



**RAILS**

Refugee and Immigration  
Legal Service

**2022-23**

Annual Report

Refugee and Immigration Legal Service

# Welcome

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Service (RAILS) is a Community Legal Centre (CLC) founded in 1980. For over 40 years, RAILS has provided free legal assistance and education in immigration and refugee law. RAILS is the only specialist CLC in Queensland for this area of law and provides services throughout the State.

RAILS works with people who have experienced family violence; people who have applied or need to apply for refugee visas in Australia after fleeing violence in their home countries; and with refugees in Australia hoping to reunite with their closest family members, often displaced and fleeing situations of danger, in Australia.

RAILS is a member of Community Legal Centres Australia and is registered as a Charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for Profit Commission.

RAILS acknowledges the Traditional Owners 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 respect to them and to Elders, past, present and emerging.



**RAILS**

Refugee and Immigration  
Legal Service

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# Message from the President

Abdul Jarrah, President

In this our 43rd year, I am grateful to be associated with RAILS' team of extraordinarily talented and dedicated people. Thanks are owed to the leadership, staff and volunteers at RAILS for your commitment and hard work on behalf of our clients. I also thank our partners and the law firms that provided pro bono assistance, for the quality services you provided us this year. We could not achieve our mission without your valued support. My thanks also go to the Management Committee members who give of their valuable time to guide the overall direction of RAILS and, in many instances, assist with many aspects of the work.

Last November, we welcomed Lorraine Hill to the Management Committee. Lorraine is a practising solicitor with an extensive background and deep understanding of refugee and administrative law. She has worked as a representative for asylum seekers in Australia and offshore; and has undertaken decision making roles with the Department of Immigration and Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Also last November, our past President Matt Black stepped down from that role but, luckily for the Management Committee, remained as a member. Matt has served, and continues to serve RAILS, both in his capacity as a Barrister and on the Management Committee. He left very large shoes for me that I continue to try fill. My effort is made so much easier by the constant support I get from our Executive Director and Principal Solicitor Kylie McGrath, who works tirelessly every day. Your relentless pursuit of excellence is truly inspiring.

Throughout the year, RAILS continued to progress through our work in response to the Afghan crisis, an area of critical need during this financial period. We finalised this program of work in December 2022. A couple of months later, we rapidly scaled up our work to assist boat arriving refugees in converting their temporary visas to permanent ones in response to changes on the law in February 2023.

Towards the end of 2022, demand for assistance from plane arriving refugees started to grow, reaching an extremely high level through the following months. RAILS worked hard to meet this community legal need. We owe thanks to Senior Supervising Solicitor Susan Hogarth for all the ways in which she utilised staff and volunteers to seek to meet this pressing need.

This year, the Management Committee created a second sub-committee: the Organisational Sub-Committee, focused on organisational and human resources matters. This sub-committee operated alongside the already existing Finance sub-committee, which focused on assisting our Treasurer in ensuring the smooth running of our financial affairs. These sub-committees have enabled us to better progress the organisation's governance work and understand and support the RAILS team.

The most significant piece of work the two sub-committees undertook this year was to assist RAILS with the decision to move premises and the implementation of this decision. This item had been on the Management Committee's agenda for some time and after consultation with the staff team, the Management Committee decided that the time was right for us to move premises. I look forward to the clients and staff of RAILS experiencing a more accessible, welcoming and functional service location in the coming year.

This coming year, the Management Committee plans to focus on lifting the profile of the work we do as well as explore additional funding opportunities. I look forward to another year working with you and to celebrating our successes.

## **OUR VISION**

Fair and humane justice system for the most vulnerable

## **OUR MISSION**

Empower the most vulnerable refugees, asylum seekers and migrants through legal assistance, education and advocacy

## **OUR VALUES**

Social Justice  
Expertise  
Client-centred  
Ethical practice  
Inclusive

# At a glance

## In the financial year 2022-23 RAILS...



**Represented 806** clients  
**Finalised 332** of these matters

Provided **legal advice** on **2,622** occasions  
Completed **1,413 pieces of discrete legal work**  
for clients who we did not represent



**Referred** people to appropriate support and legal  
services on **789** occasions

Worked across **8 outreach locations**  
throughout Queensland



Provided **89 education sessions** to over **2,500 attendees**  
Developed **14 legal education resources**

## This was only possible thanks to our team...

**45**  
staff  
members



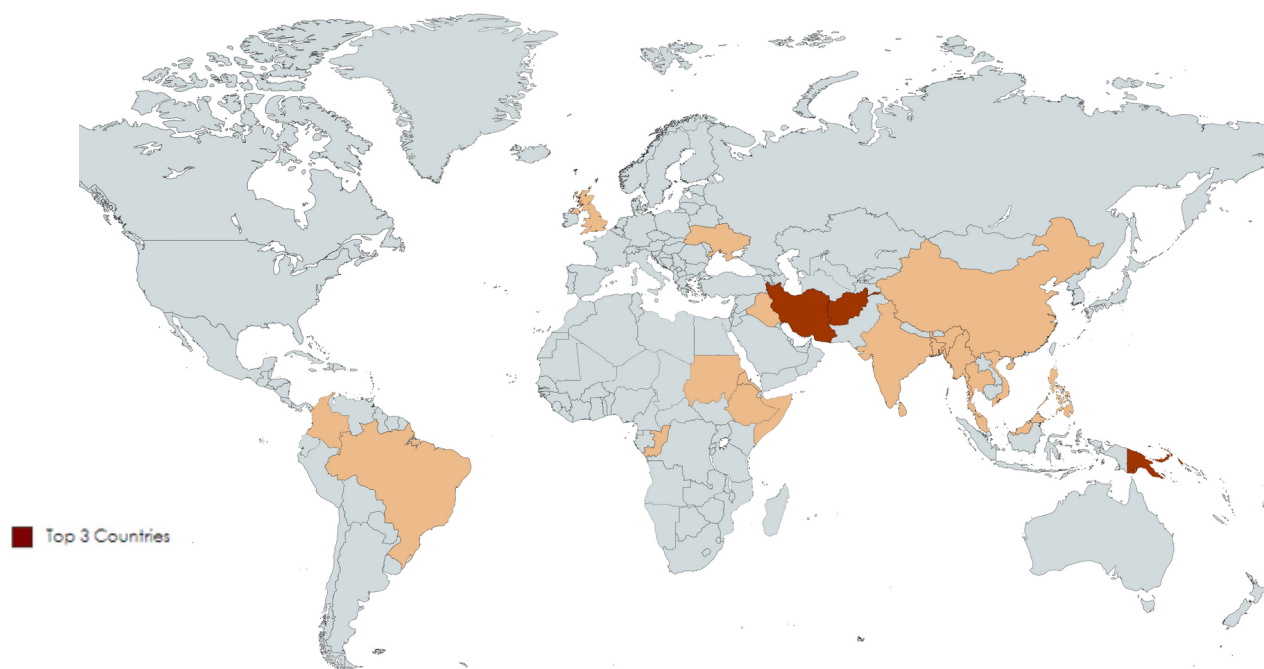
**120**  
volunteers

# Who were our clients?

**In 2022-23, we helped 2,312 people.**

Our clients are **diverse**: they came from **107 different countries** and spoke **99 languages**.

2022-23 RAILS' Clients Top 25 countries of origin:



- |                     |                                 |                |                 |              |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Afghanistan      | 6. Sri Lanka                    | 11. India      | 16. Philippines | 21. Fiji     |
| 2. Iran             | 7. Democratic Republic of Congo | 12. Pakistan   | 17. Somalia     | 22. Malaysia |
| 3. Papua New Guinea | 8. Ethiopia                     | 13. Bangladesh | 18. Vietnam     | 23. Ukraine  |
| 4. Iraq             | 9. Eritrea                      | 14. Colombia   | 19. Sudan       | 24. Brazil   |
| 5. Myanmar          | 10. Syria                       | 15. China      | 20. England     | 25. Thailand |

**Our clients came from:** Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Australia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, England, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), France, Germany, Guinea, Hong Kong, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea, Republic of (South), Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Moldova, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Northern Ireland, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Scotland, Serbia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Taiwan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Vietnam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Our clients also experience **multiple layers of disadvantage**:

**Almost 90%** of our clients **did not speak English** as a first language

We used **interpreters** to provide **55%** of our services

**75%** of our clients were **financially disadvantaged**

**Almost 20%** of our services were provided to clients who had **no income** whatsoever

**742** of our clients disclosed that they had **experienced family violence**

**438** of our clients were **homeless or at risk of homelessness**

**302** of our clients had **a disability**

# Executive Director's Report

Kylie McGrath, Executive Director and Principal Solicitor

2022-23 has been another enormous year for those seeking safety from violent regimes and relationships and so, another enormous year for RAILS. This year, RAILS has again demonstrated its resilience as an organisation and our deep commitment to meeting the immigration legal needs of those seeking safety.

## **Response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan**

This year marked the conclusion of our crisis response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, on 15 January 2023, and the conclusion of our grave risk clinic and crisis-related work with boat arriving refugees and asylum seekers on 30 June 2023 (or shortly thereafter).

Overall, we were able to provide substantive legal assistance to 395 members of the Afghan community in Queensland. We have:

- lodged permanent visa applications for all those who were air-lifted on emergency flights from Kabul,
- lodged visa applications for the parents of all minors air lifted without their parents,
- assisted non-evacuated Afghans in relation to their immediate family members,
- lodged requests for bar lifts for all Afghans in Queensland yet to secure protection, and
- prepared partner visa applications for all Afghan nationals on temporary refugee visa.

While we remain keenly aware of all those who are yet to reach durable safety from Afghanistan, we are extremely proud to report that all evacuees in Queensland who we represented in their applications for humanitarian visas have had those visas granted and that two courageous female judges from Afghanistan represented by RAILS have been brought to safety in Australia and that the parents and siblings of one child evacuated without their parents have now been able to join them in Australia.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to, and admiration for, Joanna Cull for leading and coordinating this large scale, complex, new and often shifting work from December 2021 until the conclusion of our crisis response on 15 January 2023. I would also like to sincerely thank Stacey Parker for her excellent work in designing and coordinating the grave risk clinic and, from 15 January 2023, for her role as Grave Risk Coordinator, leading that clinic as well as our continuing work with minors and judges.

## **The conversion of temporary refugee visas to permanent refugee visas**

Less than one month after the end of our crisis response to Afghanistan, another momentous shift in immigration legal need was upon us. The government announced that boat arriving refugees with temporary refugee visas would, for the first time since their arrival in

Australia over a decade previously, be eligible for permanent visas. This long-awaited, positive would impact approximately 2200 refugees here in Queensland.

By 7pm the day after the announcement, RAILS had key messages for clients and stakeholders on our website to help people understand what the changes meant, who the changes applied to and how RAILS could help. Within the following days and weeks, we had held 9 trauma-informed information sessions, attended by 1221 people across 4 locations in Queensland in key languages. Within one month, we had 10 staff members working directly with clients impacted by the announcement.

By June 2023, we had applied for permanent visas for 92 clients and provided start to finish representation for a further 41 clients. This huge change also meant that our pro bono Refugee Visa Expiry Clinic was able to conclude its work. This Clinic, which commenced in March 2015, lodged 695 applications on behalf of recognised refugees whose temporary refugee visas were due to expire. This is an incredible achievement and we are deeply thankful to all of the pro bono firms and volunteers, as well as the Queensland and Commonwealth Government who made this possible.

I would like to sincerely thank Bernie Carrick for his leadership of our work with boat arriving refugees and asylum seekers. This is both a deeply harrowing area of work as well as a highly technical area of law. The depth of your care and support for your team and our clients, your technical expertise and your leadership, planning and implementation of our conversion work is much appreciated.

## **Growing demand in relation to plane arriving asylum seekers**

Demand in this area started to build in August 2022 and escalated throughout the year. With the international border re-opening, significant increases in the number of onshore refugee visas being lodged and increased processing of these matters by the Department, Tribunal and Minister, our resources have been stretched to breaking point to meet this critical area of need. This is particularly due to the effective withdrawal of IAAAS funding in 2018, which had previously funded our work in this area.

My deep thanks to Susan Hogarth for leading this area of work. Susan has worked incredibly well and hard to support her team, triage these matters and to meet this critical area of need. She has transitioned our pro bono Evening Advice Sessions toward this work, commenced an early career lawyers pro bono Protection Visa Clinic and brought on board highly skilled and experienced volunteers. However, there is only so far that resources can stretch though, and we anxiously await further funding announcements in this area.



# Executive Director's Report

Kylie McGrath, Executive Director and Principal Solicitor

## **Family violence**

There has continued to be high demand within our family violence practice this year. Our clients need to know what impact leaving a violent relationship may have on their visa status so they can make an informed choice about this incredibly important decision.

If they do choose to leave, they need expert legal representation to navigate the complex process of proving that they have experienced family violence in order to continue with their partner visa applications.

This year, a short term grant of Vulnerable Women's funding made a huge difference to our ability to offer start to finish representation to women in these circumstances though, sadly, this allocation of funding ended in November 2022. This year, the Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Family Violence Pilot has also allowed us to work collaboratively with Women's Legal Service Queensland to meet the migration and family law needs of clients.

Our life changing refugee family reunion work and community led education work has also continued throughout the year. Thank you to Noel Reeves and Robert Lachowicz for leading work in these areas.

## **A new home for RAILS**

This year has also been momentous because, after over 20 years in our current premises, we have decided that is time for RAILS to have a new home. There are many reasons for this including that we just don't have enough space and desks for our team in our current space, that our office is not accessible for those with mobility issues, safety issues and because our current space is not affirming for staff or clients. We look forward to welcoming clients into our new home in November 2023.

## **Our staff**

Thank you to all of our staff. This work is deeply enriching and impactful but demands so much from us. On behalf of the organisation and all our clients, thank you for everything that you have given to support our clients to secure safety.

Thank you also for your resilience as we navigated significant funding uncertainty with the conclusion of both our vulnerable women's funding and our Afghan crisis response. During this period of uncertainty, we were very sad to have to significantly contract our team and say goodbye to 7 valued staff members.

Separate to this, we also said goodbye to two highly valued, long-standing RAILS lawyers this year. In April 2023, Bunu Gautum left our

team. Bunu first started work with RAILS as a lawyer in 2008 and worked with RAILS for many of the years since then. Bunu has an in-depth knowledge of immigration law and practice and a deep commitment to her clients. Bunu was the first RAILS lawyer to work within the Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Family Violence Pilot, a collaborative partnership with Women's Legal Service Queensland. She brought to that role her considerable expertise, both in RAILS' core areas of work and in relation to skilled and student visa options, as well as in working with culturally diverse women who have experienced family violence. Bunu is an exceptional lawyer and a great support to her clients and colleagues and is greatly missed.

Tim Madigan also left our team this year to return to practice in native title. Tim worked with RAILS as a lawyer for eight years. Tim is an exceptional legal mind and was highly valued in the team for his legal analysis and research as well as his ability to remain cool, calm and collected while carrying a significant caseload. Tim played a significant role in crafting the legal argument that led to the recognition of the special status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in our legal system, with a view to providing protection from immigration detention and deportation.

RAILS would like to thank both Bunu and Tim for their invaluable contribution to RAILS over many years.

## **Our volunteers and supporters**

I would like to thank all of our pro bono, administrative, legal, EAS and law student volunteers. We simply could not do what we do without you.

Finally, I would like to convey my sincere thanks to the Management Committee. I would like to particularly thank: our President Abdul Jarrah, for his vision and tenacity in relation to the new premises; our Treasurer Kathryn McKeon for her clear strategic focus, her operational support and for going above and beyond to support our staff and organisation; and our Secretary Nitra Kidson KC for her depth of knowledge of our organisation. I would also like to especially thank all those Committee members who have provided such meaningful guidance and worked so hard through our sub-committees to progress financial and organisational priorities.

Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, pro bono partners, funders and donors. The work that RAILS does builds safety and hope and reunites families and we could not do it without you.

# National Legal Assistance Partnership

RAILS' most significant source of funding is the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP), funded by the Commonwealth and State Governments. In the 2022/2023 financial year, we exceeded our required NLAP deliverables by 62%. This reflects the overwhelming demand that has been experienced by our service in this period.

NLAP provides much needed core funding for RAILS across several program areas. RAILS receives core funding for generalist immigration advice and representation, visa cancellation and our now discontinued TPV/SHEV expiry clinic. NLAP also funds RAILS' Evening Advice Sessions (EAS). For the first six months of the financial year, RAILS also received NLAP funding for vulnerable women.

## Plane arriving asylum seekers

As in previous years, our generalist NLAP funding has allowed RAILS to provide immigration advice and assistance to plane- arriving asylum seekers, as well as to those who have experienced family violence. This work can be life changing. Australia's migration system is complex, and our clients face multiple layers of disadvantage. Having access to an experienced lawyer who can explain to them how they can find and remain in safety is of utmost importance.

RAILS is committed to providing legal assistance to people seeking asylum by providing initial advice. We offer further assistance to those who are financially disadvantaged and whose matter has reasonable prospects of success, including representing a number of people in immigration detention.

During the 2022-23 financial year, it was extremely difficult for our service to meet this demand, as the number of meritorious referrals to our service increase significantly.

This was the result of a growing number of people applying for asylum and increased processing of visas by the Department of Home Affairs and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). We have represented a number of people in detention in the last financial year applying for protection.

At the time of writing, a joint announcement has been made by the Department of Home Affairs and the Attorney General's Department to commit funding for legal services for people applying for protection. We look forward to these changes and the positive impacts that they may bring to people seeking to live in safety.

## Visa Cancellation Practice

Our cancellation practice remains small but vital. This practice assists those holding (or who have held) refugee and humanitarian visas that have been cancelled or may be cancelled due to identity, integrity or consistency matters. Through the practice, RAILS also assists victim-survivors of family violence who have had their partner visas cancelled. RAILS assists clients to respond to concerns raised by the Department and if necessary, represents the client in reviews at the AAT about the cancellation of their visas.

This work has a profound impact on clients' lives, as the cancellation of their visa leaves them in a precarious position, uncertain for their future in Australia, the country where they have built their lives. We have met demand in referrals for this service.

## TPVISHEV Expiry Clinic

Our Refugee Visa Expiry Clinic ran from July to February, when legal changes made this work no longer necessary. The clinic assisted refugees on expiring temporary visas to apply for a further refugee visa. The clinic operated weekly with pro bono support from firms. See the Unrepresented Asylum Seekers section of this report.

## Total NLAP services provided in 2022 - 2023

<b>Represented</b> <b>338</b> clients	<b>Finalised</b> <b>160</b> representation matters	<b>Provided</b> <b>1345</b> legal advices	<b>Completed</b> <b>561</b> pieces of discrete legal work	<b>Provided</b> <b>717</b> referrals	<b>Provided</b> <b>892</b> information services
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### Family Violence, Onshore Protection and Family Reunion

Provided <b>729</b> legal advices	Completed <b>230</b> pieces of discrete legal work	Represented <b>298</b> clients	Finalised <b>100</b> representation matters
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### Evening Advice Sessions

Provided <b>195</b> legal advices
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### State funded response to Afghan crisis

Provided <b>171</b> legal advices	Completed <b>120</b> pieces of discrete legal work	Represented <b>35</b> clients	Finalised <b>32</b> representation matters
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### Vulnerable Women

Provided <b>87</b> legal advices	Completed <b>18</b> pieces of discrete legal work	Represented <b>28</b> clients	Finalised <b>18</b> representation matters
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### Refugee Visa Expiry Clinics

Provided <b>109</b> legal advices	Completed <b>173</b> pieces of discrete legal work
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### Cancellations Practice

Provided <b>58</b> legal advices	Completed <b>16</b> pieces of discrete legal work	Represented <b>22</b> clients	Finalised <b>10</b> representation matters
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# National Legal Assistance Partnership

## Evening Advice Sessions

In previous years, we have utilised our Evening Advice Sessions to assist financially disadvantaged Queenslanders in a broad range of immigration matters such as onshore visa options, carer's visas, citizenship or meeting immigration deadlines. The dramatic increase in demand for assistance from plane arriving asylum seekers has compelled us to review and restrict the intake guidelines for our Evening Advice Sessions, which now assist, primarily people applying for asylum. EAS is staffed by volunteer advisors, who provide an invaluable contribution towards assisting RAILS with these compelling matters.

## Family Violence Practice

NLAP funds also support our critical family violence practice (see the family violence section of this report).

## Case study – Survivor of Domestic Violence granted a Protection Visa

Mary\* is a woman from Papua New Guinea (PNG), who arrived in Australia with her two children. While living in PNG, Mary and her children experienced protracted and severe domestic violence at the hands of Mary's husband and the father of her children. The violence Mary experienced included physical, sexual, financial and psychological abuse. Mary felt helpless. Her husband was a wealthy and powerful local man and had paid her bride price. Consequently, she was seen as his property.

Mary was unable to seek the protection of state authorities as the violence experienced was viewed as a private matter.

Mary hoped the move to Australia could provide relief from violence, although she relied on her husband for financial support and was required to return to PNG intermittently with the children. After an escalation of violence on her last return trip, Mary returned to Australia and cut ties with her husband, subsequently becoming homeless. Mary sought legal assistance by contacting RAILS. RAILS provided Mary with legal advice, assisted her to lodge an application for a Protection Visa, prepared a detailed Statutory Declaration and gathered evidence to prove her fear of harm was credible. When Mary's Protection Visa application was refused, RAILS assisted her to obtain work rights, which allowed her to lift herself out of poverty and provide for herself and her children without returning to her abuser.

RAILS assisted Mary to lodge an application for review at the AAT. RAILS advocated that Mary met the Protection Visa criteria, provided a detailed Statutory Declaration, legal submissions and represented her at her hearing. RAILS' experience in representing clients who have fled domestic violence and key knowledge of how this claim fits within the Protection visa legal criteria ensured that Mary was provided with comprehensive and expert legal representation. After a long and uncertain waiting period of 7 years, Mary and her children received grants of Permanent Protection Visas and were able to safely remain in Australia as refugees.

*\* Details have been changed to protect the client's privacy*

## NLAP Client Survey Results

In May 2023, RAILS surveyed clients assisted within the NLAP program. The below shows the highlights of the survey results and comments provided by surveyed clients.

93%

of clients said that RAILS staff helped them to understand how to deal with their legal problem and provided them with options

94%

of clients said that they felt confident in the ability of RAILS staff to assist them

93%

of clients said that they would recommend RAILS to other people

96%

of clients said that RAILS staff listened to their legal problem in a friendly and respectful manner

"The lawyers were very helpful and were able to assist at the last minute."

"RAILS was very supportive throughout my experience. RAILS is still fighting for me".

"The lawyer went above and beyond to help and I was extremely happy with the service."

"Thank you to [RAILS staff member] for interpreting for me, listening to me and assisting me."

# Family Violence

One-third of migrant and refugee women in Australia have experienced family violence. Of those women, 91% experienced controlling behaviors and 42% experienced physical or sexual violence (Report: Migrant and refugee women in Australia: The safety and security study, Harmony Alliance and Monash University, 2021, pg. 9). As the specialist refugee and immigration legal service in Queensland, working with migrant and refugee victim-survivors of family violence is a core part of our work.

It has been acknowledged by the Minister of Home Affairs, Clare O'Neil that Australia's Migration system is complex (Media Release: The Hon Clare O'Neil, 22 February 2023). For people, mostly women, who are dealing with the impact of experiencing family violence, navigating the immigration legal system to understand their options is almost impossible without legal assistance. RAILS specialises in this complex area of law.

RAILS provides services to women who are fleeing family violence in their home countries about staying in Australia, so they do not have to return to harm. RAILS also provides services to people, mostly women, who have experienced family violence after arriving in Australia.

## **Assistance to women who have experienced family violence in Australia**

RAILS provides discrete advice to people, mostly women, who have experienced family violence about the impact it may have on their visa status. We also provide ongoing representation to those who have experienced family violence after applying for a partner visa and we assist them to meet the evidentiary requirements to be granted permanent residency after separating from their abusive partners.

In our previous annual report, we acknowledged an increase in funding for this critical work because of RAILS's inclusion in the allocation of funding for vulnerable women's from NLAP and because of the establishment of the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot in collaboration with Women's Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ) (the Pilot). This additional funding significantly increased RAILS capacity to assist survivors of family violence.

Women on temporary visas fleeing family violence often have legal needs relating to different areas of the law. The overlapping legal issues, added to the cultural, linguistical and systems knowledge barriers they face, puts them in a highly complex situation and in need of expert legal assistance. Through the Pilot, women are provided with immigration legal assistance from a RAILS' lawyer; and legal assistance with domestic and family violence, family separation or divorce, parenting and child safety matters, from a WLSQ lawyer. This program makes essential legal support more accessible to women who are navigating incredibly challenging situations.

As a result of the Pilot and the NLAP vulnerable women funding, all women who met our criteria for ongoing assistance in 2022 were provided with representation. This ensured the fast and efficient processing of their permanent visa application allowing them to move on with their lives safely and securely. It meant that vulnerable women on temporary visas were able to access essential services, such as housing, earlier, by becoming permanent residents sooner.

The complexities of their cases would have been compounded if RAILS had not been able to provide full representation. Unfortunately, RAILS allocation of NLAP's vulnerable women funding ended in 2022. It has since then been exceptionally challenging for our service to meet demand for women escaping family violence.

This year, we welcomed the Australian Government's updated family violence legislative instrument which commenced on 31 March 2023 and aimed to improve accessibility to the family violence provisions by increasing flexibility around the evidence an applicant must provide to make a non-judicially determined claim of family violence. The Government has also committed to expanding the family violence provisions and we look forward to the implementation of this commitment in the next financial year.

## **New initiatives and staff training**

To meet the legal needs of women on temporary visas who have experienced family violence but whose legal matters are not within RAILS' casework guidelines, we established a referral pathway for advice from our pro bono partner MinterEllison. We truly value the immigration expertise and advice that these women can receive outside of our core practice.

RAILS is committed to growing the service's ability to safely and effectively help family violence survivors. During the 2022-23 financial year, RAILS established a clinic based at the Immigrant Women's Support Service (IWSS). Each week, a RAILS female solicitor attends a women-only space at their office to advise women, mostly on temporary visas, who have experienced family violence in Australia. This allows women to receive legal assistance in a space they are already familiar with and where they feel safe, close to their IWSS caseworkers who can provide them with emotional support. RAILS deeply values our relationship with this trusted service delivery partner.

To deepen RAILS' staff knowledge and improve our practices, all of RAILS' staff attended a two-day training provided by Women's Health and Equality Queensland on trauma and family violence informed practice; while IWSS' acting director, Ingrid Mackay, provided all RAILS' staff with training on family violence as it impacts culturally and linguistically diverse women.

# Family Violence

## **Assistance to women fleeing family violence experienced in their home countries**

67% of our legal services to female clients applying for protection visas in Australia were provided to women who had experienced family violence. In most cases, they cannot safely return to their home countries because those States and legal systems do not protect them from the abuse. RAILS is committed to assisting women in this situation apply for protection visas to remain safely in Australia as refugees.

It has now been six years since the withdrawal of IAAS funding for onshore protection visas. Insufficient funding, accompanied by a recent increase in processing both at primary and review decision making levels have stretched our resources to near breaking point as RAILS has tried to continue to meet demand. RAILS has needed to make extremely difficult decisions about the allocation of resources among meritorious cases.

### **Family violence prevention**

RAILS acknowledges the importance of family violence prevention. Our 'Family Peace Building' project, is a deep collaboration with community to support people build the skills to become family peace-builder leaders in their communities.

RAILS partners in this project with community leaders, Multicultural Australia, South Community Hub and Islamic Women's Association of Australia, and builds on many years of RAILS education work with refugee communities around family law and culture.

As part of this project, RAILS provided online family violence prevention and conflict management training for community leaders and in person training for cultural support workers. We also developed and taught an eight-week program for TAFE integrating language learning with peace-building. RAILS' Family Peace Building work is funded by the Department of Home Affairs.

### **Case study – Survivor of Domestic Violence granted a Partner Visa**

Alice\* was referred to the Temporary Visa Holders Experiencing Violence Pilot program (the Pilot) by a support service while she was living in a refuge for women after fleeing family violence.

Alice had applied for a partner visa sponsored by her partner. He became abusive towards her, making her fear for her own safety. As a result of having experienced family violence, she had legal needs in relation to her immigration matter, as well as in relation to domestic violence protection orders and to property. Her ex-partner had engaged in systemic abuse for all of Alice's legal matters.

In relation to her immigration matter, Alice was eligible to become a permanent resident after having ended the relationship with her abusive visa sponsor. However, she needed to provide enough evidence that the relationship was genuine, and that family violence had occurred, within the required timeframes. If she obtained a final domestic violence protection order (DVPO), this would be sufficient evidence of family violence for her migration process. Unfortunately, the process of applying for the DVPO had been negatively impacted by Alice's circumstances not being accurately recorded by police.

Alice received immigration and family law advice about the DVPO through the Pilot program.

Alice's final hearing for her DVPO was to take place before the family violence evidence for the immigration process was due. However, there was no certainty that a decision regarding the final DVPO Alice was seeking would be made before the immigration deadline. We supported her to prepare different pieces of evidence of her experience of family violence, including asking the police for a statement to support her.

RAILS had to request two extensions of time from Immigration for Alice to have time to organise enough pieces of evidence of her experience of family violence. This made the client very anxious and stressed.

Fortunately, the court made the final DVPO in the terms sought by Alice and RAILS provided the final DVPO, a report from the DV service, the police statement and Alice's own detailed statutory declarations as evidence that she had suffered family violence in the relationship. Alice was granted a Permanent Partner visa after 5 days after. This evidence was provided to the Department. This was many months after the pilot first started to assist her.

*\*Details have been changed to protect the client's privacy*

**742**

of our clients disclosed that they had experienced family violence.

We provided

**1264**

legal assistance services to these victim- survivors.

**52%**

did not speak English as first language

**38%**

were homeless or at risk of homelessness

**31%**

had dependent children



# Refugee Family Reunion

## Family Reunion background and RAILS team

When people flee their country to seek asylum, they are often forced to leave their families behind. They hope that they will be able to reunite with their loved ones once they have found refuge, but sadly, this process takes years and puts a great strain on individuals and their families. Many refugees come from countries that are still undergoing continued conflict, so they carry the burden of knowing that their wives, husbands and children are exposed daily to hardship and violence. This long-term separation can have grave consequences for refugees trying to start their lives in a new country, adding to feelings of guilt and isolation and a lack of emotional support and sense of community.

Our Refugee Family Reunion (RFR) program assists refugees in Queensland who want to bring their displaced family members to Australia. The program is funded by the Commonwealth Government and our team is currently formed by lawyers Noel Reeves and Mu Shwe; Migration Agent, Grace Prince and paralegal Kirsten Cribb.

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.

### 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 of our clients apply for the humanitarian program, as they cannot afford other visa options. However, some clients choose to apply for both and increase their prospects of success. Two applications can run at the same time and will not impact each other's development.

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 clients the application forms and a useful checklist to ensure that all steps of their family's visa application process are met.

In some cases, after the initial advice, we work with the client through the whole visa application process. We draft statements, gather evidence, write detailed legal submissions and represent them in front of the Department of Home Affairs. Sadly, our funds are limited, and we can only provide ongoing casework to people with no financial means in cases with most prospects of success.

### Who are our clients?

Our clients are newly arrived refugees living in Queensland, who have been settled within the last 5 years and who want to bring their family to Australia. They come from all over the world, including Afghanistan, Iraq and the Congo. These countries have the highest rates of displaced people on Earth and as such make up the three primary groups of our RFR clients, percentage wise.

Many of our clients have families who have fled armed conflict and are living in neighbouring countries. For example, most of our Afghan clients have family who have escaped following the return of the Taliban, and now reside in neighbouring Iran and Pakistan. Similarly, our Iraqi clients, who primarily belong to minority religious groups, such as Christians and Yazidis, have escaped to neighbouring Turkey or Kurdistan (semi-autonomous province of Northern Iraq).

## Refugee Family Reunion services provided

Represented

**81**

clients

Finalised

**35**

representation  
matters

Provided

**613**

legal advices

Completed

**124**

pieces of discrete  
legal work

Continued

# Refugee Family Reunion

A large part of the RFR client group are women (and often their children) who hold subclass 204 visas. A 204 (woman at risk) visa is usually granted to women referred to the Australian government by the UNHCR who do not have the protection of a male relative and as such, are in danger of exploitation and sexualised violence. Many of the single female clients at the Townsville RFR clinic are Congolese and Somali women who have migrated to Australia from refugee camps in Kenya, Burundi and Tanzania. Similarly, many of the single female clients at the Toowoomba RFR clinic are Afghan or Iraqi women widowed by the ongoing conflict.

## Outreach work

As part of the RFR program, RAILS provides services to clients outside of Brisbane, at various outreach clinics throughout Queensland. This is done in collaboration with our partners at various settlement services that support newly settled refugees after their arrival to Australia.

RAILS provides assistance for refugee clients at the following locations:

- 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 both Multicultural Australia every month, and CatholicCare bimonthly
- Townsville: in the offices of the Townsville Multicultural Support Group, every two months
- Cairns: in the offices of the Centacare FNQ, every two months

## Case Study - Mother reunites with her children

RAILS RFR team represented, Faith\*, a woman from Central Africa\* who had originally been granted refugee status but could not start her new life here, as she was separated from her four children she had been forced to leave behind in Uganda\*.

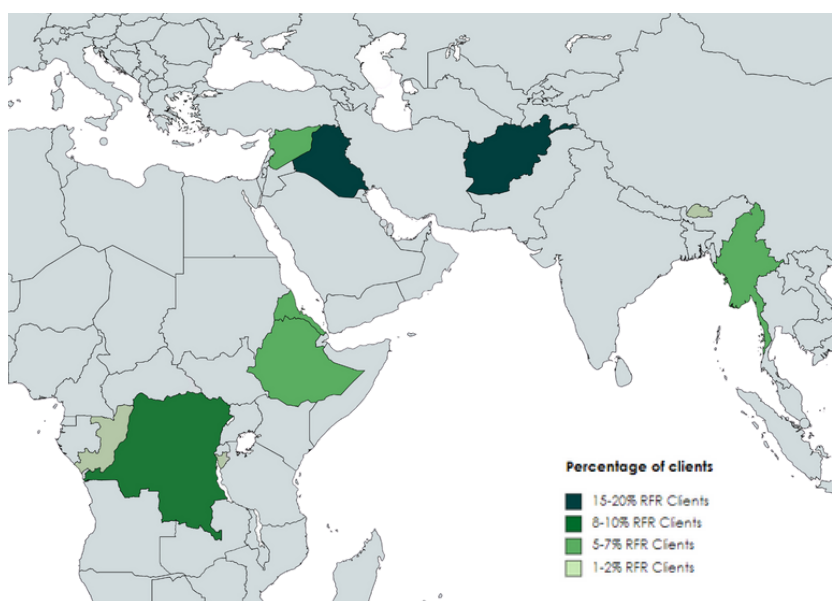
We prepared and submitted five Child Visas for her children, all of whom were under the age of 14 and were living temporarily between different family members in a refugee camp.

Faith was desperate to get them here out of concern that their abusive father would look to take them and flee to another country.

During the visa process, which took many years to finalise, Faith was in constant stress and worry for the children's safety. We provided legal representation to her as she navigated multiple Requests for Information, DNA testing, birth certificate translations, and other evidence to show she was the mother and sole carer for the children.

Finally in August 2023, after nearly two years of processing, the children's visas were granted, and they are now all safely living together in Brisbane.

*\* Details have been changed to protect the client's privacy*



## Top 10 countries of origin of RAILS' Refugee Family Reunion clients

1. Afghanistan
2. Iraq
3. Democratic Republic of Congo
4. Myanmar
5. Syria
6. Ethiopia
7. Eritrea
8. Congo, Republic
9. Bhutan
10. Burundi

# 93%

of the legal services provided required the **use of interpreters**

# Unrepresented Asylum Seeker Program

RAILS' Unrepresented Asylum Seeker (UAS) program assists refugees and asylum seekers who took sea journeys to Australia nine to thirteen years ago or have been born in Australia to parents who made that journey. Because of their mode of entry, they are separated from their loved ones overseas and have spent the last decade in constant uncertainty. They are some of the most marginalised and traumatised people in Queensland but also some of the most resilient and determined.

UAS was staffed this year by Coordinating Lawyer Bernie Carrick, lawyers Valentina Jung (July-December 2022), Clare Carter (from October 2022), Emma Fell (from February 2023), Naazneen Omar (April to June 2023), Legal Support Coordinator Elle Ko and paralegals Erin Allen, Emily Humphreys and Cami Christ (from February 2023). They were assisted by volunteer lawyer, Sophie Farnsworth (from August 2022) and Barry Nilsson Lawyers secondee, Bree Sutherland (February to June 2023).

This year, a significant positive change occurred for many UAS clients. Refugees whose protection claims had been processed in Australia became eligible for permanent residency for the first time. This very welcome change has brought with it opportunities and challenges.

## **Refugee Visa Expiry Clinic**

From 2014 to 2023, refugees who arrived before 1 January 2014 and had their refugee claims processed in Australia were restricted to 3- or 5-year temporary visas. These visas did not permit them to bring their partners or children from overseas and required them to obtain permission from Home Affairs before travelling outside Australia.

The Refugee Visa Expiry Clinic assisted people on 3 or 5 year temporary refugee visas to apply for subsequent visas. From July 2022 to February 2023, 103 individuals and families were assisted to apply for new refugee visas through the Clinic. RAILS is grateful to volunteers from Barry Nilsson Lawyers, Herbert Smith Freehills, King & Wood Mallesons and McCullough Robertson who assisted with this clinic and were joined in December 2022 by volunteers from Johnson Winter Slattery. This clinic was funded by NLAP funds and with State Contingency funds.

## **Conversion of Temporary Refugee Visas to Permanent Visas**

On 14 February 2023, the Migration Regulations were changed to create a process of granting permanent residence to refugees with temporary status. Unprocessed applications for subsequent refugee visas on hand with the Department were converted into applications for permanent Resolution of Status (Subclass 851) visas, while refugees with current or expired temporary refugee visas were invited to apply for permanent Resolution of Status (ROS) visas.

In April 2023, our Refugee Visa Expiry Clinic transformed into a RoS Visa Clinic and for two months volunteers from Herbert Smith Freehills, Johnson Winter Slattery, King & Wood Mallesons and McCullough Robertson assisted with these applications. By late May, with virtually all applications lodged, the Clinic was able to close.

Although the criteria for grant of a ROS visa are straightforward, many clients in this group have long and complex immigration histories and the work of assisting them has been correspondingly complex. It emerged early that the regulation amendments inadvertently left out a group of people. Others have had to withdraw temporary refugee applications in order to lodge new ROS applications, and applications have initially been assessed as valid, only to later be deemed invalid, while previously deemed invalid applications have subsequently been assessed as valid, and therefore need to be withdrawn in order for a ROS to be granted.

From February to June 2023, the UAS team gave discrete ROS application assistance to 92 clients (individuals or family groups) and provided representation to a further 41 clients. This work is funded by the Commonwealth Government.

Partnering with QPASTT, we organised nine trauma-informed information sessions for 521 clients across Woolloongabba, Logan, and Toowoomba/Gatton. The sessions, which were based around 5 dominant language groups, included mental health support, dinner, childcare, and pro bono legal assistance. We placed key messages and fact sheets on our website with translations, and an audio recording for Rohingya clients as well as presenting an information session at the Underwood mosque attended by almost 700 people.

Additionally, we held a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for lawyers and migration agents and conducted three stakeholder meetings to educate peers on the change to the law and outline RAILS' response.

## **Family Reunion for ROS visa holders**

Refugees on ROS visas are eligible to sponsor their immediate family for Partner or Child Visas but they cannot act as proposers in humanitarian applications. For many, the opportunity to be reunited with their loved ones after so long is an immense relief. For others, the price of a decade's separation means family relationships have broken down, children are now too old to be included as dependents or the refugee in Australia is too unwell to work and pay the very expensive application fees associated with Partner Visas.



# Unrepresented Asylum Seeker Program

In July 2022, UAS began assisting Afghans on temporary refugee visas to prepare Partner Visa applications in anticipation of them becoming permanent residents in the future. RAILS lawyer Sadia Azizi worked with volunteer lawyers Sophie Farnsworth and Clyde Constantino as well as volunteers from Barry Nilsson Lawyers on advising and preparing applications for 33 clients. We now look forward in coming months to being able to open this program up to all ROS visa holders with the pro bono support of firms.

### Refugees Transferred from Offshore Detention

People who journeyed to Australia in 2013 and 2014 before being transferred to Nauru or Papua New Guinea for the processing of their refugee claims, now live in Australia on 6 month bridging visas. The Government's position continues to be that this group should obtain resettlement in a country other than Australia. The UAS program, with generously donated funds, assisted a family with children, one of whom has a disability, to ask the Minister to make an exception to this policy and allow them to stay in Australia.

This group of refugees have extremely poor physical and mental health. Their access to Medicare and the ability to work lawfully is contingent on them submitting bridging visa applications every six months.

The Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) Consortium consisting of Communify, Australian Red Cross, RAILS, Queensland Program for Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT), World Wellness Group (WWG), Multicultural Australia and Indooroopilly

Uniting Church continued to provide wrap-around support services to this group, and UAS again provided legal assistance within that model.

Throughout the year, RAILS assisted 79 individuals and 22 family groups who had been subject to offshore processing by monitoring their visa expiry dates and assisting them to lodge fresh applications. This work is funded by donations from generous supporters and by funds from the ASRA Consortium (State Government-funded).

### Asylum Seekers in Australia

Across Australia, there are around 9,500 asylum seekers living in the community on bridging visas or without any visa. In Queensland, virtually all of these people have been found not to engage Australia's protection obligations, yet they remain fearful of returning to their home countries. A large part of the reason for this lies in the separate legal regime that was enacted in 2014 to consider their refugee claims and the withdrawal of funding for legal assistance that accompanied it. The need for a durable solution or process for resolving the protection needs of this group is an ongoing area for law reform.

With ASRA funding the UAS team assisted around 70 asylum seekers to maintain their lawful status through bridging visa applications every 1-3 months throughout the year. Legal advice was also provided to 123 clients. Crucially, this work was supplemented by donations, which allowed UAS to assist 6 families with Ministerial Intervention Requests, seeking permission to be allowed to reapply for a protection visa.

## Unrepresented Asylum Seeker Program services and clients

**74%** of legal services were provided to **financially disadvantaged people**

Pieces of discrete legal work completed: **831**  
 Legal advices provided: **486**  
 Represented clients: **69**

**544** clients were assisted:  
**1,322** received legal services  
**1,297** received non-legal support

**29%** of clients had a **disability**  
**77** clients were **homeless** or at risk of homelessness. **Over half** of them also **had a disability**

# Afghan Response

In August 2021, the Taliban seized power from the Ghani regime in Afghanistan. From this time until June 2023, RAILS responded to community demand of unprecedented scale in the organisation's history.

While we recognise that the crisis is far from over and the Taliban continue their brutally oppressive regime, the funding for our crisis response program for Afghan Queenslanders has now ended. Any ongoing legal needs of the Afghan community will now be addressed through our broader programs.

## **Summary of crisis response in 2021-22**

After 15 August 2021, RAILS received over 800 requests for assistance from members of the Afghan community in Queensland desperate to evacuate their loved ones from danger.

RAILS implemented a rapid response to the initial crisis in the few weeks that followed and later, developed a program of work coordinated by lawyer Joanna Cull to assist Afghan nationals in Queensland. RAILS' extended response to the crisis was possible thanks to very generous and timely funding from the State Government and donations from RAILS' generous supporters, and later on, funding from the Commonwealth Government.

Lead by Coordinating Lawyer, Joanna Cull, RAILS response to the crisis in 2021-22 focused on:

- representing people who had been evacuated from Afghanistan by Australian forces in their applications for permanent residence and representing other groups with distinct legal needs;
- advising and assisting immediate family members of Afghan Queenslanders;
- advising and assisting extended family members of Afghan Queenslanders through a pro bono program;
- coordinating a significant legal education response, both for legal professionals and for the Afghan community; and
- assisting boat arriving Afghans whose visas had been previously refused to re-apply for temporary protection and to prepare visa applications for their immediate family.

## **Afghan response 2022-23**

During the financial year 2022-23, RAILS Afghan Response continued to respond to the legal need in the Afghan community.

## **Legal representation for Afghan evacuees**

Through funding from the Commonwealth Government, RAILS continued to assist Afghan evacuees to apply for permanent residency. Between January 2022 and January 2023, lawyers Jennifer Messieh, Sadia Azizi and Emma Fell and paralegals Ruby Chiswell, Simone Cameron, Jodie Chapman and Kirsten Cribb, led by coordinating lawyer, Joanna Cull, assisted 142 clients (102 of whom were provided with legal representation). As part of this work, RAILS assisted 12 children who had been evacuated from Afghanistan without their parents and 9 people in need of National Disability Insurance Scheme support.

All applicants represented by RAILS were granted permanent residence visas.

RAILS also assisted evacuees who had partner visa applications on foot prior to their arrival in Australia to navigate complex decisions regarding the most beneficial visa pathway to pursue.

## **Legal representation for groups with distinct legal needs**

With support from the International Association of Women Judges and Australian Association of Women Judges, RAILS assisted 11 Afghan female judges with their humanitarian visa applications.

RAILS also represented 10 unaccompanied minors who had been evacuated from Afghanistan to sponsor parents and siblings to come to Australia.

As of 6 October 2023, RAILS has secured humanitarian visas for a few judges and their families who are now safely in Australia. This critical work was funded by the Queensland government and the Ubuntu Foundation.

## **Family reunion assistance for permanent resident**

In 2022/2023 The Grave Risk pro bono program continued to assist Afghan Queenslanders lodge visa applications for their immediate and extended family members at grave risk in Afghanistan.

This work was funded by the Queensland Government and relied heavily on pro bono volunteers from private law firms MinterEllison, Allens, Norton Rose Fulbright, Barry Nilsson and King & Wood Mallesons.

# Afghan Response

Lead by Grave Risk coordinating lawyer Stacey Parker, lawyer Sadia Azizi and paralegals Simone Cameron and Kirsten Cribb, and secondee lawyers one day a week: Famin Ahmed from MinterEllison (from September 2022 until June 2023) and Alana Humphris from Allens (from October 2022 until January 2023) the program:

- finalised 62 humanitarian applications for 37 clients (multiple applications lodged for families living in one household);
- provided advice and in-progress draft applications to 7 clients whose applications became untenable due to a change in Department policy;
- provided initial advice to 12 clients; and
- arranged for a pro bono firm to assist two evacuee clients to sponsor their family on Partner Visas

RAILS is now planning to transition this pro bono program to support our broader Refugee Family Reunion program.

## **Family reunion assistance for Afghan nationals holding temporary refugee visas**

RAILS assisted Afghan nationals who previously held temporary refugee visas and were therefore prevented from sponsoring family members overseas, to take steps towards reuniting with their spouses and children. This work began in 2022 in anticipation of the Government creating a pathway to permanency for refugees on temporary visas.

When that change occurred in February 2023, the program was well-placed to provide clients with a completed Partner Visa application to lodge upon the grant of their permanent visa. Coordinating lawyer, Bernie Carrick and lawyer Sadia Azizi were assisted in this work by volunteer lawyers Sophie Farnsworth and Clyde Cosentino, as well as volunteers from Barry Nilsson Lawyers.

These refugees who have been restricted to temporary visas until this year, have been separated from their partners and children – most of whom are still living in conditions of danger - for a decade or more. It has taken a dramatic toll on their physical and mental health. Now that the funding for this Afghan-specific family reunion program has ended, RAILS is investigating opportunities to collaborate with pro bono partners to meet the critical need for Partner and Child Visa assistance for the broader cohort.

## **Summary of RAILS' Afghan Response**

All the Afghan evacuees in Queensland represented by RAILS have obtained permanent residence. RAILS has assessed the 800 referrals received when the Taliban took Afghanistan. We have offered to assist Afghan Queenslanders with partners, dependent children and orphaned relatives in Afghanistan.

We have prepared applications for the immediate family members of our evacuee clients and for eligible family members at grave risk through our pro bono clinic. We are continuing to represent all unaccompanied minors to apply for their parents to join them here in Australia and female Judges seeking safety in Australia until the end of 2023.

Those who were evacuated from Afghanistan and have obtained permanent residence are still desperate to bring family to Australia. Funding for this specific client cohort has now ended and so RAILS is assisting these clients through our general Refugee Family Reunion Program.

## **Supporter profile – Ubuntu Foundation**

The Ubuntu Foundation is an organisation that funds projects in support of marginalised communities. RAILS is deeply grateful for their generous partnership during 2022-23, which has been life saving for some Afghan families.

The Ubuntu Foundation funded expert legal representation for 10 Afghan minors - some as young as 13 years old - who had been evacuated from Afghanistan without their parents. RAILS assisted the minors to apply for visas for their parents and siblings to reunite with them in Australia.

Family separation has a severe negative impact on the health of young people of refugee background. They face worry about their family's safety and wellbeing, while having to navigate a new country and culture, language and education challenges and as they try to adapt to a new environment without their parents' care, support and protection.

Thanks to the Foundation's donation, these children had legal representation to navigate the challenging and complex process to reunite with their families in safety.

While most of the lodged visa applications are still pending a decision from the Government, some have already been granted. This means that these parents will be brought to safety in Australia and remain in the country permanently, caring for and protecting their sons and daughters as they heal from the traumatic experiences they have survived. Humanitarian visas have also been granted to siblings, who will be able to settle in Australia with their families. It is hard to imagine a donation with a more positive impact on the lives of young people. On behalf of them and their families, we sincerely thank the Ubuntu Foundation for their support.

# Afghan Response

## Case study – Family reunited after more than 2 years

Mina was 12 years old when the Taliban took over Afghanistan in August 2021. Her family attempted to flee Kabul in an evacuation flight with Western forces. They were horrified when, in the violence and chaos of Kabul's airport, Mina was evacuated by Australian forces without the rest of her family, and brought to Australia, where she had no family connections.

Since then, her family have remained in Kabul living under the Taliban's oppressive regime. Her family were in danger in Afghanistan because of their political opinions, their connection to Mina, (who was living in a Western country) and their prior association with the Afghan Government. Her mother and sisters could not access education, healthcare and work rights, simply for being women. They could not leave the house without a male companion.

RAILS assisted Mina in her own application for permanent residency. Being granted permanent residency gave her the right to sponsor her family to migrate to Australia.

RAILS subsequently lodged a split-family application for Mina at the end of 2022. At that point, she had already been separated from them for more than one year. While Mina tried her best to settle in, she continued to struggle with his traumatic experiences in Afghanistan and being separated from her family.

RAILS provided detailed legal submissions and evidence to support the family's application. Almost one year after his application was lodged, Mina's family's visas were granted. Mina will be reunited with her family very soon, and they will be able to heal and settle in Australia in safety as a family.

*\*Details have been changed to protect the client's privacy*

## Afghan Response Program services provided

Represented

**332**

people in their visa applications

11 were **unaccompanied minors**

6 of them were **eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme**

Provided

**512**

legal advices

Completed

**222**

pieces of discrete legal work

Presented

**9** community legal education sessions for **941 people**

**2** CPD sessions for **158 people**

Developed

**10** fact sheets

**1** information video

# Community Legal Education

Our legal education practice aims to be responsive to need, engaging and effective. It is developed collaboratively with communities and practitioners around best practice learning principles endorsed by the community legal education sector.

## Professional Development

Our continuing professional development program aims to build the knowledge and skills of staff, volunteers and the wider profession around our core areas of work and to assist them in maintaining professional registration. Our webinars reach practitioners throughout the country and are recorded for watching on-demand. The program has been taking place for many years and is highly regarded.

Our monthly webinars this year covered judicial review, Temporary Protection Visa transition to permanent residence, humanitarian visas, Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) processes, visa cancellation, family violence, ethics and working with gender and sexually diverse clients in refugee cases. Our webinar on 'Fact-finding and credibility in refugee decisions' with distinguished Canadian academic and author Professor Hilary Evans Cameron gained the interest of the AAT, with 25 of its members attending.

We continued our annual collaboration with St Vincent De Paul's Migration Advice Service with a half-day of in-person seminars at Woodridge.

We thank the private practitioners and RAILS' lawyers who gave their time and expertise to prepare and present the seminars.

## Community Education

RAILS presented legal education sessions to various refugee-background communities both online and in person in Brisbane and Toowoomba. These covered information about visas, family reunion, humanitarian visas, deportation, citizenship, family violence, the legal system, human rights, police, wills and employment law.

We continued to grow our 'Family Peace-Building' project aimed at family violence prevention and early intervention for people from culturally diverse backgrounds. We dialogue with community members, leaders and workers, building skills to support them to become family peace-builder leaders in their communities. The program includes online and in-person workshops, as well as work with community members in TAFE classes, integrating language learning with peace-building.

This long term, strengths-based, co-designed community project emerged out of deep collaboration and work with community leaders and is a partnership with Multicultural Australia, South Community Hub and Islamic Women's Association of Australia. It builds on many years of RAILS' education work with refugee communities around family law and culture.

We also continued our history of innovative legal education with the 'Law Rap' project, where we entertain and engage people in drumming, singing and creating music while dialoguing about law. We composed law messages that emerged from the dialogues and made them into short videos for social media. We held workshops at African Village in Moorooka in a continuation of our long term partnership with Queensland African Communities Council. Three punchy legal message songs and videos were created with community musicians, dancers and film-makers, around criminal justice and legal help. The videos have had over 4,500 views through RAILS and the artists' YouTube and Tik Tok pages. The project was funded with a grant from the Legal Aid Queensland's CLE Collaboration Fund and has been re-funded given its initial success and potential.

## Resources

We developed fact sheets about temporary visa transition to permanent residence, humanitarian travel overseas, new citizenship pathways for NZ citizens and a citizenship information kit.

## Community Legal Education in numbers:

**1,513**  
people attended

**25**  
community education activities, including:

**12** information sessions for **1,303** for TPV/SHEV holders being converted to ROS Visas

**14**  
education resources, including:

**6** factsheets  
**6** videos  
**2** contributions to professional manuals

Peace Building:

**6** workshops for **18** community leaders

**1** Community of Practice

Peace Builder Toolkit and Pledge

**Over 607**  
community workers and legal sector professionals attended

**33**  
professional development sessions

# Treasurer's Report

Kate McKeon, Treasurer

I am pleased to present the Treasurers Report for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

Overall, RAILS recorded a loss of \$11,047 for the financial year compared to a surplus of \$95,373 for the previous corresponding period. Whilst RAILS is not showing a surplus, the result is pleasing compared to budget expectations and the significant pressure on costs from the very high client demand experienced throughout the year.

The total income received of \$3,024,137 was a record high in the history of RAILS. Revenues grew 11% compared to last year, mainly due to the new TPV/SHEV conversion grant as well as reinvigoration of the Community Support Programme.

These additional funding streams contributed to meeting the very high levels in demand to ensure the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community have access to essential legal services, which prior to this injection was underpinned solely by the generosity of donors and supporters.

Grants from Federal and State Governments represent 92% of RAILS revenue. I would like to acknowledge our funding partners for their financial contribution towards essential programs and invaluable client services.

Equally though, we greatly appreciate the support of individual donors and organisations that enable us to be more responsive to changing demands to assist migrants and refugees, outside of the limitations of current funding programs.

Donations of \$94,400 were gratefully deployed to support boat arriving refugees and asylum seekers as well as supplement the response to the Afghan crisis.

The total expense for the year was \$3,035,185 with costs managed very well given such inflationary challenging times. The expense that saw the highest increase was employee expenses. These include wages and salaries, superannuation contributions and accrued leave entitlements for RAILS staff.

Employee expenses for this year was \$2,546,558, an increase of 13% compared to last year, mainly from the recruitment of additional lawyers for direct service delivery as well as increases to the relevant Award and refreshing of leave provisions. Property Expenses were also higher due to the additional office space for the Afghan Reunion programme.

The Balance Sheet is in a strong position to face any future funding challenges and continues to have a strong current ratio 2.1 (2022: 1.9); giving an indication of RAILS ability to pay their debts as they fall due.

Independent auditors, Haywards, have audited the accounts. Once again, RAILS has received a clean and clear audit.

This year saw continued improvements to financial and business practices. In particular, the Finance Sub-Committee developed an improved cost recovery model and a dedicated Operating Reserve to protect RAILS from unexpected events or serious disruption to its work.

The Operating Reserve puts RAILS in a sound position as we move through testing times and provides flexibility and transparency to use "excess reserves" to invest in strategic initiatives if suitable opportunities arise and the Management Committee think it prudent.

The financial position for the coming year is expected to see positive gains in income due to the likely Government funding to support plane arriving asylum seekers and refugees. However, this will be offset by the contraction of non-recurrent funding streams, expenditure increases from the move to new premises, and general inflationary pressures. The ongoing support of individual donors and organisations will continue to be vital.

I express my appreciation to fellow members of the Finance Sub-Committee, the Executive Director and staff, especially the Finance Officer and Operations Manager for their energy, courtesy, diligence and contribution throughout the year.

## Income Sources

Government \$2,535,186 - **83.8%**

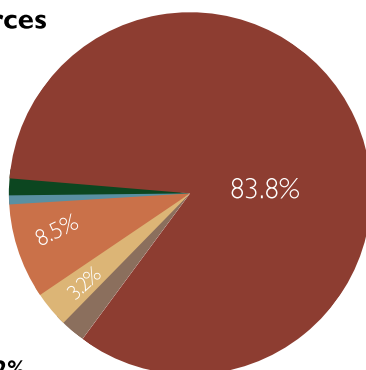
Student clinics \$48,331 - **1.5%**

Other income \$22,553 - **0.8%**

Partnerships \$258,193 - **8.5%**

Donations \$94,445 - **3.2%**

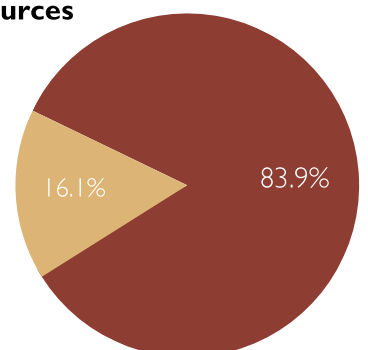
Fees \$65,430 - **2.2%**



## Expense Sources

Employee expenses \$2,546,557- **83.9%**

Operating and program costs (exc. employee expenses) \$488,625 - **16.1%**





# Acknowledgment of Funders

## **National Legal Assistance Partnership – combined State and Commonwealth Government funding**

RAILS receives funding through the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP), encompassed within the National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance. RAILS' NLAP funding agreement commenced on 1 July 2020 and will expire on 30 June 2025.

## **Settlement Engagement and Transition Support – Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs**

RAILS receives funding from the Department of Home Affairs to provide legal assistance to humanitarian visa holders to sponsor their family to reunite with them in Australia, and to provide enhanced Domestic and Family Violence support to this client group.

## **Legal Support to Temporary Protection and Safe Haven Enterprise Visa holders- Commonwealth Government through Australian Red Cross**

To provide critical legal assistance to support holders of a Temporary Protection (subclass 785) visa (TPV) or a Safe Haven Enterprise (subclass 790) visa (SHEV) to navigate a pathway to a permanent visa.

## **Afghanistan Response Funding - Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General**

In response to the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, RAILS received generous funding from the Queensland government to meet the immigration legal needs that arose from this crisis. This funding ended on 30 June 2023.

## **Legal Support to Afghan Evacuees - Commonwealth Government through Australian Red Cross**

To boost the capacity of specialist legal services to support evacuees from Afghanistan on subclass 449 Temporary Humanitarian Stay visas to transition to permanent visas in Australia. This funding ended in January 2023.

## **2022-23 Contingency Funding - Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General**

To support RAILS to expand its pro bono clinic to meet the huge surge in the number of temporary refugee visas expiring in Queensland in the financial year.

## **Legal Support for Women on Temporary Visas Experiencing Family Violence - Womens' Legal Service Queensland (WLSQ)**

As part of a pilot program funded by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services, RAILS renewed their partnership with WLSQ to provide immigration legal assistance to this vulnerable group.

## **Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) program, managed by Communitify and funded by Multicultural Affairs Queensland**

For the provision of funds to employ a Legal Support Coordinator to assist those accessing ASRA hubs and a part-time lawyer to provide discrete legal assistance to these clients.

## **Legal Aid Queensland**

For the provision of funding to provide immigration legal assistance to victim-survivors of family violence and to support RAILS' Community Legal Education program.

## **University of Queensland and Griffith University**

For their collaboration with RAILS to host students for clinic placements. This gives students experience in working in a legal service, as well as learning about professional responsibilities, while they provide valuable assistance to RAILS' staff.

**RAILS also thanks** the trusts and foundations that have supported our work. We thank the Religious of Queensland and Presentations Sisters for their long- term support for our vulnerable clients. We thank the Ubuntu Foundation for their generous support of our work with Afghan minors in Australia separated from their parents. We thank the Zonta Club of Brisbane for their generous support of Afghan women judges fleeing the taliban.

**RAILS thanks** the generous individuals and organisations who have donated to us and supported our efforts to fundraise publicly, in particular the generous anonymous donor who provided a matching donation for our 2022 Christmas fundraising campaign.

# Management Committee Members

## **Abdul Jarrah, President**

Abdul is a senior executive with extensive experience in leading mining and construction businesses, both nationally and internationally, and ensuring strong and accountable governance in organizations. He is currently a Group Executive General Manager with a large mining services provider, responsible for the business's strategic agenda.

Abdul holds a Bachelor of Science (Civil Engineering) from George Washington University and a Master of Science (Civil Engineering) from the University of Maryland. He also holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland and a Graduate Diploma in Applied Law from the University of Queensland.

He is admitted as Attorney-at-Law to the Bars of Maryland and Washington DC in the US. He is also admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland.

Abdul previously served on the Board of the Queensland Resources Council and NSW Minerals Council Executive Committee. He joined RAILS' Management Committee in November 2021 and has been its President since November 2022.

## **Kate McKeon, Treasurer**

Kate has a Bachelor of Business (Accounting) degree and Post Graduate qualifications in Information Technology. She was a qualified Chartered Accountant and has over 25 years of experience covering all aspects of finance and administration, project management and business analysis.

Kate has more recently operated her own consulting company focusing on financial feasibility and business transformation. Her clients have been diverse across multiple sectors including Government, Higher Education, Social Impact Organisations, ASX and Global companies. She joined RAILS' Management Committee as the Treasurer in June 2022.

## **Nitra Kidson KC, Secretary**

Nitra is a barrister in private practice and specialises in public law, particularly administrative law and native title. Nitra was appointed Queen's Counsel in 2019, a testament to her expertise and dedication to the legal profession.

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.

## **Matt Black, Member**

Matt is a barrister in private practice. He has a particular focus on Administrative law, which includes migration and citizenship proceedings. Since 2013, Matt has regularly provided pro bono representation in judicial review proceedings involving protection visas and related issues. In 2015, he was awarded the Australian Lawyers Alliance Civil Justice Award for pro bono work on a significant migration law case.

Matt has been a member of RAILS' Management Committee since November 2018.



# Management Committee Members

## **Hiwa Zandi, Member**

Hiwa is a practicing lawyer specialising in commercial, property and migration matters. Hiwa has worked for the International Organisation for Migration in a consultancy position coordinating the asylum seeker Voluntary Return Program in Manus Island and Nauru in 2014. Later, he joined a Brisbane based boutique firm as a Senior Solicitor for six years. From 2021, Hiwa is the Managing Director of his own boutique law firm, Madina Lawyers and its associated migration firm Migrating to Australia Consultancy.

Hiwa's association with RAILS goes back more than 15 years when he initially worked as a volunteer legal clerk between 2004 and 2006. He has been a member of RAILS' Management Committee since 2016.

## **Kelly Morrow, Member**

Kelly is a solicitor who provides advice on financial rights.

Kelly previously practised in both state and federal personal injuries law before moving into the community legal sector in 2023. Kelly has volunteered with LawRight (formerly QPILCH), VoRTCS, the Indooroopilly Uniting Church Visa Application Program and at RAILS as a law student and volunteer lawyer. She joined RAILS' Management Committee in November 2021.

## **Lorraine Hill, Member**

Lorraine Hill is a practising solicitor with an extensive background in refugee and administrative law. Lorraine has a deep understanding of refugee and immigration law having worked as a representative for asylum seekers in Australia and offshore; and has undertaken decision making roles with the Department of Immigration and Administrative Appeals Tribunal. She has a long-standing association with RAILS as the founding solicitor for RAILS' Unrepresented Asylum Seekers (UAS) project, which continues today.

Lorraine joined RAILS' Management Committee in November 2022.

## **Peter See, Member**

Peter has a wide background across the not-for-profit sector, government and private industry. He was one of the founding members of Tenants Queensland, a convenor of QAILS (now Community Legal Centres Queensland) and the first CLC representative on the then Legal Aid Commission of Queensland.

For the past 14 years he has been working with Indigenous organisations on developing Indigenous land and sea management programs. He currently works on strategy and projects for Country Needs People, an environmental charity that works across Australia.

Peter joined RAILS' Management Committee in 2021.

## **Narelle Sutherland, Member**

Narelle is an experienced grant and policy program manager. She has more than 30 years of experience in community legal centres, domestic violence, and housing support organisations and state government agencies. Narelle currently coordinates grant programs for First Nations land management. She has volunteered on a number of non-government management boards and as a settlement support worker with recently arrived refugees. She has qualifications in Social Work, Arts (Sociology) and policy analysis.

Narelle joined RAILS' Management Committee in November 2020.

# Volunteer Testimonies

## **Marg Le Seur** **Evening Advice Session Advisor**

I have been associated with RAILS since 2006, first as a paid employee and, in more recent years as a volunteer.

The work of RAILS and other Community Legal Centres is crucial to the creation of a fair society – one where access to your rights as a human being is not limited to the rich. Because of the enormous demand for assistance and limited funding, the work of volunteers is crucial to achieving this outcome. When I volunteer at RAILS, I know that I am part of the solution.

As a recent retiree, volunteering also keeps my brain active and my life interesting. One of the great things about volunteering at RAILS is that there are so many ways in which someone who cares about social justice can contribute.

As a lawyer/migration agent, opportunities are available to give initial advice, do research, take statements, write submissions. I feel valued and well-supported as a volunteer. I meet interesting people from diverse cultures with varied legal problems. I often feel inspired by the courageous and resilient clients who we meet. After a volunteer shift at RAILS, I always feel grateful that my many years of experience are not wasted. I feel that I am continuing to make a valuable contribution. The relationship between me as an older retired volunteer and RAILS is very mutually beneficial. I hope it continues for a long time to come.

## **Breanna Sutherland** **Secondee**

During the first half of 2023, I had the pleasure of undertaking a pro bono secondment at RAILS as part of the graduate program at Barry Nilsson Lawyers. Throughout this period, I had the opportunity to assist several asylum seekers and refugees in navigating their visa applications. Given the complex and confusing nature of this process, I deeply appreciated the chance to provide genuine support to clients and assist in easing their mental burden.

In my experience, RAILS clients exhibit remarkable resilience despite facing numerous challenges. Their positive outlook can be directly attributed to the invaluable support and guidance they receive from RAILS. I was consistently impressed by the strength and determination not only displayed by the clients I engaged with but also by the dedicated RAILS staff and volunteers.

Working at RAILS proved to be incredibly fulfilling and I was especially grateful for the kindness and support demonstrated by the team. I consider myself privileged to work at a firm that maintains a strong relationship with RAILS and supports the organisations' incredible work for its clients.

## **Shefali Atwal** **PLT Student and Day Legal Volunteer**

RAILS has provided me with a platform for growth and a firm ground to stand upon for my current career as a solicitor.

My journey with RAILS began as a Practical Legal Training (PLT) student and evolved significantly as a volunteer legal practitioner. Working alongside some of the most esteemed legal minds, dedicated to providing crucial legal assistance to refugees and immigrants, was an enriching experience. It allowed me to develop a broad and diverse range of skills, imperative for my future profession as a solicitor.

RAILS further facilitated connections with other organisations, including St. Vincent de Paul Society, which broadened my perspective and served as great networking opportunities. I was fortunate to have the guidance, mentoring, and wisdom of senior solicitors at every critical juncture. They equipped me with the skills to overcome challenges, provided insight into the intricacies of the immigration process, and helped me hone my legal skills.

The impact RAILS has on individuals and families seeking refuge in a new country, resonated deeply with me. I could tangibly see the profound positive change that legal assistance could bring upon their lives, reinforcing my belief in the power of law to create change. This experience with RAILS has strengthened my resolve to contribute to the field of family law.

Today, I serve as a dedicated solicitor advocating for the rights of First Nation people, a passion that emerged from my work with RAILS. I remain deeply committed to my field, and I attribute a significant portion of my personal and professional growth to RAILS.

RAILS, I am grateful for the opportunities, inspiration, learning, and growth that you have provided has shaped me into the solicitor I am today.

# 2022-23 Staff Members

Kylie McGrath – Executive Director and Principal Solicitor  
Susan Hogarth – Senior Supervising Solicitor  
Noel Reeves – Senior Supervising Solicitor  
Cristina Prieto Salvador – Operations Manager  
Robert Lachowicz – Education Officer

## **Lawyers and Migration agents**

Abby Jiang - Solicitor  
Bernie Carrick - Unrepresented Asylum Seekers Program Coordinating Solicitor  
Bunu Gautam - Solicitor  
Clare Carter - Solicitor  
Emily Darling - Solicitor  
Emma Fell - Solicitor  
Grace Prince – Registered Migration Agent  
Jenifer Messieh - Solicitor  
Joanna Cull - Afghan Response Program Coordinating Solicitor  
Lara Conlan - Solicitor  
Latif Murtazawee – Solicitor  
Mu Shwe - Solicitor  
Naazneen Omar - Solicitor  
Neha Vaidyanathan - Solicitor  
Sadia Azizi - Solicitor  
Stacey Parker – Lawyer, Pro Bono Coordinator and Grave Risk Program Coordinator  
Tim Madigan - Solicitor  
Valentina Jung - Solicitor

## **Support Staff**

Anna Cavanagh - Senior Intake Officer  
Camilo Galeano - Senior Intake Officer  
Cami Christ - UAS Program Paralegal  
Eleanor Printy - Fundraising, Communications and Engagement Coordinator  
Elle Ko - Paralegal  
Emily Doyle - Administration and Intake Officer  
Emily Humphreys - Paralegal  
Erin Allen - Paralegal and Executive Assistant  
Grace O'Shannessy - Administration and Intake Officer  
Hiba Heir Beik - Receptionist  
Jodie Chapman - Afghan Response Program Paralegal  
Kell Andersen - Receptionist  
Kirsten Cribb - Paralegal  
Meg Beedie - Administration and Intake Officer  
Meera Nair - Administration and Intake Officer  
Nellie Gordon - Paralegal  
Precious Bonga - Administration and Intake Officer  
Ruby Chiswell - Afghan Response Program Paralegal  
Sadie Burton – Paralegal  
Sophie Farnsworth - Paralegal  
Simone Cameron - Afghan Response Program Paralegal

# Thank you!

Our committed, skilled and resilient team of pro bono law firms and barristers, volunteer lawyers and migration agents, secondees, day and evening volunteers and clinic and PLT students made an invaluable contribution throughout the year, which meant that more people in Queensland were able to access justice.

As RAILS' Afghan Response team finalised their work this financial year, MinterEllison, Allens, Norton Rose Fulbright, King & Wood Mallesons (KWM) and Barry Nilsson Lawyers have continued to provide essential volunteers for our Grave Risk Program, our work with Afghan female judges and evacuated clients sponsoring immediate family. We thank them for their continued partnership. RAILS is very grateful to MinterEllison for providing Famin Ahmed as a Secondee one day per week (from September 2022 until June 2023) and to Allens for providing Alana Humphris as a Secondee one day per week between (from October 2022 until January 2023) to assist with this work.

We deeply thank Barry Nilsson Lawyers, Herbert Smith Freehills, Johnson Winter Slattery, KWM, McCullough Robertson and the individual volunteers who supported RAILS' Refugee Visa Expiry Clinics. This financial year saw a dramatic increase in the number of these visas that were expiring, and the pro bono contributions of time and expertise from these valued partners were instrumental in being able to meet demand for the service. RAILS is very grateful to Barry Nilsson Lawyers for providing Breanna Sutherland as a Secondee one day per week (from February 2023 until June 2023) to assist with this work.

Additionally, RAILS would like to thank MinterEllison for providing visa pathway advice to clients who have experienced family violence and for their pro bono review of legal agreements throughout this period.

RAILS is grateful for the hard work and dedication of pro bono barristers, lawyers and migration agents including:

Dr William Wild, Matt Black, Benedict Coyne, Gavin Rebetzke, Julian Gormly, Kate Slack, Emma Hoiberg of counsel for providing pro bono opinions and acting as pro bono counsel for clients with judicial review proceedings.

Leigh Rollason of Robertson O'Gorman Solicitors, Caitlin White and Terry Fisher from Fisher Dore Lawyers, Roya Majd from Majd Visa and Anthony Stolar of Stolar Law for providing pro bono immigration legal assistance to our vulnerable clients. We also thank:

## **Continuing Professional Development presenters**

Stafford Shepherd, from Queensland Law Society  
Georgia Regan and Alison Ryan from RACS  
Fadzai Mamvura from Women's Legal Service  
Dr Hilary Evans Cameron  
Reimen Hii, barrister

## **Evening Advice Session volunteers**

### *Volunteer Advisors*

Amelia Sturton  
Anna Gunning-Stevenson  
Bianca Chisari  
Chang Min Park  
Darryl McNeill  
Emma Robinson  
Jennifer Samuta  
Jessi Galbraith  
Joshua Sharman  
Marg Le Sueur  
Narendra Sharma  
Peter Lee  
Prathap Lakshmanam  
Rachael Molnar  
Roya Majd  
Sastha Sanjaya Ariyasinghe  
William Markwell

### *Admin Support Coordinator*

Sadie Burton

## **Day Admin and Legal volunteers**

Allie Guy  
Amy Wells  
Andy Strudwick  
Angelique Christopher  
Asha Varghese  
Ashley Beith  
Baylie Woerner  
Bea Simbag  
Cami Christ  
Catherine McLeodd  
Charlie Cooper  
Charlotte Whitaker  
Chi Nguyen  
Chiara McGinty  
David Tran  
Dianne Rufus  
Echo Hunter Demecs  
Edbert Kang  
Elizabeth Ann Young  
Emily Doyle  
Ethan Green  
Fatema Nazari  
Fay Brewer  
Georgia Haigh

# Thank you!

Glennis Gill  
Grace Beattie  
Hannah Wallace  
Homa Kosha  
Isabelle Delabbio  
Janet Crowden  
Jashwini Sharma  
Jay Mark  
Jessica Smith  
Josia Nann  
Karuna Hooper  
Katherine Clancy  
Kirsten Cribb  
Latif Murtazawee  
Lauren Bellamy  
Lavanniya Ganesh  
Lidya O'Neill  
Lilly Barnett  
Linda McBride  
Luis Cho  
Madison Facey  
Maritsa Adams  
Maurice Mabiiriizi  
Meg Baresic  
Michelle Hua  
Nadia Gutta  
Nazneen Omar  
Nicholas Harper  
Nicole Harvey  
Rebecca Kelly  
Renee Worsfold  
Ruth Delaney  
Samuel Dany  
Simran Gill  
Soojung Jang  
Tasfia Alam  
Tricia Riddle

## **Clinic Students**

*UQ - Semester 2, 2022*

Aleisha Carter  
Cameron Beavis  
Holly Otto  
Isabella Douglas  
Jessica Ogden  
Jessica Truong  
Tony Huang  
Vanessa Miao  
Xinrui Liang

*UQ - Semester 1, 2023*

Anna Whip  
Benjamin Cornwell  
Bianca Orticio  
Divya De Silva  
Georgia Perry  
Joshua Gordon  
Millie Bromwich  
Sarah Baade  
Seann Boo  
Siobhan Lyons

*Griffith - Semester 2, 2022*

Emma Webber  
Michael Beljak  
Mitchell Harding  
Natasha Garthe  
Sanjay Desai  
Uche Iheruome

*Griffith - Semester 1, 2023*

Anu Chacko  
Daniel Narko  
Maannalyn Avila  
Mary Phillip  
Olivia Anderson  
Pritpal Singh

## **Secondees**

Alana Humphris  
Famin Ahmed  
Breanna Sutherland

## **Practical Legal Training students**

Atousa Todiee  
Klarissa Pantillano  
Phoebe Nind  
Shefali Atwal  
Sophie Farnsworth  
Thomas Choo

## **Social work placement volunteers**

Camilo Galeano  
Precious Bonga

## **Legal clinic volunteer advisors**

*MinterEllison*

Ali Harris  
Alice Tanzer-Wilde  
Amanda Martin  
Ana Kolesnikova  
Anamique Linney  
Angela Stevens  
Anjali Nadaradjane  
Arabella Tuck  
Ashleigh Sams  
Benjamin Campbell  
Berta Nagy  
Blaire O'Loughlin-Mills  
Caitlen Penklis  
Caitlin Baird  
Cara Lang  
Chantelle Martin  
Chelsea Gordon  
Chris Nliam  
Chris Nliam  
Chris Rynders  
Claudia Lizzio  
Claudia Sheridan  
Courtney Coyne  
Daniel Shaw  
Danielle le Poidevin  
Ella Simon  
Elle Belekas  
Emma Bastian  
Eva Squire  
Gabby Brady

# Thank you!

Gabrielle Foster  
Georgia Taylor  
Hannah Stilin  
Harriet Lomas  
Hazal Gacka  
Helen Hamberger  
Isabella Impiazzi  
Isobel Carmody  
Ivan Li  
Ivan Lu  
Jarryd Cox  
Jehannah May  
Jessica Pham  
Jillian McAuliffe  
Joel Reid  
Jordan Phillips  
Josephine Vidler  
Julia Sperac  
Karla Nader  
Kate Dowse  
Kate Thorogood  
Katherine Breer  
Katherine Scott  
Katie Simone  
Kimberley Lam-Wong  
Laura Berry  
Laura-Rose Lynch  
Leyla Dixon  
Liz von Muenster  
Lizzie White  
Madeline Johns  
Maria Cantrill  
Marley Angus  
Matthew Paterson  
Maxwell Crawford  
Melinda Wilson  
Michelle Knight  
Mikayla Colak  
Naini Rautela  
Natalie Zheng  
Nick Biscoe  
Nikole Rabeling  
Oliver Waddingham  
Olivia Lynch  
Peter Tryfonopoulos  
Renee Shike  
Rhys Kaspar  
Richard Abraham  
Richard Batten  
Sarah McCann  
Scott Thompson  
Simon Batten

Simon Brandis  
Spencer Hayward  
Stella Luo  
Stephie Werner  
Sylva Guo  
Tana Dryden-Strong  
Tegun Middleton  
Tom Pierce  
Tom Roberts  
Victoria Gabriel  
Yibing Mao  
Yii Fen Tan  
Yumi Bhattarai  
Zariyah Ahmed  
Zita Megyeri

*Norton Rose Fullbright*

Charles Smith  
Jacob Cookson  
Mitchell Kennedy  
Seraijah Choi  
Vanja Serbedzija

*McCullough Robertson*

Adria Askin  
Alex Komarowski  
Alice Chester  
Beliz Ozturk  
Deekshita Ardham  
Emma Hambleton  
Gracie Roberts  
Jemima Crockford  
Jemma Keys  
Joshua Dunn  
Kathleen Moy  
Katie Piper  
Lewis Edwards  
Pardeep Kaur  
Rachel Zagorskis  
Sarah Hausler  
Ulani Powell

*Johnson Winter Slattery*

Luca Masinello  
Peter Smith

*Barry Nilsson*

Alice Elliott  
Angelo La Paglia

Beth Royan  
Breanna Sutherland  
Emma Harman  
Flynn Harch  
Hannah Savins  
Jordan Farr  
Lauren McHugh  
Melanie Karibasic  
Michael Geraghty  
Mitchell Lee  
Maddison Ryan  
Milly Murphy  
Mollie O'Brien  
Nicholas Neroni  
Raeesa Lambat  
Sam Hunt  
Stanton Lau

*King & Wood Mallesons*

Camille Etchegaray  
Dusan Stevic  
Ebony Sinnathamby  
Ethan Hydee  
Georgia Sullivan  
Georgia Tucker  
Giulia Marrama  
Hema Berggren  
Jay Ding  
Julius Moller  
Kate Cincotta  
Matthew Forbes  
Ruthvik Rao  
Sacha Kemp

*Herbert Smith Freehills*

Ali French  
Allira Jeffery  
Angelina Vukovic  
Bianca Janovic  
Caitlin Philp  
Edward Kerr  
Elise Anthony  
Elise Stack  
Emily Reyher  
Fergus Geary  
Grace Hicks  
Harriet Baxter  
Henry Meehan  
Holly Vaughan

# Thank you!

Isabella LeMare-Hutton  
James Anstice  
Joel Humphreys  
Kai Alison  
Kishaya Delaney  
Madeleine Pitman  
Maritsa Samios  
Molly McInerney  
Natalie Lesco  
Oliver Caine  
Samara Cassar  
Saskia Gude  
Sean Tran  
Shane Berkery  
Sophie Rolph  
Spandon Das

## *Individual volunteers*

Loretta Stellino  
Georgia May  
Nicky Mitchell  
Jonathan Makepeace  
Hannah Savins  
Harriet Watson



**RAILS**

Refugee and Immigration  
Legal Service

## **Hours of operation and location**

Level 3, 43 Peel Street, South Brisbane, QLD

Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm

(07) 3846 9300

Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday  
between 11am and 5pm

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**[www.rails.org.au](http://www.rails.org.au)**