

OFFICIAL



Community Legal Services Program

2024–25 report

Acknowledgement of Country

This report was written on the lands of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge and pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and Traditional Custodians throughout Victoria, including Elders past and present.

About the program

The [Community Legal Services Program \(CLSP\)](#) supports community legal centres (CLCs) to provide legal assistance and associated services, increasing access to justice in Victoria.

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) manages the CLSP and administers funding to CLCs on behalf of the Commonwealth and State governments as well as VLA's funding for collaborative services and partnerships with CLCs.

This report summarises the impact of the CLSP in the 2024–25 financial year, as recorded in CLCs' service data and progress reports.

Key achievements

Using CLSP funding, CLCs delivered 142,225 services (including referrals) for 54,475 people in 2024–25. CLCs support clients and community members experiencing disadvantage to access justice; providing a wide range of community-based and client-centred legal and related services across the state, particularly in the areas of family violence, family law, and civil law.

This year saw continued innovation from CLCs in legal assistance services, outreach, partnerships, and in advocacy for policy and systems reform, with CLCs noting the need for sustainable resourcing into the future to meet legal needs in Victoria.

CLCs in the program

This report includes deidentified data only from CLCs funded via the CLSP:

- Anglicare Victoria – Gippsland Community Legal Service
- ARC Justice (Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre)
- Asylum Seeker Resource Centre
- Allied Justice (previously Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service)
- Barwon Community Legal Service
- CommUnity+ Legal
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Disability Discrimination Legal Service
- Djirra
- Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Environmental Justice Australia
- First Step Legal Service
- Fitzroy Legal Service
- Holstep Health – West Heidelberg Community Legal Centre
- Inner Melbourne Community Legal
- inTouch Community Legal Centre
- Job Watch
- Justice Connect
- Law and Advocacy Centre for Women
- Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre
- Mental Health Legal Centre
- Monash Law Clinics
- Moonee Valley Legal Service
- Northern Community Legal Centre
- Peninsula Community Legal Centre
- Refugee Legal
- Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre - Emma House Legal Program
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- Social Security Rights Victoria
- South-East Monash Legal Service
- Southport Community Legal Service Inc
- Southside Justice
- Tenants Victoria
- Upper Murray Family Care – Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
- Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service
- Westjustice
- Whittlesea Community Connections
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Youthlaw

Clients reached

In 2024–25, CLCs used CLSP funding to support **54,475 people** in Victoria.

CLCs have statewide reach and used CLSP funding to provide services to all 79 local government areas (LGAs) in Victoria, as well as some interstate regions for clients of cross-border services.

CLCs make a significant contribution to access to justice for diverse communities and addressing inequality in the justice system, providing services for people experiencing intersecting disadvantage and complex legal needs.

In 2024–25, of the total 54,475 clients assisted by CLCs in the CLSP:

-  **64%** were **women** (34,736 women)
-  **7%** were **aged over 65 years** (4,012 people)
-  **8%** were **aged under 25 years** (4,314 people)
-  **18%** were of **culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds** (10,000) people
-  **4%** identified as **Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander** (1,940 people)
-  **61%** were experiencing **financial disadvantage** (33,190 people)
-  **27%** were **single parents** (14,979 single parents)
-  **27%** had a **disability and/or mental illness status** (14,542 people)
-  **54%** were experiencing **family violence** (29,182 people)
-  **8%** were **homeless or at risk of homelessness** (4,243 people)
-  **4%** were from **outer regional or remote areas** (2,162 people)

CLCs report continued high levels of legal need in the community and demand for their services across multiple legal problem types, and priority cohorts. For example:

We continue to see escalating demand for legal assistance from people seeking asylum, refugees and vulnerable migrants across all of our legal services – CLC

Services delivered

In 2024–25, CLCs used CLSP funding to deliver **142,225 services** (including referrals) across **65** legal problem types.

Top problem types

CLCs assist people with a wide range of interconnected legal and social issues, and provide trusted, community-based services that meet legal and related needs.

Family violence services are the largest proportion of the services delivered by CLCs using CLSP funding; over 41,000 services this year, along with Family law, including services for parenting arrangements (over 11,000 services), property (over 6,000), and other family law problems (over 5,000). CLCs also provided a high number of civil law services over the year; including more than 15,000 housing services, 10,000 for employment, and close to 10,000 services for other civil law problems.

Problem type	Number of services
Family violence	41,527
Housing	15,508
Parenting arrangements	11,806
Employment	10,427
Other civil law problem	9,922
Family law property	6,262
Other Family law problem	5,742

Our legal team continued to provide accessible and responsive legal assistance to individuals and families experiencing disadvantage across a broad range of legal areas – CLC

As indicated by the high numbers of clients assisted and matters opened and run, this program is meeting an extensive need for services tailored towards women – CLC

Services

Using CLSP funding, CLCs provided more than 39,000 legal advice services, 32,000 referrals, 26,000 information services, and 19,000 duty lawyer services this year. CLCs also provided over 16,000 intensive services (such as legal task, representation, non-legal support, ongoing legal support) to clients needing further assistance.

CLCs continue to use CLSP funding to deliver extensive community legal education, stakeholder engagement, and law and legal service reform activities across the state.

Service type	Number of services
Legal advice	39,852
Referral	32,500
Information	26,614
Duty lawyer	19,873
Legal task	7,148
Representation services	6,495
Stakeholder Engagement	2,125
Non-legal support	2,095
Community Legal Education Activities	937
Ongoing legal support services	427
Law and Legal Service Reform	411
Community Legal Education Resources	111
Dispute Resolution	77

Highlights

Highlights provided by CLCs included continued sector innovation, with centres expanding their reach and deepening their community impact. Many CLCs report record levels of service delivery supported by strengthened partnerships, and targeted workforce development. Funding also supported the introduction of new service models, such as specialist hubs, and legal helplines, which enabled more responsive, diverse and accessible support for clients to meet changing community need. CLCs are also key contributors to early intervention approaches to help prevent the escalation of legal issues and reduce system pressure.

We were pleased to launch our new family violence service in a local refuge, this service will work in both a crisis and long-term legal response as they face a world post-separation and the family violence – CLC

Centres also made significant progress in data collection and evaluation, using evidence to guide practice improvements and demonstrate outcomes, to strengthen future effectiveness.

We've strengthened how we track and learn from our work, using data and feedback to inform service design and demonstrate outcomes – CLC

Importantly, CLCs maintained a strong focus on community connection and advocacy, ensuring local voices informed systemic reform on key issues such as family violence, tenancy and youth justice. They noted the importance of strong partnerships with local organisations and agencies, to drive better outcomes and systemic impact.

Highlights have been the systemic advocacy and networking with the disability community and disability advocacy sector, in particular in relation to the Disability Royal Commission recommendations and planning how to persuade government to act on those recommendations – CLC

Future focus

CLCs noted challenges in sustaining service delivery within a rapidly changing environment, highlighting the need for long-term investment in workforce stability, system capability, and sector coordination. Despite strong growth, CLCs report that demand for services continues to outpace available capacity and funding. Sustained and increased funding would enable CLCs to deliver more services, and resource effective innovation and collaboration for greater impact.

We note ongoing challenges and pressures due to uncertain and insecure project-based funding – CLC

Future focus areas for CLCs include securing consistent and adequate funding to meet rising demand, embedding trauma-informed and culturally safe practices, and strengthening staff wellbeing supports. Centres also identified the importance of maintaining adaptability in the face of legal and policy reforms, investing in ongoing training, and leveraging new data systems to improve planning and accountability.

Funding in 2024–25 – actual

In 2024–25, the CLSP provided **\$68,466,401** in funding.

Over half of CLSP funding in 2024–25 was from the Victorian State government; \$36.6 million, with \$27.7 million Commonwealth funding, and \$4.2 million VLA funding, where VLA allocated funding to collaborative services and partnerships with CLCs.

2024–25 funding – actual

Funding source	2024–25 actual
Commonwealth – National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP)	\$27,693,023
State – Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)	\$33,564,453
State – Department of Health (DH)	\$2,140,000
State – Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)	\$853,368
Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)	\$4,215,557
Total	\$68,466,401

Funding in 2025–26 – budget

In 2025–26, the CLSP will provide over **\$81 million** in funding.

In 2025–26, CLSP funding to CLCs has increased by more than \$13 million, primarily due to the \$9.4 million uplift in Commonwealth funding via the National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP) allocated to Victorian to CLCs and Women's Legal Services this year

The budget includes \$38.6 million State funding (\$2 million increase), \$37 million Commonwealth funding (\$9.4 million increase), and \$6 million VLA funding (\$1.9 million increase). This is the current budget as of December 2025, noting that the funding amounts are likely to change through the year due to new or extended funding streams being confirmed.

2025-26 funding – budget

Funding source	2025–26 budget
Commonwealth –National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP)	\$37,069,349
State – Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)	\$36,148,181
State – Department of Health (DH)	\$2,160,000
State – Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR)	\$293,048
Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)	\$6,077,921
Total	\$81,787,178

Reporting method

This report only covers CLCs and services funded by the CLSP. It does not include all CLCs in Victoria or all services provided by CLSP funded CLCs. The CLSP funds approximately 80% of Victorian CLCs, and within those centres, only some programs and services are funded through the CLSP. As a result, this report does not capture all CLCs operating in Victoria, nor does it reflect the full range of services delivered by CLSP-funded CLCs. While the CLSP is a major source of funding for CLCs, most CLCs also receive funding from other sources, including other government funding, or donations and philanthropic funding.

There are instances where services, demographic information, or law/problem types may be missing or not included in the data in this report. This means totals in this report may not always align with the sums of related figures. In the coming years, continued improvements in data systems and reporting will help to more fully demonstrate the collective impact of the CLC sector.

Themes are summarised from CLC reports on highlights and challenges from their services and operations this year, with some illustrative quotes from CLC reports included throughout the report.

Annual reports, case studies, and impact reports published by the [Federation of CLCs Victoria](#), and [individual CLCs](#) provide further information about CLC achievements for the 2024–25 year more broadly.

More information

Further information on the Community Legal Services Program is [available on our website](#).

Contact our CLC Funding and Development Program team at clcfdp@vla.vic.gov.au.

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