

1 JULY 2021 - 30 JUNE 2022

ANNUAL REPORT



SHOALCOAST COMMUNITY
LEGAL CENTRE INCORPORATED



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre would like to Acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work. We pay our respects to the Ancestors, Elders past and present, the future generations, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. We Acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People will always hold a spiritual belonging and connection with this country, and remain the Traditional Owners and First Peoples of this land.

MISSION

To provide free, easily accessible and professional legal services that support vulnerable members of our communities when they need it most.

VISION

To live in an inclusive and equitable society that embraces social justice, where professional legal services and support are available to all, regardless of social or economic status.

VALUES

One for all.

We offer respect and support, not judgement or bias. Our professional legal services are genuinely inclusive and available to all. We truly care.

Community to the core.

We are about fostering a more informed, empowered and stronger community where everyone is respected, supported and heard.

Time worth taking.

We provide high levels of professional legal services, delivered with empathy, patience and compassion. We take the time to truly understand our clients and their unique situations, before explaining the best ways forward using plain English.

Big picture focus.

Every client's legal situation is unique. We go further to see the complete picture, so we can offer the right combination of options, information and support. We provide a holistic service and link to other experts when required.

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VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

President	Stephanie Young
Vice President	Jack Miller
Secretary	Meredith McLaine
Treasurer	Emily Hoerlein
Committee Members	Kerry Wright Sue Cutmore (until May 2022) Lorraine Hayward
Staff Representatives	Caryn Carpenter Kathryn Grimshaw (until May 2022)
Principal Solicitor	Justine O'Reilly
Centre Manager	Emma Wood

STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Provide an efficient generalist legal service offering discrete and ongoing legal assistance to disadvantaged members of the local community.
2. Promotion of Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre's services, in line with the Centre's mission and goals.
3. Identify and contribute to law reform issues that promote systemic change to the advantage of Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre's clients.
4. Identify and implement strategies to manage the long term sustainability of the service.
5. Ensure that Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre is a culturally safe place for our staff and all communities we work with.
6. Identify and respond to needs in our service delivery area in relation to Family Law/Family Violence/Domestic Violence.
7. Continue to build and maintain our relationships with the Indigenous community through our centre services.
8. Auspice and run the CLSD (Cooperative Legal Services Delivery Program) for the South Coast.

SHOALCOAST TEAM

ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Emma Wood	Centre Manager
Rebecca Butler	Administration Support Worker
Caryn Carpenter	Community Support Worker
Jasmine Huang	Administration and Events Planner

LEGAL TEAM

Justine O'Reilly	Principal Solicitor
Abby Bartlett	COVID-19 Project Solicitor (until January 2022) Generalist Solicitor (until June 2022)
Brock Budworth	Generalist Solicitor for Southern Shoalhaven (August to September 2021)
Liz Dunlop	Generalist Solicitor for Southern Shoalhaven (until August 2021)
Ruth Ferguson	Generalist Solicitor for Bega Valley (from September 2021)
Kathryn Grimshaw	Generalist Solicitor for Bay and Basin (until May 2022)
Mike Harding	Generalist Solicitor for Bega Valley (March to August 2021)
Katerina Lahodny	Casual Generalist Solicitor
Erin Mulally	Generalist Solicitor for Southern Shoalhaven (from November 2021)
Joanne Pollock	Generalist Solicitor for Eurobodalla
Bradley Rusak	Paralegal (from January 2022)
Ashwyn Sormus	Paralegal (from March 2022)
Louisa Stewart	Generalist Solicitor for Postcode 2541, Worrigee and East Nowra
Francesco Terranova	Generalist Solicitor (from August 2021 to April 2022)
Linda Tucker	Casual Generalist Solicitor
Erica Weatherly	Bushfire Project Solicitor (until January 2022) Generalist Solicitor (until April 2022)
Lachlan White	Paralegal (from August 2021)
Lisa Woodgate	Generalist Solicitor for Queanbeyan/Palerang and Snowy Monaro

PROJECT TEAM

Brock Budworth	Cooperative Legal Services Delivery Program (August 2021 to September 2021)
Liz Dunlop	Cooperative Legal Services Delivery Program (until August 2021)
Erin Mulally	Cooperative Legal Services Delivery Program (from November 2021)

VOLUNTEER TEAM

Priansh Abrol	Social Work Volunteer
Porsha Lake	Social Work Volunteer
Caitlin Mairinger	Legal Intern

COURT SUPPORT PROGRAM

Unfortunately due to COVID restrictions our Volunteer Court Support Program has been on hold since March 2020. We look forward to when we can recommence this great program that assists court users on List Days at Nowra Local Court and Batemans Bay Local Court.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FUNDING

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre received funding from the following sources in 2021/22:

NLAP Generalist Funding - State and Commonwealth Governments through the Community Legal Centre Program Unit (CLC Program Unit) managed by Legal Aid NSW

Bushfire Funding - Legal Aid NSW

COVID-19 Funding - Legal Aid NSW

Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program - Legal Aid NSW

Social Sector Transformation Fund - Department of Communities and Justice

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre acknowledges the ongoing support provided by the New South Wales State and Commonwealth Government.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

And yet another year of outstanding service delivery and continued improvement passes us by! As I sit to write this report, my mind is having a difficult time accepting that another year has actually passed us by. I feel as though this year, whilst so much has happened, has really been a year of catching up, or rather, working out exactly where we are? Having ably dealt with the COVID pandemic for what feels like a long time, at least the latter half of the year has become more focused on recovery and finding a new normal. Many of our services have thankfully returned to normal, many of our staff are enjoying being back in the office and importantly our clients continue to be provided an excellent service. The centre continues to allow flexible work arrangements for staff and will continue to monitor and develop the way we work in response to client need and the wellbeing of our staff.

Shoalcoast continues to reach a high volume of clients and this number has not been adversely impacted by restrictions, from time to time imposed due to COVID-19. This is a very pleasing outcome. Our outreach remains strong across the board, and it is great to see the continued work of the team to increase the visibility of our service and to build strong stakeholder relationships. Whilst funding always continues to ebb and flow in terms of source and amount, it has remained fairly consistent which is always of utility when planning for ongoing service provision.

The Management Committee, in undertaking its governance duties has attempted to increase its focus this year on strategic planning and how best to guide the ongoing operations of the centre as it works to meet the Shoalcoast vision. This will remain a focus moving forward. In undertaking those duties, I have been assisted this year by fellow committee members Jack Miller, Meredith McLaine, Lorraine Hayward, Sue Cutmore, Kerry Wright and Emily Hoerlein. I am very thankful for their work and assistance throughout the year and their willingness to volunteer their time and expertise in this way. We did unfortunately farewell Sue from the committee, and I thank her again for her work.

The Annual Report is as always, an important opportunity to stop and reflect on the people that make an organisation work and work well. To that end I recognise the ongoing leadership, resilience and imagination of our leaders Emma Wood (Centre Manager) and Justine O'Reilly (Principal Solicitor). They continue to provide steady oversight and direction which has meant that Shoalcoast has maintained consistent service delivery across its catchments and adapts well to change and challenges.

Along with our leaders, the work undertaken would not be possible without a team of committed and enthusiastic staff who never fail to exceed expectations. All of our staff including our team of highly effective solicitors, paralegals, volunteers and skillful support staff have ensured that for another year, when many of us may have begun to feel weary, we have been able to rise to the challenge and ensure that a professional legal service has been accessible to as many people as possible. I have no doubt that they will continue to do so into the next year.

I commend this report to them and the amazing outcomes it captures.

Stephanie Young

President



TREASURER'S REPORT

The Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre is here to help people first and foremost. It is our philosophy that the money we receive is merely a tool used to provide help to anyone who needs it. With this in mind, I report that 2021/22 was a successful fiscal year, where we close with a deficit of \$160,677.

Our goal as a not-for-profit is to use all income received to help our community. Some years, we will report a surplus. Others, a deficit. We have no need to keep accumulating surpluses, and this deficit is both normal and healthy.

Below is a summary of our financial position.

Total income	\$1,438,821	Current assets	\$999,781
Less:		Net Property, plant and equipment	\$60,850
Employee expenses	\$1,279,391	Total assets	\$1,060,631
Depreciation	\$17,680	Total current liabilities	\$466,455
Rent	\$66,843	Total non-current liabilities	\$27,901
All other operating expenses	\$235,584	Total liabilities	\$494,356
Deficit	(\$160,677)	Net assets	\$566,275
		Retained earnings	\$566,275

Our financial statements have been audited by Booth Partners, and give a fair and true representation of the activities and position for the financial year ended 30 June 2022. This comprehensive report is available upon request.

I am pleased to report that we are able to pay all our outstanding debts when they are due.

I would like to acknowledge the funding received from both the NSW Government and the Commonwealth. Without them, it wouldn't have been possible for us to operate last year.

I would like to thank the Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre staff, management committee, and the greater Shoalcoast communities for this past year. I would like to thank Emma Wood and Jasmine Huang in particular, whose hard work and integrity have ensured this year of being treasurer was successful.

Emily Hoerlein
Treasurer



PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Although we thought we might be nearing the end of the pandemic, 2021/22 started with much of our catchment going into lockdown. While we at Shoalcoast knew how to work remotely and had all the systems in place, we realised this COVID lockdown was different for our clients. After more than two years of dealing with the pandemic, many people in our catchment are frazzled. Cost of living pressures are increasing. Housing is insecure and the rate of homelessness, or risk of becoming homeless in our five Local Government Areas is at crisis point. At Shoalcoast we have noticed that our clients' problems had become more complex and their mental health was suffering. This made it a challenging year with all the Shoalcoast staff rising to meet the challenges.

In 2021/22 we provided 1,735 legal advices to clients over the phone and face to face, mainly in the areas of family law, wills and estates, injuries compensation, consumer issues, housing, credit and debt, neighborhood disputes, employment, and domestic violence. We provided ongoing assistance to our most disadvantaged clients in a variety of ways such as representing them in mediations to develop parenting plans and/or property settlements, advocating on their behalf to reduce their debts or to enforce their consumer rights, representing them in victims support claims, drafting enduring powers of attorneys and enduring guardianship documents, representing them at NCAT or the Fair Work Commission, and working with the local domestic violence services to ensure they have the right conditions on their Apprehended Domestic Violence Order. With the collapse of Youpla/Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund (ACBF) we also helped clients to register with the liquidator and make complaints to their MPs.

While the lockdowns halted our fortnightly outreaches for a couple of months, we were back providing face to face outreaches in Cooma, Queanbeyan, Eden, Bega, Moruya, Batemans Bay, Ulladulla, Wreck Bay and East Nowra as soon as our partner services opened their doors. This year we also grew our domestic violence duty service to include Nowra and Bega courts, complimenting our existing Milton DV duty court scheme.

We conducted Community Legal Education (CLEs) sessions in a variety of topics to community members and community services. We presented via AVL and face to face in schools, libraries, community halls and pubs.

Our law reform activities included making various submissions to public inquiries. Our submissions were on domestic and family violence, care and protection law and the Family is Culture report, and the lessons learned from the 2019/20 bushfires. We also sent advocacy letters to politicians concerning the collapse of the ACBF as well as supporting many other campaigns and initiatives, such as #SaveSorryBusiness and #Raise the Age.

We continued to auspice the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program and the Shoalhaven Domestic and Family Violence Committee. We joined Shoalhaven City Council's Homelessness Taskforce and helped organise the Community Workshop. Throughout our catchment we attended our local interagencies and community events, and connected with stakeholders to ensure we had the best networks to holistically assist our clients.

When the floods hit parts of the Shoalhaven, we responded to a Legal Aid request and attended Pop-Up Disaster Recovery Centres. We also continued to attend and support bushfire recovery efforts while they lasted.

Our partnerships with Hall & Wilcox and Baker McKenzie remained strong. Because of our Hall & Wilcox relationship, many Aboriginal clients were able to get free wills. Baker McKenzie yet again helped us to assist many more victims of domestic violence than we otherwise could have. We are very grateful to these partners and to Justice Connect and the Bar Association's Pro Bono Assistance.

Throughout the year we continued to make our processes more efficient. We frequently met with Workcloud to organise our move to the Actionstep case management system. This system will enable us to work more effectively and will allow us to go paperless by the end of 2022. With the Marketing Clan, we worked towards the development of a website that is more client-friendly.

This year we have had a lot of staff movement. With more funds we were able to employ people on short term contracts. Eight people joined our team and eight people left, either because their short-term contracts ended or they wanted to try new adventures.

At Shoalcoast we are really lucky to have staff who are all committed to helping disadvantaged clients and who bring great energy, professionalism and resilience. Each person has unique talents that add something positive to the team.

Our Management committee, some of whom are ex-employees, provide us with excellent support and guidance. We are grateful to them for volunteering their time to be on the committee.

While COVID continued to produce challenges for our clients and for our work practices this year, the Shoalcoast team consistently provided professional and empathetic services to our diverse client group. While we do not know what next year holds, we are confident that we will be able to continue our great work.

In closing, I want to say on a personal note, how grateful I am to the Shoalcoast team for all their hard work.

Justine O'Reilly
Principal Solicitor

CENTRE REPORT

JULY 2021

- We said farewell to Lucy Nadj.
- Shoalcoast had two interns for 4 weeks from the University of Wollongong – Lachlan White and Emily Nye.
- We prepared ourselves for another COVID-19 Lockdown and outreaches continued in Eden, Bega, Batemans Bay and Ulladulla.
- Caryn Carpenter celebrated 10 years of service with Shoalcoast.

AUGUST 2021

- In mid-August, stay at home orders were once again in place and the team commenced working remotely again, due to COVID-19.
- We welcomed Francesco Terranova and Jasmine Huang and Brock Budworth to the team.
- We said farewell to Liz Dunlop and Dianne Day and Michael Harding.
- We welcomed Emily Nye and Lachlan White to the team as paralegals.
- The CLSD Action Planning Day was held on 31 August 2021 which saw the creation of the 2 year action plan for the South Coast.

SEPTEMBER 2021

- We welcomed Ruth Ferguson to the team.
- We said farewell to Brock Budworth.
- We continued working remotely and kept in touch via ZOOM.
- The team celebrated R U OK? Day with an R U OK pack.

OCTOBER 2021

- The team happily returned to the office from working remotely in late October.
- We commenced investigating the potential of a case management system to replace CLASS – Actionstep.
- We said farewell to Erica Weatherly and Brock Budworth.
- Justine joined the Shoalhaven City Council's Homelessness Taskforce.
- Erica submitted a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Committee in relation to the bushfires, which highlighted the work completed with the bushfire funding and systemic problems encountered by the affected communities.



NOVEMBER 2021

- We welcomed Erin Mulally to the team.
- We welcomed our first social work student, Priansh Abrol for placement and Bradley Rusak as a legal intern – both from University of Wollongong.
- We commenced returning to some of the outreaches following the stay at home orders.
- We passed our annual Cross Check.

DECEMBER 2021

- We celebrated the challenging year we had with a lovely end of year event – we all enjoyed a dolphin cruise and lunch at the Huskisson Pub.
- We said farewell to Emily Nye.
- As the COVID-19 stay at home orders were lifted, we could finally farewell Dianne Day with a lovely farewell event on 2 December at the Growers in Worrigeer. Dianne started working at Shoalcoast at the very beginning in 1999 and has given 22 amazing years to the Centre. It also was a great day in that many people who had been involved with Shoalcoast CLC in the past 20 years attended.
- We returned to events again – we attended a Youth Event at Sanctuary Point and the Prosperity in the Park/Southern Cross Housing Christmas Party at Parramatta Park in East Nowra and the Shoalhaven Disability Expo.
- The quarterly CLSD meeting was held and we introduced the new CLSD Coordinator – Erin Mulally.

JANUARY 2022

- The office returned in early January after we all had a lovely Christmas break.
- We welcomed Bradley Rusak to the team as a paralegal.
- We welcomed Ashwyn Sormus to the team as a legal intern from the University of Wollongong.

FEBRUARY 2022

- We welcomed Erica Weatherly back to the team
- We returned to outreach in most locations, whilst being COVID safe
- The quarterly CLSD meeting was held

MARCH 2022

- We assisted Legal Aid with Pop-up disaster recovery centres in our area due to the recent flooding.
- We made great progress with our investigations into our new case management system – Actionstep and we look to commence planning and implementation in the coming months.
- We welcomed Ashwyn Sormus to the team as a paralegal.

APRIL 2022

- We said farewell to Erica Weatherly and Francesco Terranova.
- We were advised that our NLAP Generalist state and commonwealth funding would be rolled over and that we were required to apply for our Family Law Family Violence Funding. The funding application was submitted in late April.
- All our outreaches were back and fully operational.
- The Shoalcoast team commenced a 5 week, 2 hour a week training course in Office 365 – this training was funded by Community Industry Group.
- We said farewell to our old faithful photocopier and welcomed a very new, sleek looking machine to the office.
- We submitted the next stage of our Accreditation requirements to CLC Australia.

MAY 2022

- We said farewell to Kathryn Grimshaw.
- We are working towards our GO LIVE date with Actionstep – 29 June.

JUNE 2022

- We ceased entering data into CLASS on 22 June 2022. We still maintained our full level of intake and advice service using manual methods as we waited for our data to be imported into Actionstep.
- The team commenced training in Actionstep, in preparation for the GO LIVE date of 29 June 2022.
- We received funding from DCJ for Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence for \$150,000.
- We held our annual planning day, focusing on our mission, vision and strategic plan and what our deliverables would be for 2022/23.



2540, BERRY, SHOALHAVEN HEADS AND KANGAROO VALLEY

A COVID lockdown at the start of the 2021/22 year, and the subsequent increases in the cost of living, made life more precarious for many of our clients living in the 2540 area. Many people in this area exist on casual work and have insecure tenancies. Public transport is a huge problem. Quite a few small businesses are not recovering from the effects of COVID and are having to lay people off. These issues increase pressure at home which can manifest itself in family violence and family breakdown.

Shoalcoast assisted people to deal with these problems by advising them of their rights and responsibilities and advocating on behalf of these clients to get a desired outcome. This year we advised and assisted people who were unfairly dismissed and/or not receiving their proper entitlements. In the tenancy area, we advocated for many tenants who were being harassed and/or unfairly evicted from their caravan parks or other landlords. We helped residents to deal with their traffic offences and their fines. For women experiencing domestic violence we advocated for them to get the right conditions on their ADVOs and made sure they had the right support services around them. For people who were separating we advised on family law as it relates to parenting and property. For older people we advised on planning ahead and drafted Enduring Powers of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship documents. In March when the Youpla/Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund (ACBF) collapsed we did a pop-up outreach in Jerrinja Aboriginal Community to advise people about what was happening and we drafted personal letters of complaint to the local MP to voice each person's anger and seek redress.

Shoalcoast worked in conjunction with many local community services to deliver positive outcomes. We regularly attended the Bay and Basin Police and Community Services fortnightly meeting to network with other community groups and ensure we were assisting those most in need. We also regularly attended the Shoalhaven Homelessness Interagency to work with other services to address the growing homelessness problem.

Total Legal Services: 410



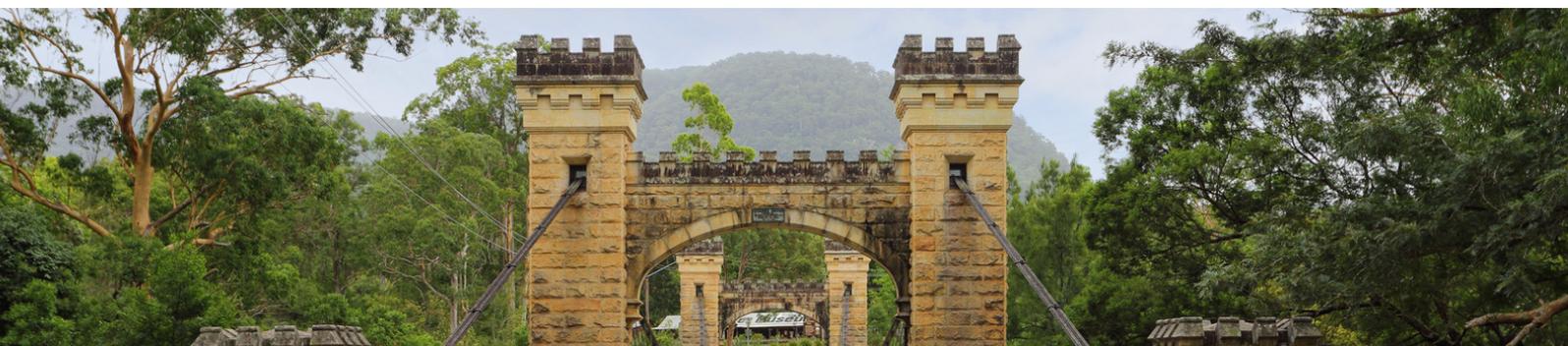
Civil
72%



Family
22%



Criminal
6%



2541, WORRIGEE AND EAST NOWRA

The 2541 plus Worrigeer region has once again had consistent legal needs given the population size and regional location. 2021/22 year has been another challenging time for the people of Nowra with access to justice being limited due to COVID. With the freedom provided by vaccination and opening up of services we have been meeting even more complex needs clients than ever before. Our face to face services in Nowra office have operated all year with the exception of the lockdown between August and October 2021.

OUR MIA MIA ADVICE CLINIC SERVICE/OUTREACH

This area had one regular outreach for this year at Nowra East Public School's Our Mia Mia Wellbeing Hub fortnightly through each school term. The start of 2022 saw a huge expansion to the schools who are members of the Our Mia Mia hub which include the following schools: Nowra East Public, Nowra Public, Shoalhaven High, Sussex Inlet Public, Bomaderry Public, Bomaderry High, Callala Public, Culburra Public, Falls Creek Public, Greenwell Point Public, Lyrebird Preschool and Clipper Rd Childcare.

The outreach was responsible for 12 different member schools and able to accept other community members near those schools. To make it able to operate more consistently in a confidential space more accessible to all member schools we moved the Outreach to be a Clinic out of our 80 Bridge Rd premises in Nowra. This has improved our ability to see more clients in the fortnightly clinics and is able to assist more clients in person. We can now operate throughout the school holidays and staff development days also which increases our availability for clients.

Shoalcoast is still a member of the Governance Committee for Our Mia Mia as a Service Provider Member, where we commit to attending quarterly meetings to oversee the governance and development of this great service that now extends to 12 schools and preschools in the Shoalhaven.

ADVICE AND TASKS FOR CLIENTS AT 80 BRIDGE RD NOWRA

We see many clients from the area in person at the Nowra office for Shoalcoast (80 Bridge Road, Nowra) as required each week. It can be a great easy place to meet with clients who have additional needs or are elderly as we have the conference room to meet comfortably and confidentially and it is near to many support services. Many clients in Nowra area find it helpful to be able to drop in documents or sign paperwork here in person as they lack access to technology or transport.

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

CLE for service providers and stakeholders in the Nowra area has also been a highlight of 2021/22 as we continued to help workers better understand how to make Victims Support applications for victims of violence as the increasingly difficult process had many clients feeling unable to make their own applications. We continue to support workers so they feel confident to support their clients, training the frontline workers has been an effective strategy in helping address unmet legal needs in Nowra. For complex matters we are then able to assist clients and or provide timely advice to address issues they have.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT FOR SHOALHAVEN AREA

Shoalcoast continues to lead and collaborate with key stakeholders in the Shoalhaven area.

Shoalhaven Domestic and Family Violence Committee

Shoalcoast has continued to auspice and run the SDFV Committee in Nowra. Louisa has lead the meetings as Chair for a fourth year and Emma has been Secretary for same terms and previously in other roles for the Committee. This work allowed us to take an active role engaging others in our profession and community partners which also feeds our Community Legal Education and provides a steady stream of referrals for advice and assistance.

The 2021/22 year has seen two successful grants of funding for the committee work including an updated Directory of Shoalhaven DFV services and training, support and other materials to promote the committee's work able to be purchased with these funds. The committee hosted another successful webinar with Heather Douglas in December 2021 for 16 Days of Activism focusing on education around Intimate Partner Violence and the law. We have also produced pens and posters for use by the local services to assist clients with finding the best help when needed.

South Coast Family Law Pathways Network Steering Committee

In 2021/22 Shoalcoast's membership of the SCFLPN Steering Committee allowed us to take part in hosting successful events including:

- Annual Judicial Dinner in May 2022 with guest speaker His Honour, Judge Colin Campbell of the Wollongong Registry of FCFCOA where we engaged with other legal service providers, FDRPs and non-legal services to discuss effective and collaborative approaches to Family Law matters in our region.
- Shoalcoast also was a speaker at the Family Law: Financial Implications of Separation Roadshow in March 2022 hosted by the SCFLPN across three locations with speakers from Financial Counselling organisations, Child Support, Legal Aid, Shoalcoast CLC, Redfern CLCs Financial Abuse Service and Centrelink FISOs.

We look forward to continuing this work into 2022/23 year.

Total Legal Services: 567



Civil
71%



Family
23%



Criminal
7%

WRECK BAY

The Wreck Bay Aboriginal Community is located on 403 hectares at the edge of Booderee National Park in Jervis Bay Territory. There are about 48 houses in the Wreck Bay village which also has a medical centre, an early education learning centre, an administration centre and a cemetery. At the request of the community, Shoalcoast does a fortnightly outreach on Tuesdays. We advise on civil matters such as succession laws, consumer issues and debt matters. We help a lot of the residents get Enduring Powers of Attorneys, Enduring Guardianships and Wills.

This year we assisted many Wreck Bay residents deal with the liquidation of the Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund (ACBF)/Youpla. Non-Aboriginal businessmen started the funeral insurance company in 2010. They branded their funeral products with Aboriginal colours and logos and hired Aboriginal and Islander salespeople to go door-to-door in Aboriginal communities to sign up for these funds. Wreck Bay residents were victims of this sale ploy. Clients recounted details of how ACBF salesmen would come into their homes and eat with them encouraging them to get their friends and families to sign up. Many residents have paid more in premiums over the past 10 years than an average funeral would cost. Because of the collapse of ACBF/Youpla, and because they are unsecured creditors, ACBF/Youpla customers are unlikely to receive anything from the liquidation. Worse still, however, is that these elderly customers are now left without funeral coverage and little time to pay into another funeral insurance scheme. Shoalcoast assisted distressed clients by helping them communicate with the liquidator and by helping them make complaints to their Federal member and the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA). Shoalcoast has also written directly to government advocating for redress for these clients.

Total Legal Services: 20



Civil
100%



Family
0%



Criminal
0%



SOUTHERN SHOALHAVEN

Shoalcoast continued to develop and maintain strong relationships with community organisations and clients in the Southern Shoalhaven area through community legal education, interagency meetings and traditional/digital marketing mechanisms.

Shoalcoast continues to have a regular presence at the Ulladulla and Districts Community Resource Centre (CRC) for outreach appointments, which take place every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month. During the COVID lockdowns, we were able to conduct our appointments by phone to enable people to still had access to legal services during this difficult time. Face to face appointments recommenced at the CRC in December 2021.

Shoalcoast continues to attend Milton Court every 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month to provide legal advice across a number of subject areas, predominately in the area of Family Law and Apprehended Violence Orders. Advice is given to clients either by phone or at Court if they attend in person (with in person advice being affected during the COVID lockdowns). Further assistance has been provided to clients after the initial Court date in areas such as parenting plans, Victims Support applications and liaising with the Police to obtain copies of Apprehended Violence Orders.

We have developed a great relationship with the WDV CAS program, auspiced by the Southern Women's Group. A regular meet up of local solicitors, WDV CAS and the NSW Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers has been taking place in the Shoalhaven LGA, which has been productive for discussing service offerings and improvements for clients experiencing domestic violence.

Total Legal Services: 340



Civil
49%



Family
46%



Criminal
4%



EUROBODALLA

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre has continued to provide telephone advice to clients in the Eurobodalla region over the last 12 months. Shoalcoast returned to face to face appointments in 2022 and provided fortnightly outreach in Moruya at The Family Place and Batemans Bay at Mackillop Family Services.

The Eurobodalla area has seen an increase in people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of a number of factors including the 2019/20 bushfires, COVID restrictions and the increased cost of living that has coincided with a decline in available rental properties. This has led to increased pressure on stakeholders in the area to assist clients to find affordable accommodation, support services and free legal advice and assistance for many vulnerable clients with complex legal and non-legal issues.

Shoalcoast has attended a number of interagency meetings in the area including attending the Eurobodalla Homelessness and Housing Solutions Forum, the Eurobodalla Family Network Meeting and the Eurobodalla Domestic Violence Meeting. The interagency meetings focus on raising awareness and addressing the increase in unmet need in the Eurobodalla area.

In March 2022 the Youpla Group Funeral Fund (formerly Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund) went into liquidation and a number of Aboriginal clients who had been paying into the fund for many years were advised that they would not receive any benefit from the fund when they passed away.

Shoalcoast provided legal advice to these clients and assisted them to make complaints to the Commonwealth Member for Gilmore and the Australian Financial Complaints Authority. Shoalcoast also assisted clients to communicate with the administrator and update their contact details. Shoalcoast continues to contact the affected clients to provide updates regarding the situation.

Shoalcoast has worked with private legal firms and barristers on a pro-bono basis to provide legal advice and assistance to clients in the Eurobodalla region throughout the year. In particular, clients have received pro-bono advice regarding employment law and workers compensation matters, and a barrister's opinion regarding taking a complaint to the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) in relation to a breach of privacy by an NSW Government organisation. We have also assisted many clients to make applications for support under the Victim Support Scheme.

Total Legal Services: 338



Civil
72%



Family
20%



Criminal
9%

QUEANBEYAN/PALERANG AND SNOWY MONARO

During 2021/22 Shoalcoast provided a free legal service throughout the Queanbeyan/Palerang and Snowy Monaro Local Government Areas. During 2021/22 there was a steady demand for legal services in the Queanbeyan/Palerang and Snowy Monaro Local Government Areas.

Throughout the year Shoalcoast assisted clients with family law, minor criminal and civil law problems. Common legal problems faced by clients included AVO's, fines, employment law, traffic regulatory offences, motor vehicle property damage, credit and debt and consumer complaints in relation to goods and services. Clients were provided with legal assistance on family law issues, such as divorce and separation, parenting, property settlement and family violence. Shoalcoast worked closely with local service providers to promote integrated support for more vulnerable clients.

Shoalcoast continued to play an active role engaging with local stakeholders to promote the service throughout the catchment area. Shoalcoast participated in regular online Interagency meetings and developed networks with relevant local service providers. Shoalcoast has continued to experience a steady flow of referrals from local stakeholders.

The COVID-19 pandemic placed some restrictions on expanding service delivery, travel and face to face meetings with clients. During the reporting period Shoalcoast provided a fortnightly outreach advice clinic at the Monaro Community Access Service (MCAS) in Cooma and at The Hive in Queanbeyan. Following a successful trial clinic in early 2021, Shoalcoast now operates a regular monthly outreach advice clinic at the Local Court in Cooma.

Shoalcoast participated in a series of community engagements during Seniors Week and Law Week. We were privileged to be invited to Nimmitabel to undertake a program of talks following a successful grant application by the Nimmitabel Men's Shed Group under the Reducing Social Isolation for Seniors program. Shoalcoast also participated in Planning Ahead community legal education and scam awareness talks in Cooma, Queanbeyan, Bungendore and Braidwood.

Total Legal Services: 112



Civil
70%



Family
24%



Criminal
6%



BEGA VALLEY

Populated by just under 36,000 people the Bega Valley Local Government Area covers 6,040 square kilometres, with 78% of those being either national parks or state forests. The biggest industries are the production of timber, dairy farming and other agriculture but a growth in tourism has been emerging over the past few years.

In addition to weekly telephone advice Shoalcoast offers face to face outreach each alternate week, with appointments available on Tuesdays at Mackillop Family Service, on Wednesdays at the Eden Access Centre and on Thursdays at Bega Women's Resource Centre. Since May 2022 a Shoalcoast solicitor has been available at Bega Local Court to give advice and assistance to victims of domestic violence, enhancing the services of the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Scheme. It is envisaged that Shoalcoast will work with South East Women and Children's Services to deliver efficient and empathetic support to victims providing them with referrals and legal expertise.

Over the course of the year Shoalcoast provided 225 legal advices and a total of 247 legal services with an emphasis on civil disputes and problems and family law. The local courts are serviced by a duty lawyer for criminal matters but otherwise there is extremely limited access in the Bega Valley Shire to free or generally affordable legal representation. The couple of law practices who offer to do family law work under grants of Legal Aid do not have the capacity to meet demand, so clients requesting assistance for family law matters was a recurrent theme each week. Shoalcoast facilitated an increasing number of applications under Legal Aid's Early Resolution Assistance funding and attended mediation with the client in the interests of making agreements for the future parenting of their children.

Still feeling the effects of the 2019/20 bushfires and reeling from flooding in 2022 many residents of the Bega Valley LGA are both figuratively and literally rebuilding. It has been noticeable over the past year that many clients, regardless of the legal problem they have had, still reference this particularly trying period in their lives. Many are socially and geographically isolated or have been challenged financially for the first time in their lives but a common theme of all clients has been the gratitude that they have access to free legal advice and support.

Whilst the COVID pandemic continued to limit opportunities to network and provide community legal education Shoalcoast was able to build its profile by delivering sessions to seniors, school groups and attending local events.

Total Legal Services: 247



Civil
58%



Family
32%



Criminal
9%

COVID-19 FUNDING

As expected with the August-October 2021 lockdowns in our catchment area, we saw an upsurge in COVID related enquiries in the first 6 months of this financial year. In all we gave 35 advices mostly in civil law. We advised on consumer matters concerning cancelled holidays and cancelled weddings. We advised on mandatory vaccinations in workplaces and what to do if threatened with termination of employment. We also advised on mask exemptions and how to address fines for breaching Public Health Orders.

Total Legal Services: 35



Civil
91%



Family
3%



Criminal
6%

BUSHFIRE FUNDING

The devastating 2019/20 bushfire continued to effect many clients throughout our catchment area. Many people had planning disputes with Councils about their rebuild. People were also having disputes with their builders. One builder who was operating unlicensed across Eurobodalla and Bega Valley was finally suspended in February 2022, but this was of little consolation to all those people who had given that building company their insurance payout and only had a half-built house. Disputes with insurance companies were still prevalent as were disputes with government bodies about bushfire grants.

Coupled with all of this, many of the bushfire services started to conclude halfway through the year, causing many people stress as they reported that they still needed mental health support as well as other services.



Shoalcoast gave advice and assistance to people effected by the above problems. As rebuilds were taking longer than expected, we advocated for clients to get longer accommodation under their insurance policies. Some insurance companies were obliging while others were not. Where we did not have the legal expertise, such as in planning law, we sought the assistance of pro bono solicitors and barristers throughout the country.

In response to Bega Valley Council's request, Shoalcoast organised for a barrister who was an expert in home building disputes to give a community information session via AVL. Shoalcoast also continued to attend the Bega Valley Bushfire Recovery service and the Health and Wellbeing meetings in Bega Valley and in Queanbeyan/Palerang.

Shoalcoast also made submissions to the Senate Inquiry into Lessons Learned from the 2019/20 bushfires. Our recommendations were:

- Insurance companies increase the standard limitation period of temporary accommodation clauses in insurance contracts to 24 months.
- The income threshold test in the Special Disaster Assistance grant guidelines be removed and replaced with a qualitative description of primary producer.
- The Small Business Bushfire Recovery Grant should be open to farmers who cannot satisfy the primary producer criteria.
- Government bodies administering disaster relief grant schemes should have their functions enshrined in legislation and jurisdiction conferred on NCAT to conduct merits review of their decisions.
- Grants criteria should accommodate the difference between receiving a cash settlement and insurance company-managed repairs to avoid inequity.
- The Senate Committee should recommend that insurance companies interpret their policies so as not to obstruct persons from receiving grants.
- Community Legal Centre's should be funded for specialist training on conveyancing and home building disputes in preparation for future natural disasters.
- A grant be established for bushfire affected clients to access legal advice from private legal practitioners with expertise in conveyancing and home building disputes.

Total Legal Services: 34



Civil
79%



Family
9%



Criminal
12%



CASE STUDIES

These case studies give examples of the work completed by Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre this year. All names have been changed in these case studies.

Uncollected Goods Matter

Shoalcoast was contacted by Maria who had agreed to store her friend Jamie's shipping container on her property for a short time. After a lengthy period of time Maria had asked Jamie to remove the shipping container but he refused and the container remained on the property for a number of years. Shoalcoast assisted Maria to draft a notice of disposal under the Uncollected Goods Act NSW 1995 that was served on Jamie. We provided ongoing advice and assistance to Maria throughout the process, and after lengthy negotiations, Jamie removed the shipping container at his own expense.

Employment Matter

Theresa had worked for 10 years as a child care worker. Recently, her employer decided that all staff should receive a flu vaccine even though there were no public health orders which made it mandatory in this industry. Theresa was summarily dismissed because she did not agree to have a flu vaccine. Theresa was happy to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it became available for her age group. Theresa lodged an Unfair Dismissal application in the Fair Work Commission. Shoalcoast represented Theresa in the Fair Work Commission and after several conciliation conferences a negotiated settlement was finally reached between the parties. Theresa was very happy with the outcome.



Debt Recovery Matter

James approached Shoalcoast after discovering that two mobile phone handsets had been fraudulently obtained using his account, leaving him in more than \$13,000 worth of mobile phone bill debt. Working with police, Shoalcoast ended up taking the matter to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman who found that James was not responsible for the debt which was consequently reduced from \$13,420 down to \$2,000. After Shoalcoast's negotiations, the final payable amount was reduced further to \$1,000 which James was able to pay off in a number of months. James confirmed with Shoalcoast that he was no longer being pursued by the debt recovery agency.

Family Violence Matter

Leanne and the father of her infant child were sharing the child's care on an ad hoc basis. After an argument that led to a physical struggle, the father contacted police who subsequently applied for an AVO. Leanne attended court without getting any legal advice and entered into a 2 year no contact AVO naming both the father and the child as protected persons. Leanne was referred to Shoalcoast as the father had only allowed Leanne an hour of supervised time once per week. An urgent application was made for a Legal Aid Family Dispute Resolution Conference where an agreement was reached to increase Leanne's time with the child. Shoalcoast ended up drafting a Parenting Plan, but the father would not agree to the arrangement. Had Leanne received sound legal advice prior to entering into the AVO she may have been able to avoid the separation from her child the father forced upon her, but with the assistance of Shoalcoast Leanne was able to establish a consistent routine of time with her child which she will be able to build on in the future.

Consumer Complaints Matter

Janine's dentist had not properly fitted and aligned her dentures which meant that she was unable to eat solid foods. After an unrelated visit to the hospital, the hospital contacted the dentist to realign the dentures so that Janine could eat. She had lost 14 kilograms during her time in hospital. The dentist wanted to charge her an additional \$500 despite the teeth not being fixed in the dentures. Shoalcoast contacted another dental surgery who were able to assist Janine in having the dentures fixed and fitted with no additional cost. Shoalcoast then made a complaint on Janine's behalf to the Health Professional Councils Authority about the dentist. While the Dental Council of NSW chose not to take further action, Janine was informed that she has 3 years to bring an action in personal injury, and will need to seek a private solicitor to assist with this claim.

COVID-19 Matter

Trevor had to move back from Bali when the COVID pandemic hit. He arrived in Australia with no money. After doing hotel quarantine, Revenue issued him with a \$3,000 hotel quarantine bill which Trevor was unable to pay. Shoalcoast helped Trevor apply for an internal review of the debt with Revenue but they would only accept a payment plan. The payment plan was beyond Trevor's means so Shoalcoast, working with our local financial counsellor, applied to the Financial Hardship Review Board and was successful in getting the debt waived. Shoalcoast was then asked to provide guidelines for financial counsellors with an overview of the 2 year process we went through to get the result.

Victim's Services Matter

Shoalcoast assisted Molly in lodging an application for Victim Support after ongoing domestic violence with her former partner whom she has 5 children with. The application requested an Immediate Needs Support Package (INSP) and Recognition Payment. The Notice of Decision granted an INSP for \$5,000 for security at Molly's home. Later, the Notice of Decision granted a Recognition Payment of \$1,500. Shoalcoast had written submissions seeking a payment of \$5,000 due to the evidence of physical and emotional harm inflicted on Molly. The decision did not provide any information regarding how the assessor made his determination. Following this, Shoalcoast assisted Molly to lodge an Internal Review to Victim Services. Eventually the notice of Review Decision agreed that Molly should receive the full payment of \$5,000. The balance of \$3,500 was paid to Molly.

Employment Matter

Stella was employed as an apprentice with a local business. During her employment Stella was harassed and bullied by her immediate supervisor. After she made a complaint about her supervisor's behavior her employment was terminated. Shoalcoast assisted Stella with her General Protections Involving Dismissal application and represented her at her telephone conference in the Fair Work Commission. A negotiated settlement was reached and Stella was very pleased with the outcome.

Bushfire Matter

After Adam lost his home in the 2019/20 bushfires, he immediately engaged a builder to draw up plans for a new house. In order to pay the deposit Adam needed to refinance his mortgage with the bank. The bank took 10 months to approve the refinance of his loan. Adam was ready to pay the deposit to his builder and commence building but he had to wait for the bank. Eventually Adam's temporary accommodation entitlements ran out and he started using his insurance payouts to pay for the cost of living. Shoalcoast wrote to the bank's complaints team and requested a compassionate extension to temporary accommodation payments, alleging that his rebuild was delayed due to the failure to reapprove his mortgage. Adam was given roughly \$15,000 to cover the cost of accommodation until his home was rebuilt.

Traffic Matter

At 85+ years of age Renee failed two required on-road driving assessments and Transport for NSW cancelled her licence. Renee was caring for her adult daughter who had a significant intellectual disability and physical health issues so Renee's need for a licence was very strong. After making an application to have the appeal heard in the Local Court, Shoalcoast built a case for Renee to reinstate her learner licence. Based on her many years of safe driving, her excellent physical health, her carer commitments and the lack of public transport alternatives, Shoalcoast was able to persuade the Magistrate to overturn the Transport for NSW decision such that Renee could keep her learner licence with a view to passing her next on-road driving assessment.

COOPERATIVE LEGAL SERVICES DELIVERY PROGRAM (CLSD)

The CLSD partnerships continued to meet quarterly through the 2021/22 financial year, continuing with online/virtual meetings due to COVID lockdowns and high COVID case numbers. Despite the South Coast and Southern Tablelands being impacted by COVID-19, meetings were still well attended during the year by key legal services, community and government partners.

The action plan for 2022 to 2024 was finalised, which has been designed to continually monitor progress and change as it occurs in the legal sector and in the South Coast and Southern Tableland communities.

The priority areas that we have decided to focus on in 2022 – 2024 are:

- Tackling fine debt in the region and making it easier for people to address their fine debt;
- Advocacy on housing and homelessness;
- Addressing gaps in services: improving access to family law representation for people eligible for legal aid, domestic and family violence services and access to NDIS.

Partnerships consist of legal and non-legal services including Legal Aid NSW, Aboriginal Legal Service, family violence prevention legal services and a range of related community and human services. CLSD's purpose is to work collaboratively with legal and non-legal service providers to identify and address unmet legal and non-legal needs of our disadvantaged clients. We do this by making better referrals, devising new services and coordinating our efforts to meet the needs of our communities.

PROJECTS

Projects stemming from the CLSD Group in the 2021/22 year included:

- The creation of a Shoalhaven and South Coast CLSD Program Tenancy Support Services referral list: this was circulated to CLSD partners to use as a referral guide when assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due to evictions, rent arrears, domestic violence and previous rental histories in social and private housing. It also outlined who to refer clients to who may have issues relating to getting on the social housing list, getting rent assistance, repairs to properties, problems with co-tenants, problems with neighbours, getting the bond back, uncollected or abandoned goods left at properties and NCAT decision appeals.
- Continuation of the e-newsletter sent out on a monthly basis with updates for meetings, service updates, projects, new services in the area and a service spotlight for organisations who want to promote new offerings/events etc.

GUEST SPEAKERS AND PRESENTATIONS

Over the last financial year, we invited a number of guest speakers to deliver community legal education and information around legal issues, how to identify legal problems and more generally guiding services/clients through the referral pathways.

These included:

- **Seema Sanghi**, the Hunter CLSD Regional Coordinator in December 2021: Provided information on the Hunter Community Alliance Project, which involves bringing leaders from community organisations and services together to achieve a common goal to address issues such as homelessness and domestic violence.
- **Ruth Pilkington**, Solicitor in Charge of the Early Intervention Unit at Legal Aid in February 2022: Provided information on the services that the Early Intervention Unit can provide to people in regional areas, namely advice and follow up short services on family law issues concerning children, child protection legal issues involving DCJ, child support, domestic violence and property.
- **Kristy Irving**, Senior Solicitor and Legal Education Officer of the Domestic Violence Unit at Legal Aid in February 2022: Provided information on the services that the Domestic Violence Unit can provide to people in regional areas, namely advice, casework and litigation services in the areas of child protection, domestic and family violence and family law. They are also running a temporary visa project if a client is a victim of domestic violence and is on a temporary visa.
- **Ivy Tseng**, NSW Project and Policy Officer, No To Violence in May 2022: Provided information on the aim of their work, being to help abusive and violent men to recognise the harm they have done and to develop strategies to stop harmful behaviour, as well as outlining the services No to Violence provides.
- **Carolyn Bateman**, Senior Program Manager Shoalhaven, Post-Separation Services & Men's Behaviour Change Programs, Anglicare in May 2022: Provided information about Anglicare's Men's Behaviour Change Program and how Anglicare's programs tie in at the local level with No To Violence.

In addition to all the guest speakers, each meeting had time allocated for facilitated discussions around the legal services available in the area, available referral pathways, networking opportunities and the dissemination of information inside/outside of the meeting. Although the facilitation of meetings via ZOOM created some technical issues for some, it was a great opportunity for services and organisations based all over the South Coast and Southern Tablelands to be involved in each meeting.



KEY ISSUES

The legal needs (i.e. advice and representation) of vulnerable people living in the Far South Coast (FSC):

It continues to be difficult to obtain representation and expert advice in the areas of Family Law and Care and Protection, with only one private solicitor based in the Bega area that is on the family law panel and currently taking on Legal Aid matters. Face to face appointments to obtain advice were at times limited during the COVID lockdowns in the financial year.

The CLSD Coordinator will continue to work with local services in the 2022/23 financial year to try and come up with ways that we can increase access to these legal services for people living in the FSC.

Homelessness:

Housing is an ongoing issue that has been causing great stress to people in the community, and has been putting strain on our local services. Problems that are contributing to a shortage of affordable and suitable homes for people in the community are:

- A general decrease of social housing options as we see an increase of property values in the South Coast;
- Private rental prices soaring;
- Refuges full to capacity, with long waiting lists;
- Reporting of domestic violence rates, therefore women and children fleeing from violence who require emergency accommodation;
- Insecure tenancies in caravan parks;
- Tenants on periodic tenancies being evicted without cause, with landlords using the 'No Grounds Eviction' sections of the Residential Tenancies Act to evict tenants and require them to vacate in 90 days.

At the May 2022 meeting, services were brought together to work on a legal issue spotting exercise around tenancy issues and it gave services the opportunity to obtain more information about services.

Shoalhaven Council has created a Homelessness Taskforce that includes the Council and other community members. Within that Taskforce, they have created a working group that is working on a Strategic Plan to address homelessness and come up with collaborative actions to be implemented in the housing and homelessness sector. The CLSD Coordinator is part of this working group and the strategic plan is still a work in progress. The CLSD Coordinator also attends the Shoalhaven Homelessness Interagency and collaborates with other partners involved in the Interagency.

Overall in this year CLSD has strived to keep the conversation going between legal and non-legal services about issues that effect our clients and how we can address our clients' legal and non-legal needs.

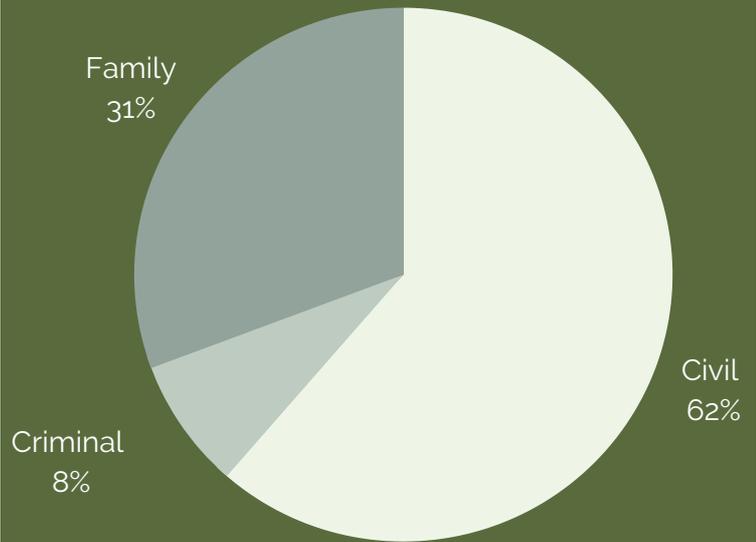
SNAP SHOT OF LEGAL SERVICES



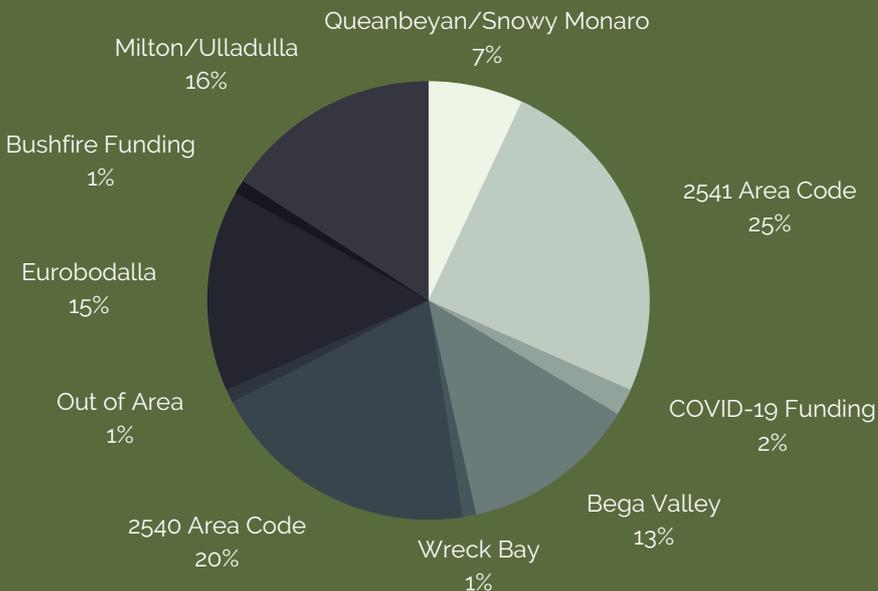
TOTAL SERVICES PROVIDED FOR 21/22

Number of clients	1,377
Information and referrals	1,609
Number of legal Advices	1,735
Number of legal tasks	307
Number of Other Representations (closed)	95
Court/Tribunal	6
DRRS	4
Duty Lawyer	9
CLE Activities	34
CLE Resources	16
Stakeholder Engagements	224
Law Reform	8

LAW TYPE FOR LEGAL ADVICES



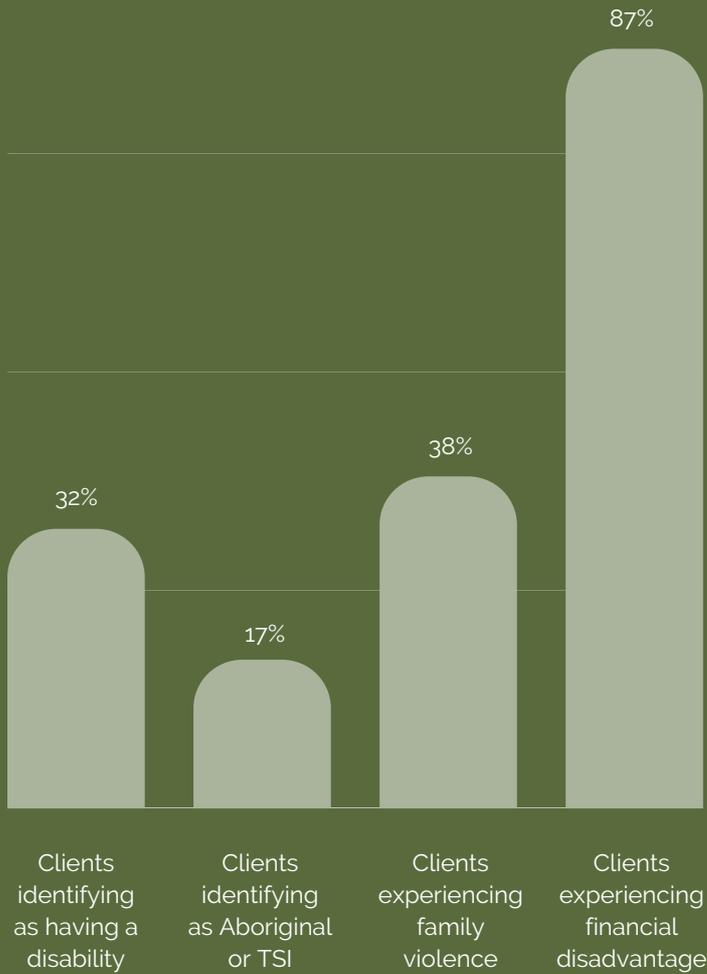
LEGAL ADVICES BY AREA



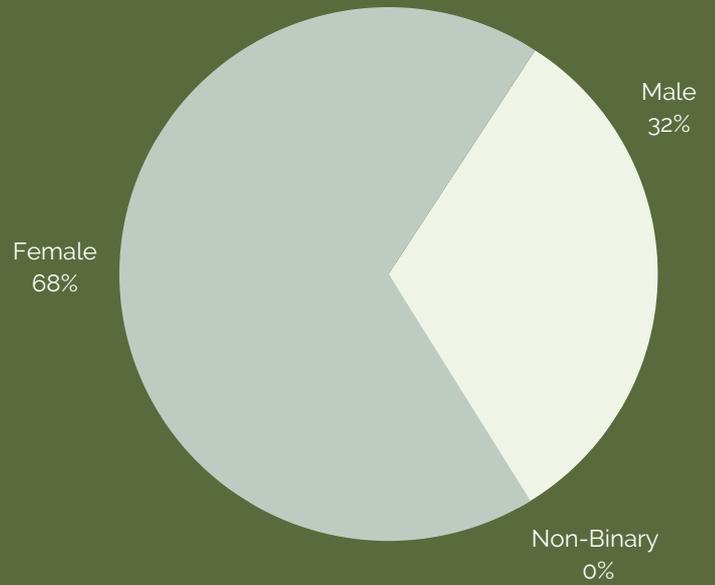
LEGAL ADVICE DELIVERY

Telephone Advice provided	1,524
Face to Face Advice provided	192
Advice provided by letter, email or online	19
Information provided	405
Referrals provided	1,204

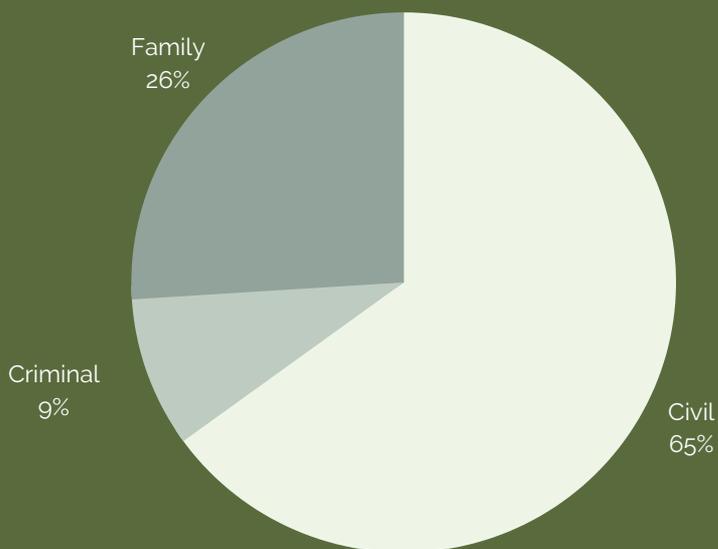
CLIENT DEMOGRAPHICS



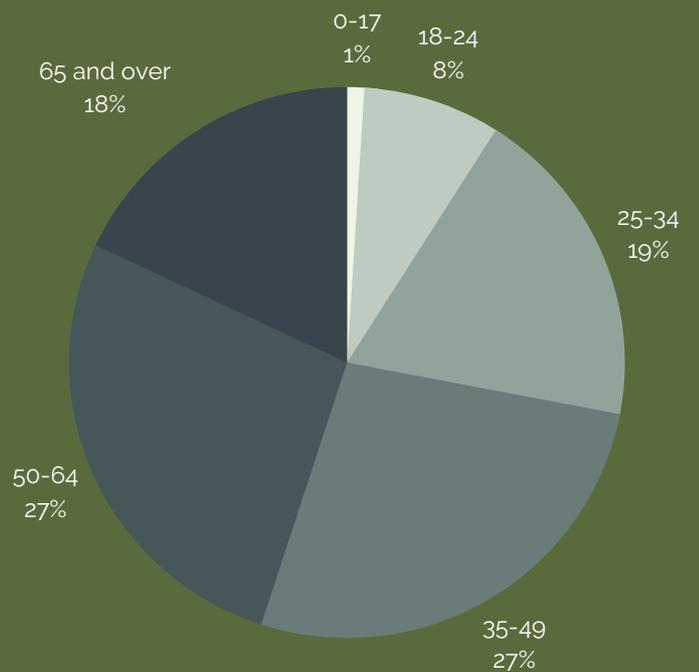
CLIENTS BY GENDER



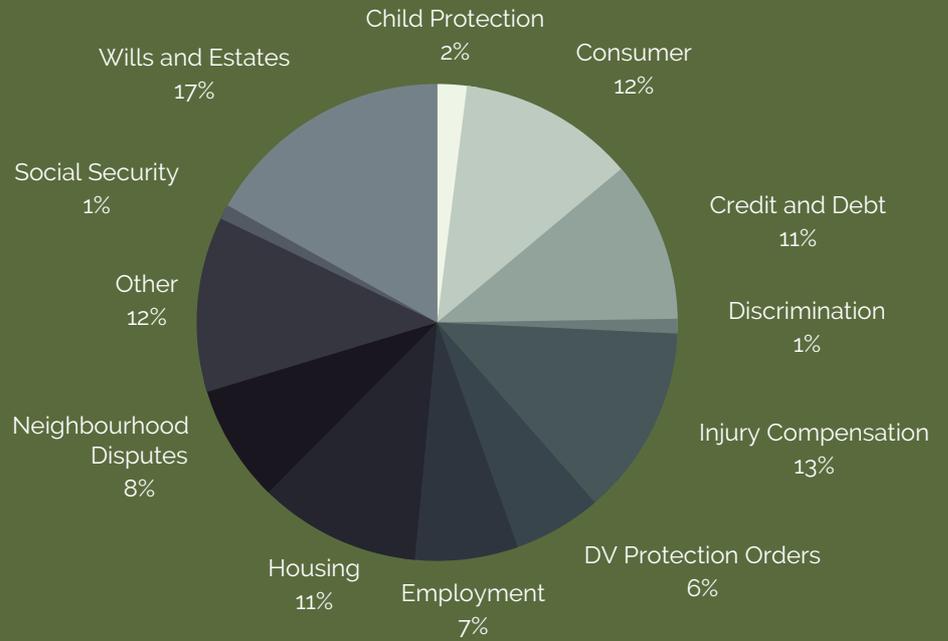
CLIENTS BY LAW TYPE



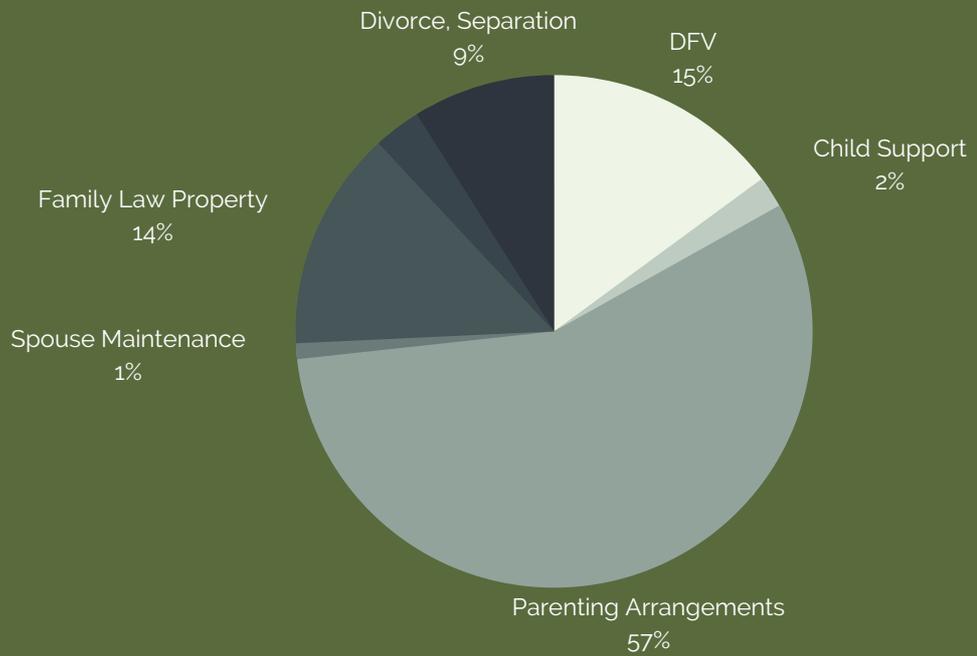
CLIENTS BY AGE



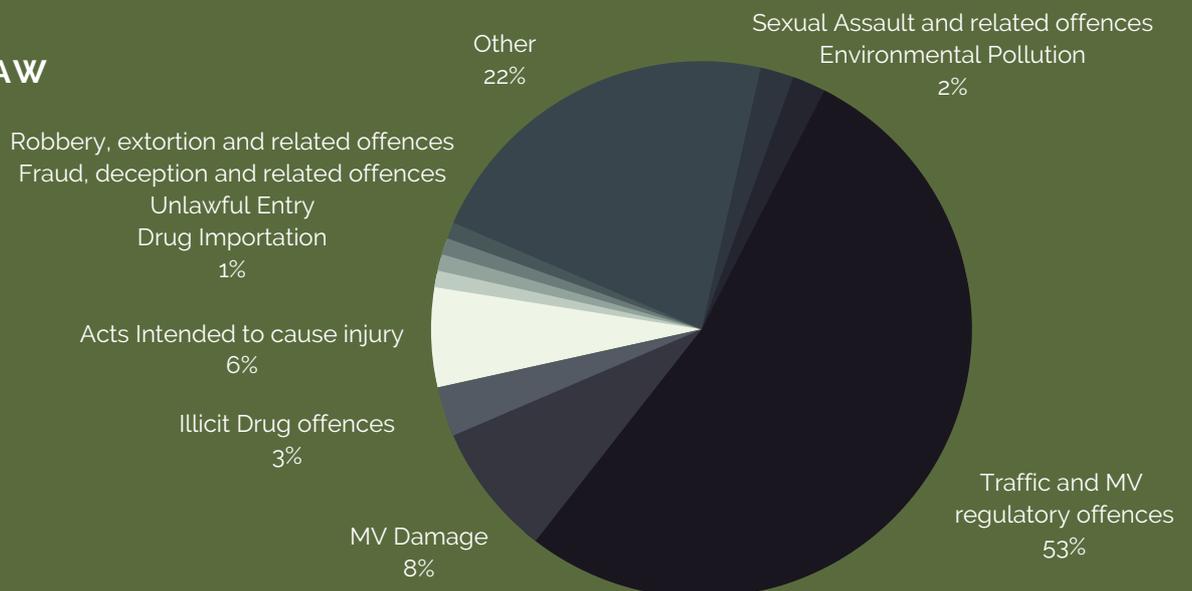
CIVIL LAW



FAMILY LAW



CRIMINAL LAW



COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION AND EVENTS

With a shift in workplace norms and remote working, fears of COVID-19 still lingering in the community, and unexpected weather phenomenon El Nina wreaking havoc, 2021/22 brought about a number of challenges for us to tackle. Ultimately, Shoalcoast was still able to deliver 34 CLEs, attend some great events, and produce updated resources for our clients and the community.

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

While we did deliver three virtual CLEs, Shoalcoast found that rather than attending these sessions virtually, most audiences preferred to wait until COVID-19 regulations allowed face to face events to resume. This is reflected in the CLE numbers increasing drastically towards the end of the financial year, with over 80% of CLEs being presented from January to June when restrictions had relaxed. The jump in CLEs towards the latter end of the financial year could also be attributed to Law Week and Seniors Week which both take place at this time.

Our CLEs throughout the year covered many areas of law including youth law, consumer rights, separation, scams and more. The most prominent CLE topic for this financial year was undoubtedly Planning Ahead, covering legal information surrounding Wills, Enduring Guardianship and Power of Attorney.

We delivered our legal education sessions largely to a community audience, with service providers generally acting as the host of the session. In particular, we provided a number of sessions at local libraries across our catchment area, as well as at service providers' office locations. Our solicitors also provided a number of training sessions to service providers, and collaborated with them for such CLEs as the Call It Out domestic violence training session which was a highlight for the year. Other notable CLEs for the year include our Resolving Home Building Disputes webinar, the South Coast Family Law Pathways Network Roadshow, and the Nimmitabel Men's Shed Super Savvy Seniors CLEs.

EVENTS

Similarly to last financial year, a number of events were sadly postponed or unable to proceed due to persisting logistical challenges around COVID-19. This year, many events also had to compete with the extreme weather brought about by El Nina. Events such as the Koori Touch Footy Day did not go ahead, and the annual NAIDOC Day event was also postponed with no future date confirmed. Other smaller events like regional expos and community days were also cancelled due to dangerous road conditions and damage from the severe rain. Shoalcoast was able to get involved with annual events which this year manifested as online campaigns, such as International Women's Day.

On the brighter side, we were collectively able to attend 21 events in person, again, mostly towards the end of the financial year. Only four of these 21 events were attended in 2021. Highlights include the SAHSSI30 Walk in Jervis Bay, the Reclaim the Night March 4 Justice, and the various Disaster Recovery Pop Up Clinics throughout the Shoalhaven.

RESOURCES

This year Shoalcoast produced 16 resources to improve our service delivery. These developments were largely updating and rebranding outdated resources to keep the content both accurate and engaging. The main updates were the rebranding of the Call It Out training collateral, updates to the Scam Bingo activity, and the development of one page handouts to summarise the legal information presented at the CLEs.

The easing of COVID19 restrictions has brought about a rejuvenated appetite for face to face community legal education sessions and events within the community. Shoalcoast looks forward to taking advantage of this refreshed enthusiasm and continuing to further enhance our service and community engagement.

Jasmine Huang

Administration and Events Planner

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In 2021/22 Shoalcoast attended and were involved in a total of 224 stakeholder engagements, covering all our regions: Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Queanbeyan/Palerang and Snowy Monaro areas.

In 2021/22 Shoalcoast was involved with the following stakeholders in our local community:

- Administration and Finance Network - CLCNSW
- Australian Services Union - Sector meetings
- Bay and Basin Police and Service Sector meeting
- Bega Valley Bushfire Recovery Meeting
- Bega Wellbeing Sub-Committee meeting
- Community of Practice - Vicarious Trauma - CLCNSW
- Cooperative Legal Services Delivery (CLSD) regional meetings
- DCJ Care and Protection Advisory Group
- Disaster Pop Up Clinics - Sussex Inlet, Sanctuary Point and Kangaroo Valley
- DV/Victims Compensation Network - CLCNSW
- Eurobodalla DV Committee meeting
- Eurobodalla Family Network meetings
- Family Law/Care and Protection Network - CLCNSW
- Harmony Day planning group
- It's Time to Reconnect - Seniors Week - Nowra
- Monaro Regional Interagency meeting
- NCOSS Regional Members Meeting
- NOVO Education - Parent/Carer Day - Vincentia
- Nowra Legal Aid and Shoalcoast CLC - regular meetings
- Nowra CDAT meeting



- PII meeting - CLCNSW
- Prosperity in the Park event planning meetings
- Prosperity in the Park/Southern Cross Housing Christmas event at Parramatta Park, East Nowra
- Queanbeyan (QPRC) Agency Network meeting
- Queanbeyan Health and Wellbeing meetings
- Reclaim the Night - March4Justice - Nowra
- Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee
- Shoalhaven City Council Homelessness Taskforce
- Shoalhaven Disability Expo
- Shoalhaven Domestic and Family Violence Committee and Sub-Committee Meeting
- Shoalhaven Homelessness Interagency
- Shoalhaven Thrive Together event
- Shoalhaven Thrive Together event planning meetings
- Shoalhaven Youth Interagency
- South Coast Family Law Pathways Network Meeting and Steering Committee
- South Coast Family Law Pathways Network Roadshow
- Southern Shoalhaven Interagency meeting
- University of Wollongong - Community Round Table meeting
- WDV CAS and Shoalcoast CLC - regular meetings
- Youth! Bay and Basin Youth Empowerment Fair



LAW REFORM

Shoalcoast invests its time and energy into law reform so that we can play our part to shift the dial for social justice in our area. Being in regional Australia our clients are often forgotten about by the policy makers. Many policies are not appropriate for the realities of our clients' lives nor are the programs and projects funded adequately. It is our job at Shoalcoast to make sure the law and policy makers in Canberra and Sydney hear our clients' concerns and address these concerns.

To that end we responded to some of the inquiries that involved matters which were relevant to our clients. We made a submission to the Audit Office of NSW about Police responses to domestic and family violence. We participated in research, conducted by RMIT, KPMG, and BOCSAR, into the experiences of adult sexual offences in the NSW criminal justice system. We made a submission to the Department of Communities and Justice about the legislative recommendations in the Family is Culture report. We also made a submission to the Senate Inquiry on lessons learned in relations to the bushfires of 2019/20, making 9 recommendations. With the collapse of Youpla/Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund (ACBF), which effected so many of our Aboriginal clients, we wrote to Federal MPs advocating for an inquiry to the Youpla/ACBF insolvency and compensation for affected Aboriginal people. We also drafted letters for our clients to send to the MPs. The letters articulated their devastation at having no funeral insurance at this late stage of their lives because of this liquidation. We also support the #SaveSorryBusiness campaign.

CLIENT SURVEY

Shoalcoast completed our annual survey in October 2021, and with a total of 49 clients being asked to participate, we achieved a 100% response rate. The number of clients who participated in the survey represented roughly 30% of the clients who received service from Shoalcoast during the period of 27 September to 22 October 2021. All survey responses were collection via telephone with one of our Shoalcoast staff members calling the clients and recording their provided responses.

What is your experience with Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre?											
	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Answered	Skipped	Total
It was easy to contact us when you first needed help.	48	98%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
We listened to your legal problem.	49	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
We helped you understand how to deal with your legal problem.	49	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
We helped you understand your rights and responsibilities.	49	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
You know where to get help if you have another legal problem in the future.	49	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
Overall, you would recommend us to other people.	49	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
How did Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre make a difference to:											
	Made it much better		Made it a little better		Made no change		Made it worse		Answered	Skipped	Total
Your money situation?	14	30%	25	54%	7	15%	0	0%	46	3	49
Your housing situation?	12	34%	17	49%	6	17%	0	0%	35	14	49
Your safety?	26	74%	8	23%	1	3%	0	0%	35	14	49
Your level of stress?	44	90%	5	10%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
Your wellbeing?	44	90%	5	10%	0	0%	0	0%	49	0	49
Personal and Cultural Needs											
Did you have any personal or cultural needs that we needed to consider? (e.g a disability or the need for an interpreter)	Yes				No				Answered	Skipped	Total
	3		6%		46		94%		49	0	49
Your specific or cultural needs were met.	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		Answered	Skipped	Total
	3	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	46	49



THANK YOU

Thank you for reading our annual report. Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre looks forward to the 2022/23 year and continuing our services to the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley, Snowy Monaro and Queanbeyan/Palerang Local Government Areas.





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