyer specialising in commercial litigation and migration matters. Hiwa has worked for the International Organisation for Migration in a consultancy position to coordinate the asylum seeker Voluntary Return Program in Manus and Nauru. Hiwa's association with RAILS goes back more than 10 years, when he initially worked as a voluntary legal clerk between 2004 and 2006.

He has been a member of our Management Committee since 2016.

Staff Members 2018—2019

Greg Mackay – Director

Kylie McGrath – Principal Solicitor from January 2019

Noel Reeves – Acting Principal Solicitor until January 2019 and solicitor

Tim Madigan – Acting Principal Solicitor until January 2019 and solicitor

Robert Lachowicz – Education Officer

Stacey Parker – Lawyer and Pro Bono Coordinator

Smitha Mallya – Administration and Finance Officer

Mei Wang – Finance Officer

George Carrington – Administration Support until January 2019

Georgia Sullivan – Administration Support until August 2018

Clare Carter – Administration Support

Rin Shimada – Administration Support

Bunu Gautam – Solicitor

Susan Hogarth – Solicitor

Jee-Yeun (Valentina) Jung – Solicitor

Imke McCall – Solicitor

Rachael Molnar – Solicitor

Grace Prince – Migration Agent

Neha Vaidyanathan – Solicitor

Angelene Counter – UAS Paralegal until March 2019

Phoebe Nind - UAS Paralegal since February 2019

Zoe Brereton – IAAAS Paralegal until January 2019

Cristina Prieto Salvador – Policy and Projects Paralegal from March 2019

Casual Staff Members

Nellie Boyce-Clarke – Administration Support

Sophie Hill – Administration Support

Rachel Tomassen – Administration Support

Alice Chester – Paralegal

Jean Morton – Paralegal

Thank You

RAILS is grateful for the hard work and dedication of its pro bono firm partners and volunteer barristers, lawyers, migration agents, and students including:

MinterEllison for providing pro bono assistance to clients who have experienced family violence

Allens, Herbert Smith Freehills, King & Wood Mallets and Norton Rose Fulbright for providing pro bono assistance to unrepresented people seeking asylum to apply for protection

Allens and Fisher Dore Lawyers for providing pro bono representation for judicial review proceedings

Corrs Chambers Westgarth for providing us with pro bono assistance to conduct a privacy review of our policies and procedures

Maurice Blackburn for accepting to act as instructors in a High Court proceeding

Ellem Warren Lawyers and Herbert Smith Freehills for providing pro bono employment practice advice and human resource management policy advice

Stephen Keim SC, Matt Black, Julian Gormly, Aaron Hartnett, Gail Hartridge, Stephen Hegedus, Emma Hoiberg, Gavin Rebetzke, Kate Slack, Mark Steele and Maxwell Walker of counsel for providing opinions and acting as counsel for judicial review proceedings

We are grateful for the hard work of our day and evening volunteers, clinic and PLT students, pro bono firm partners and volunteer barristers, lawyers and migration agents. We could not do the work we do without your dedication.

EVENING ADVICE VOLUNTEER ADVISORS

Many volunteer solicitors and migration agents who give up their time and expertise to volunteer at our Evening Advice Sessions held on Mondays and Wednesdays. This pro bono support enables us to assist far more clients than through staff alone.

- Helen Ball
- Bianca Chisari
- Elizabeth Collins Fischer
- Elvira Conner
- Shane Crawford
- Mojtaba Dani
- Emily Darling
- Aurora Djuric
- Emma Drynan
- Magdalena Dzeinis
- Hendrik de Korte
- Terry Fisher
- Rajesh Gopal
- Anna Gunning Stevens
- Katherine Keane
- Yuen Yee Lai
- Prathap Lakshmanan
- Marg Le Seur
- Boon Lim
- Roya Majd
- Cynthia Marchant
- William Markwell
- Kieran O'Brien
- Emma Robinson
- Jennifer Samuta
- Sastha Sanjaya A
- Darryl Sean McNeill
- Narendra Sharma
- Raj Sharma
- Virendra Shekhawat



- Antony Stolar
- Jane Taljaard
- Tamba Thomas
- Richard Timpson
- Bruce Wells
- Boris Yip

EVENING ADVICE SESSIONS COORDINATORS

- Daniel Barker
- George Carrington
- Clare Carter
- Ruby Chiswell
- Thomas Choo
- Edward Craw
- Micaelo Del Olmo
- Mirian Fernandez
- Matilda Lambooy
- Sarah Lawrence
- Sarah Maneckshana
- Harry Monogenis
- Georgina Rigg
- Rin Shimada
- Annie Taylor
- Harriet White

TPV/SHEV CLINIC VOLUNTEER ADVISORS

- Daniel Bradford
- Amanda Bosworth
- Inez Botta-Stanwell
- Joshua Gunn
- Timothy Leschke
- Stebin Sam
- Holli Sargeant
- Sandy Smith
- Loretta Stellino
- Stephanie Tang

- Kirra Uren
- Harriette Watson

DAY LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATION VOLUNTEERS

- Caitlin Archbold
- Theodore Carney
- Shelley Cheng
- Alice Chester
- Ruby Chiswell
- Nellie Clark-Boyce
- Chris Clur
- Ethan Culross
- Renee Curtis
- Rachel Donges
- Kate Dowse
- Magdalene Dzeinis
- Brittany Engeman
- Emma Fell
- Marisol García Tobón
- Glennis Gill
- Noemi Gonzalez
- Taylor Henderson
- Sophie Hill
- Saibal Kar
- Abinaya Ketheeswaran
- Claudia Lizzio
- Aidan McCarthy
- Imogen McInerney
- Elham Meshki (Ellie)
- Jasmine Miller
- Maryam Mohamed Zuhair
- Sarah Morrison
- Jean Morton
- Rose Mosavi
- Nicola Murray
- Phoebe Nind

- Darcy O'Brien
- Cristina Prieto Salvador
- Emily Rainbird
- Georgia Robertson
- Crispin Scott
- Lauren Seibert
- Narelle Seth
- Mu Shwe
- Sarah Smale
- Georgia Sullivan
- Corey Tibbs
- Jonathan Trembath
- Millie Volck
- Jamilla Wynter

PLT STUDENTS

- Abby
- Laura Armstrong
- Annabelle Behan
- Zoe Brereton
- George Carrington
- Rose Mosavi
- Chi Nguyen

LEGAL CLINIC STUDENTS

Summer 2018-19

Bond University

- Liam Radich
- Lee Sammut

Semester 2 2018

Griffith University

- Aaron Calcatt
- Madaline Hartwig
- Kyung Hee Kwon
- Aleksandra Milik
- Debbie Miller
- Alexandria Neumann

Thank You

UQ

- Emmanuelle Alexis
- Sarah Aljassim
- Ankita Bellary
- Rachael Blackman
- Camille Chen
- Catherine Crombie
- Susanna Je
- Phoebe Kenafake
- Elloise Laing
- Vanessa Lynch
- Alexander Moore
- Michael Pitcher

Semester 1 2019

Griffith University

- Brienna Johnston
- Harris Monogenis
- Kirsten Morgan
- Mark Norris
- Sho Stunden
- Lejla Vejzovic

UQ

- Famin Ahmed
- Madeleine Behne
- Adam Bradshaw
- Lauren Causer
- Clare Foran
- Frances Ila Marie del Rosario
- William Deicke
- Jessica Downing-Ide
- Harriet Lomas
- Sarah MacDonald (Sadie)
- Tomea Ryan
- Selina Wyssusek

We also thank ...

University of Queensland, Bond University and Griffith University for partnering with us to deliver student clinics.

UQ Pro Bono Centre for assisting with the delivery of legal education to refugee and culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Our CPD program guest speakers:

Stafford Shepherd from Queensland Law Society

Victoria Lenton from MinterEllison

Megan Arends from MinterEllison

We also thank our long-standing community partners:

Access Community Services Ltd

Asylum Circle

Australian Red Cross

BRASS Network

CatholicCare

Centacare FNQ

Communify

Community Legal Centres

Queensland

Community Legal Centres Australia

Ethnic Communities Council

Queensland

Immigrant Women's Support Service

Indooroopilly Uniting Church

LawRight

Legal Aid Queensland

Multicultural Australia

QPASTT

Queensland University of Technology

Salvos Legal

Townsville Multicultural Support Group

Women's Legal Service Qld

Finally, we would also like to thank:

Department of Home Affairs

Department of Justice and Attorney General

Department of Social Services

Bond University

Griffith University

Legal Aid Qld

Presentation Sisters

Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General

The University of Queensland

UQ Pro Bono Centre

Thank You

KING & WOOD
MALLESONS
金杜律师事务所



Allens & Linklaters

NORTON ROSE
FULBRIGHT

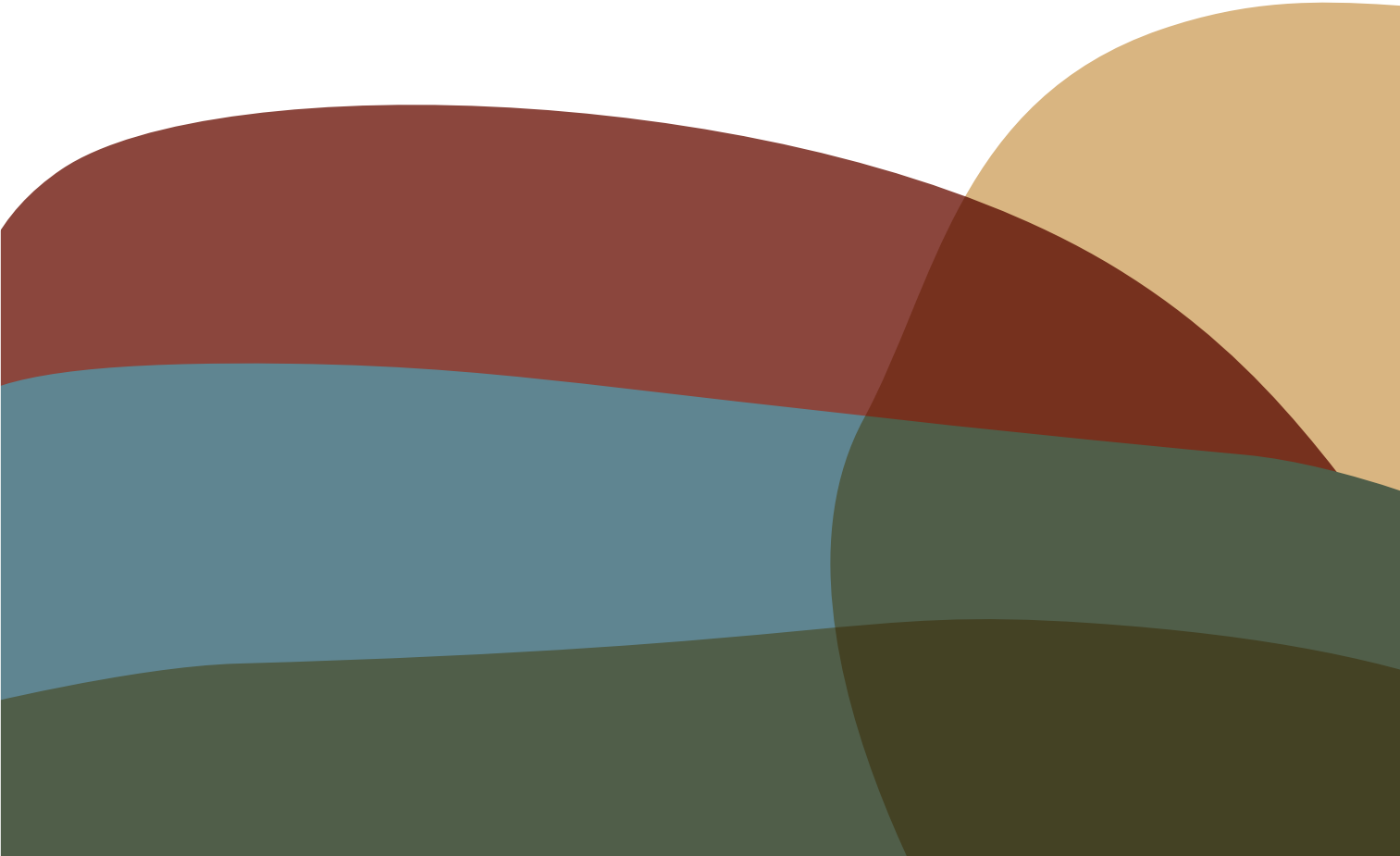


An Australian Government Initiative





RAILS staff 2018-19





RAILS

Refugee and Immigration
Legal Service

Providing a holistic and sustainable legal service for vulnerable asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants through legal assistance, and education and advocacy.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Our offices are at:

Level 1, 170 Boundary St, West End, 4101

General phone number: 07 3846 9300

WE ARE OPEN

Monday to Friday 9 am—5 pm

Monday and Wednesday 6—8 pm
for Evening Advice Sessions (West End
and Logan) and telephone advice for
people in regional Queensland.

RAILS also sees people at several
locations within the greater Brisbane area
(Woolloongabba, Indooroopilly, Logan,
Goodna) and in Toowoomba, Townsville,
and Cairns.

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee
Assistance Program runs at the
following locations: Romero Centre
(Monday), Access Gateway (Wednesday),
Indooroopilly (Thursday) and Gatton
(monthly on a Tuesday).