

OUR VISION

We believe in a society where the law is fair and everyone has access to legal help when they need it. A place where there is a shared sense of fairness and wellbeing.

We believe that fair and thriving local communities are the foundation of a just society, and that this starts at the local level.

To contribute to creating a just society, we build fairness and wellbeing in our local community through the law.

WHO WE ARE

We are an independent community legal centre working for social purpose, based in the inner Melbourne area since 1978. We are part of a large network of community legal centres working in local communities across Australia.

Our lawyers are experts in community law, and part of a small, dedicated team of lawyers, administrative and project staff supported by volunteer law students and pro bono corporate partners.

WHY WE EXIST

We work with people experiencing the greatest disadvantage in our area to achieve —

Fairer laws: We help to ensure the legal system is as fair as possible

Fairer outcomes: We help our community be heard, and have their legal rights upheld

Improved wellbeing: We improve our community's capability to focus on their health and quality of life.

WHAT WE DO

Legal help: We provide free accessible legal help in the form of information, advice, casework and representation.

Legal education: We provide community legal education to targeted community members and professionals that aims to prevent legal problems from occurring or escalating.

Law reform and advocacy: We challenge and work to change unfair laws that disproportionately affect disadvantaged people in our community.



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ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

Inner Melbourne Community Legal acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the land where IMCL is based and works. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

Chairperson and CEO report

Maintaining community support through unprecedented change

In 2019-20 IMCL remained strong and steady in the face of significant change, a credit to the IMCL board and team. We farewelled Melanie Dye (Director of Legal Practice) and Dan Stubbs (CEO), who was appointed Victoria's first Disability Worker Commissioner in October 2019. We warmly thank Mel and Dan for their stewardship over many years, overseeing considerable development of our organisation, and congratulate Dan on his appointment. During an interim time of transition, longstanding team members Nadia Morales and Jessica de Vries stepped up into Acting Co-CEO roles, providing continuity for staff ahead of the commencement of our new CEO, Damian Stock, in February 2020. Damian comes to the organisation with a passion for social change and extensive experience in the legal assistance sector.

The organisation's response to the onset of the pandemic further demonstrated our ability to maintain stability through change, with swift adjustments to operations and service delivery models to keep staff safe while continuing our core work. Strengthened by our steadfast community partnerships, we continued to reach people with legal help, and pivoted our focus to respond to the unpredictable crisis.

In light of COVID-19, we extended the timeframe for exploring

the merger with Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre, whilst continuing to work in close partnership to cater to the evolving legal needs of people in the inner-city suburbs and better understand our respective practices.

Rebuilding wellbeing in 2020-2021

Acknowledging that COVID-19 will have far reaching consequences for many people in our local area, making even more people susceptible to legal problems, we will continue to shape our work to deal with the socio-economic fallout of the pandemic.

We will ready ourselves for escalating demand for legal help as people grapple with financial distress, increases in family violence and relationship breakdown, more housing instability and worsening mental health, and as the court system deals with fines and criminal law listing backlogs.

We will identify positive change from the disruption to continue to improve our legal services and the lives of the people we work with. We will harness technology where it improves access to justice, and step in where it falls short. We will further deepen our understanding of and connection to our vibrant and diverse community so that we can centre their experiences and help them be genuinely heard, so that they can be empowered to make decisions about their own lives.

We will solidify our innovative pilot and integrated practice projects and strategically align our law reform activities to influence transformations in the way people interact with the justice system. This includes using our insights from the [PACER project](#) to inform the Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system and supporting the implementation of recommendations arising out of the [inquiry into homelessness in Victoria](#) and the public housing lockdowns.

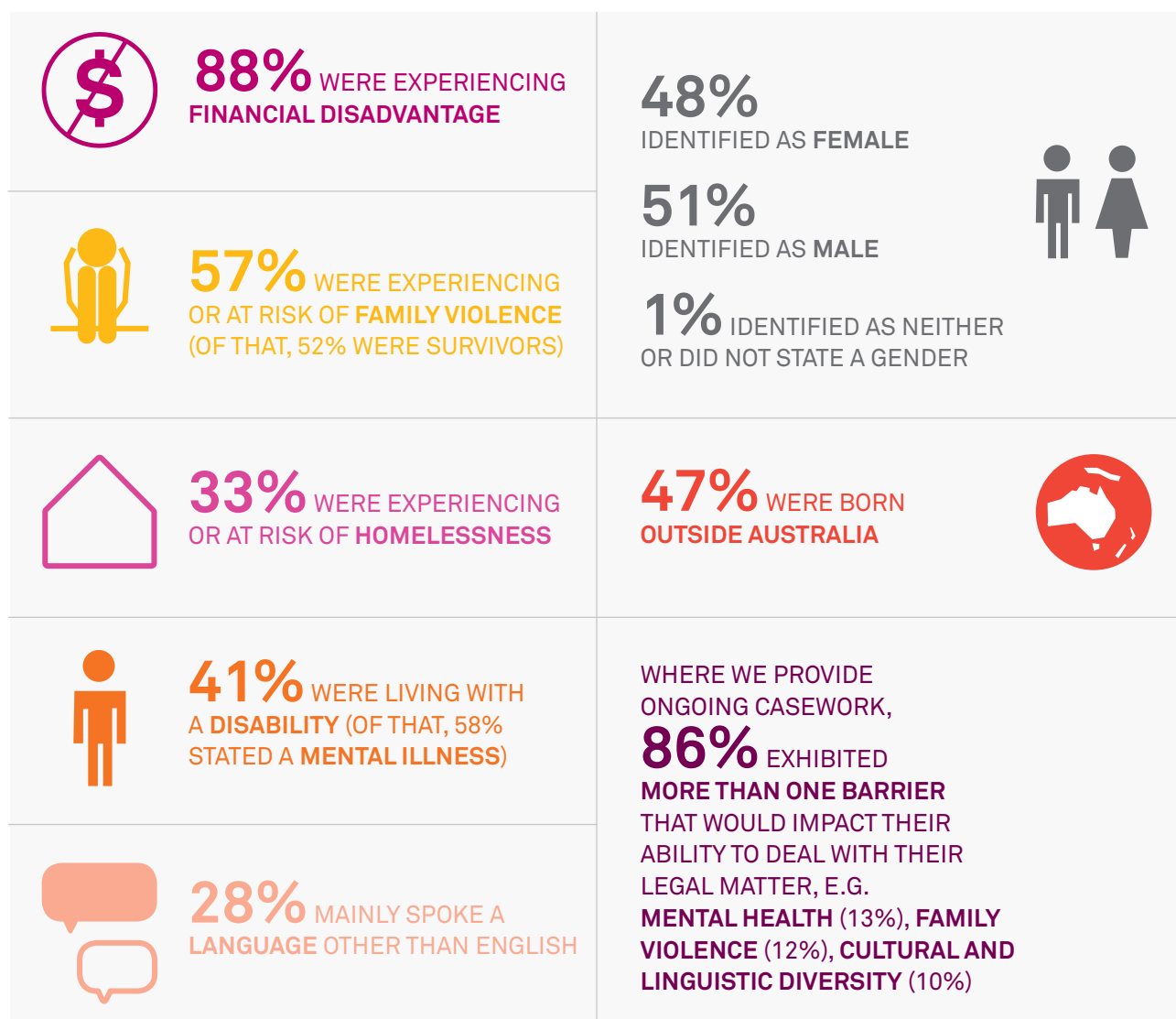
We will continue our unrelenting pursuit of housing justice by supporting our clients to access the interim COVID-19 tenancy scheme and sharpening our focus on community housing reform to enhance the rights of all social housing tenants. We will also ready ourselves for the implementation of the improved and long-awaited residential tenancies legislation, which will ensure that the enshrined rights are realisable.

— PETER FRIDELL, CHAIR
— DAMIAN STOCK, CEO

Who we help

Most people experience a legal problem in their lifetime, but not everybody is able to access legal help. To address this inequity, we prioritise assisting people who are on low incomes or who have other life circumstances that act as barriers to receiving legal assistance.

SNAPSHOT OF OUR CLIENTS THIS YEAR





FLYNN'S STORY

Flynn needed help to negotiate a parenting dispute when we met him through one of our outreach clinics at a homelessness service. His circumstances in life meant that he faced several barriers to accessing legal help, including his history of homelessness and substance use. People with a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background, like Flynn, also face additional hurdles in identifying and seeking help for legal problems. Through our partnership with Salvation Army and with the support of his social workers, Flynn was able to connect with an IMCL family lawyer. The complex case took a long time, but our lawyer was able to positively resolve the parenting dispute in the best interests of his children. Read more about his story [on our website](#).

ISMAIL'S STORY

Ismail had multiple barriers to solving his legal problems when he attended our tenancy clinic in 2019 about an eviction notice. A resident in community housing who came to live in Australia several years ago, he was stressed and worried. With several chronic health conditions and caring for his children as a single parent while working two jobs to make ends meet, he could not afford legal help and had reduced capacity to attend legal appointments. We made it easier for him. Read his story [on our website](#).



"My lawyer Louisa doesn't over-complicate things. She is really responsive in answering any questions ... giving you options and explaining the pros and cons of each option. Having her by my side has changed a lot of things that I used to just accept... Now there is a lot more accountability. They listen to me and can't take advantage of me anymore."

— ISMAIL, CLIENT

What we do

Legal issues are often at the core of everyday problems, and the law is a powerful tool to address these problems and create longstanding change in a person's life.

To create a local community where everyone has the opportunity to have a fair and good quality life, we follow three main streams in our work, centered around community partnerships:



FREE LEGAL HELP

As a generalist legal service, our lawyers have specialist legal expertise covering family, family violence, tenancy, criminal, and administrative law such as infringements and victims of crime assistance tribunal claims. This diversity helps us to provide a holistic service, as many of our clients have multiple legal problems, often in different areas of law. Clustering of legal matters is common, with half of our clients having more than two. Evidence shows that this is more

likely for disadvantaged people like [Evelyn](#), who experienced family violence that led to a range of other legal problems.

We also have an onsite financial counsellor to assist with debt matters, and for matters outside of our practice expertise we refer clients to pro bono partners, particularly in the areas of employment law and family law property division.

WE HELP PEOPLE WITH A RANGE OF LEGAL MATTERS WHICH CAN ARISE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

RELATIONSHIP & FAMILY ISSUES	FAMILY VIOLENCE	HOUSING MATTERS	SUMMARY CRIME	MONEY PROBLEMS
including parenting arrangements, birth registrations, divorce and child protection.	help to obtain intervention orders, and help if an order is breached.	such as evictions, repairs, and transfers.	including public order or driving offences, and parking, public transport or other fines.	for example, credit card, utilities and telco debts, including debt occurring as a result of family violence.

CLIENT JOURNEY AND SNAPSHOT OF THE YEAR'S LEGAL WORK

We provide a graduated level of service depending on the client need, encompassing legal advice, legal tasks and casework.

ACCESS TO FREE LEGAL HELP →	LEGAL ADVICE →	LEGAL TASK →	CASE OPENED →
A person accesses our services by contacting the IMCL office, being referred by one of our partner organisations, meeting our lawyers onsite at an IMCL outreach location or by accessing the duty lawyer service at Melbourne Magistrates' Court (MMC).	The client receives individual and tailored advice from an IMCL lawyer about their specific legal problem.	If necessary, our lawyer will provide the client further assistance e.g. by making phone calls or writing a letter.	If the client's legal problem is more complex, or the client requires more intensive support, our lawyer opens a case to provide extra assistance and might represent the client at a court or tribunal.
WE SAW 986 CLIENTS THIS YEAR	WE GAVE 750 LEGAL ADVICES THIS YEAR 373 CLIENTS AT MMC RECEIVED ADVICE THROUGH OUR DUTY LAWYER SERVICE	441 LEGAL TASKS WERE CARRIED OUT THIS YEAR	246 CASES WERE OPENED THIS YEAR

How we provide free legal help

We strive to make our services accessible for the vulnerable people living in our community, using an integrated practice model that focuses on partnerships and strategic projects.

PARTNERSHIPS

Many people do not recognise they have a legal problem in the first place, or have multiple barriers which prevent them seeking legal help. **86%** of the people we help with ongoing casework have more than one such barrier, including homelessness, family violence or a disability. In many instances, people will talk to another professional, such as a medical worker or social worker for help, before a lawyer.

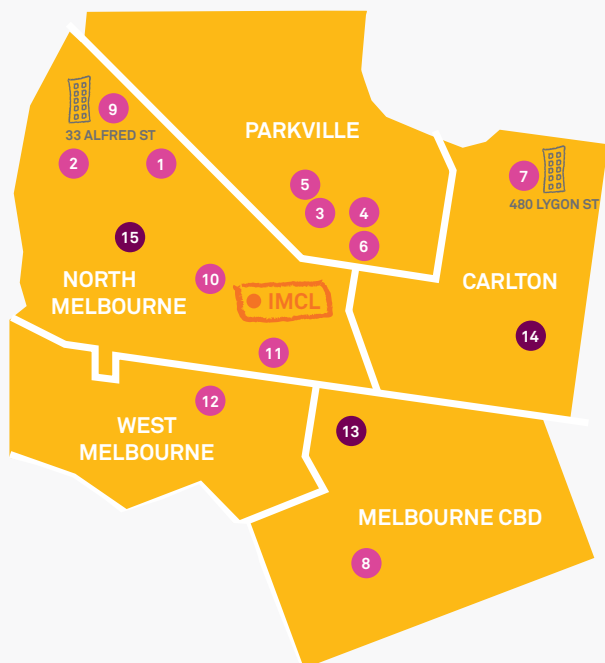
Our partnerships with hospitals and community agencies continue to break down these barriers and assist us to reach people who have difficulties in seeking help. This service integration provides the client with holistic, coordinated support for inter-related legal and non-legal problems. We have numerous outreach services across our catchment.

OUTREACH LOCATIONS

- 1 Ozanam House
- 2 North Melbourne Language and Learning Centre
- 3 Royal Women's Hospital (including the Social Work Department, the Women's Alcohol and Drugs Service [WADS] and the Centre Against Sexual Assault [CASA House])
- 4 Royal Melbourne Hospital
- 5 (including Royal Park Aged Care and Rehabilitation Units)
- 6 Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre
- 7 Family Services at Carlton Baths
- 8 Melbourne Magistrates' Court Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service
- 9 Open Door (the 480 Outreach Hub)
- 10 St Joseph's Flexible Learning Centre
- 11 The River Nile Learning Centre
- 12 Salvation Army — Flagstaff Accommodation

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- 13 Launch Housing — Elizabeth Street Common Ground
- 14 The Drum Youth Services
- 15 The Huddle



Spotlight: Partnerships with homelessness services

THIS YEAR, **33%** OF OUR CLIENTS WERE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS

Through our outreach clinics located at homelessness services, we provide access to legal assistance for clients and work in collaboration with social workers to provide holistic and coordinated support.

This year, **169 clients** have received legal help through our outreach with homelessness services at VincentCare's Ozanam House and Salvation Army's Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation. We saw a reduction in the number of clients seen when Ozanam House closed due to COVID-19, underscoring the importance of outreach services as a means for people to access legal help.

HAMZA'S STORY

Hamza was referred to IMCL by a caseworker at Flagstaff Crisis Accommodation.

Hamza was homeless and living with mental health issues. He had been trying to create a life for himself in Australia after arriving as a refugee seeking asylum.

A series of unresolved fines and a driving suspension led to Hamza's driving license being revoked, impacting his ability to look for work. These cascading issues were having an increasingly damaging effect on him and led to feelings of despair, causing Hamza to become self-destructive and suicidal.

Our lawyer recognized that Hamza had special circumstances and advocated for a review of traffic fines he had incurred.

OUR LAWYERS HAVE HELPED WITH **40**
LEGAL ADVICES FOR **FINES** THIS YEAR

The holistic approach provided by our partners and lawyers working together gave Hamza the support he needed to make positive changes in his life. By the time our lawyer, Lloyd Murphy, represented him at court, Hamza was already getting his life back on track, and this transition was made easier when Lloyd was able to have the multiple fines withdrawn.

The access to legal help provided, and accompanying tailored support, enabled Hamza to secure stable accommodation, commence an English course and begin training as a barista. He reported no longer feeling despair, with renewed capacity to plan and look forward to the future. [Read Hamza's story on our website.](#)



"Chasing a person to court when they have special circumstances serves no purpose for community safety or the public interest."

— LLOYD MURPHY,
LAWYER

Spotlight: Health justice partnerships

HJPS MAKE UP:

58% OF OUR OUTREACH SERVICES AND
37% OF OUR TOTAL SERVICES

As another example of integrated practice, our lawyers work in close collaboration with social workers and medical professionals in hospitals to provide wrap-around care through our health justice partnerships (HJPs).

Our hospital-based legal clinic enables us to meet with clients on the ward who would otherwise be unable to access legal help, either because they cannot leave the hospital or they cannot safely visit the IMCL office. We also provide legal education for hospital staff so that they can identify when patients are experiencing legal problems and facilitate referrals.

Our HJPs have been established for a number of years. The strength of these partnerships has proven invaluable during the social restrictions imposed due to COVID-19, with mutual trust ensuring that social workers were still confident to refer to the legal clinic remotely.

SHANNICE'S STORY



Shannice was experiencing family violence and needed legal help following the birth of her baby, who had developed a serious medical condition that required constant medical care. When the relationship with her partner turned violent, she decided they needed to separate so she could focus on her child's health.

The onsite legal clinic at Royal Women's Hospital provided a safe space for Shannice to access legal help while attending her child's hospital appointments, with continual support from her social workers.

To support her legal matter, we worked with her healthcare team, who provided written medical evidence of her child's complex needs. After two years, we were finally able to negotiate a fair parenting order with an agreement that the child's father can spend more time with their child only once the child's medical needs have lessened, providing Shannice with peace of mind. Read more about Shannice's story [on our website](#).

Royal Women's Hospital

Half of the women we saw at RWH were experiencing family violence. This increased to three quarters after COVID-19 social restrictions were introduced.

For the second year running, further Commonwealth funding through the Attorney-General's Women's Safety Package (WSP) enabled us to facilitate financial counselling referrals for female hospital patients experiencing financial problems. This year, 61 women benefitted from financial counselling.

RWH LEGAL MATTERS:

61% CHILD PROTECTION OR CHILD SUPPORT

56% FAMILY VIOLENCE

37% BIRTH REGISTRATION

Royal Melbourne Hospital

Working closely with social workers, our HJP with the RMH continues to strengthen. Sustainable funding enables us to maintain these services and provide the support needed for the many clients with complex matters. More than half require ongoing legal work beyond the initial advice.

This year our legal education focused on elder abuse. A subsequent increase in referrals from health workers demonstrates the importance of ongoing education and awareness of the legal clinic.

RMH LEGAL MATTERS:

45% FAMILY VIOLENCE

26% POWER OF ATTORNEY

Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre

Building on our many years of success in RMH and RWH, IMCL commenced an exciting new HJP with Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre in 2019. This provides access to legal assistance for patients who cannot leave a ward.

Since commencement in November, we have provided legal services to 11 clients onsite at the hospital.

PETER MAC LEGAL MATTERS:

80% FAMILY LAW

40% CIVIL LAW



PROJECTS: PACER & YOUTH OUTREACH LAWYER (YOL)

In extending our vision to reach members of our community, IMCL completed the first year of our two-year pilot partnership projects with two schools in North Melbourne, as well as the Police and Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) team.

Our PACER partnership, working with police and mental health clinicians, is based on the evidence of the nexus between mental ill-health and legal need, and builds on the HJP model to reach and provide legal assistance to people experiencing a mental health crisis who come in contact with the PACER team. Read more about the initial project outcomes, supported by the Legal Services Board and Commissioner, [on our website](#).

You can also read about the outcomes of our first year of our formal partnerships with youth organisations and two schools, to develop a holistic service which is accessible for young people who are vulnerable or at risk, funded by the City of Melbourne. More information is available [on our website](#).

We used human centred design (HCD) methodology to inform the development and implementation of the YOL and PACER projects. HCD is a creative problem-solving process aimed at making legal services and practices better. It puts users of a system at the centre of their own journey in order to match their practices, needs, preferences and expectations with service delivery, making sure we are providing legal help in the best and most effective way. Through these projects we are expanding our design mindset, and starting to incorporate this thinking across all areas of our work.



DUTY LAWYER SERVICE

Many people do not see a lawyer before attending a court hearing. To help these people achieve a fair outcome, we place a duty lawyer on-site at the Melbourne Magistrates' Court (MMC) to provide advice, negotiation and in-court representation in family violence intervention order (FVIVO) matters.

THIS YEAR WE PROVIDED:

373 DUTY LAWYER SERVICES FOR
344 CLIENTS

Early Intervention Legal Service (EIL)

Family violence often results in multiple legal issues, including tenancy, family, criminal and financial problems. If our duty lawyer identifies additional legal problems beyond the immediate family violence matter when meeting a client at court, we can provide assistance through our early intervention legal (EIL) service.

Reaching people early in their legal problems can resolve issues before they become more complex, or before compounding legal matters lead to severe outcomes like poverty, homelessness or psychosocial effects.

THIS YEAR WE PROVIDED:

142 EIL SERVICES FOR
84 CLIENTS

EVELYN'S STORY

We first helped Evelyn with a family violence intervention order. She had left the property she shared with her former partner, who was perpetrating family violence against her and seeking full custody of their children. Our lawyers were able to help her with child contact arrangements, as well as the debts and fines she incurred as a result of the family violence she experienced.

Identifying that Evelyn had multiple legal problems arising out of her experience of family violence, our duty lawyer referred her to our EIL service for further legal help. The diverse expertise of IMCL lawyers meant that Evelyn could get the legal help she needed to create a safe life for her and her children. Read more about her story [on our website](#).



"Jess did so much to help... It was one of the worst things that's ever happened to me, and my kids are so important to me. She was always so empathetic and professional, and I'm so grateful."

— EVELYN, CLIENT

Community legal education

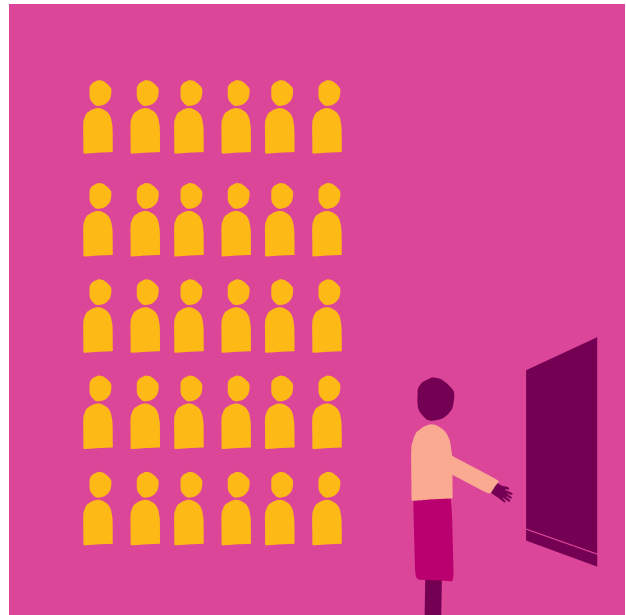
Not everyone knows when they have a legal problem, or knows how to find a lawyer, so we work with community partners who can recognise legal problems in people they work with, and provide avenues for referrals.

This year we delivered 33 targeted legal activities for:

- medical and social work professionals as part of our health justice partnerships
- teachers and wellbeing staff through our school lawyer program and international student work
- support workers and case managers working in homelessness organisations
- PACER police officers
- mental health clinicians.

We also provide community legal education sessions to community members. This year, we continued our storytelling approach with young people in schools, and also expanded and improved our online resource for international students, by launching a standalone microsite at www.ishelp.org.au with six new translated episodes on common legal issues experienced by international students.

In response to the challenges posed by COVID-19 restrictions and knowing that international students are struggling now more than ever, our community lawyers also hosted a Law Week webinar '**COVID-19 and International Students: Housing, Safety and Work**' for students and their support networks. You can watch the webinar, access the transcript, and read more about our work to promote international students rights [on our website](#).



Law reform and advocacy

We provide legal help to individual clients to achieve positive outcomes, often in life circumstances or within systems where it can feel like the odds are stacked against them. Informed by the experiences of our clients, we advocate for changes to unfair laws and systems that disproportionately affect and compound the disadvantage experienced by members of our local community. We know this is not possible alone, so we work with others to influence decision makers and find solutions for complex social problems.

This year we focussed on making change in the areas of housing and homelessness, and fines. We contributed written submissions to the following inquiries and investigations.

Fines Reform Advisory Board Review of the Fines System calling for:

- training for, and consistent decision making by, Fines Victoria staff in relation to family violence so that the legislation operates as intended to protect family violence survivors
- changes to the fines system to make it easier for people experiencing homelessness, financial hardship, family violence, mental illness, and alcohol or drug dependency to have their fines waived or reduced, and to access support to address the underlying issues that result in infringements
- penalties that are proportionate to a person's income, recognising that fines have greater life consequences for those already experiencing financial hardship.

Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria opposing the Public Housing Renewal Program initiative of the Victorian Government and advocating for:

- large scale investment in public housing
- the prevention of homelessness at its roots by providing support services and improving housing accessibility and security for people experiencing mental illness and/or family violence
- a reduction in the impact of the criminal justice system on people experiencing homelessness by changing unfair laws and bail conditions, providing wrap-around support and introducing a spent convictions scheme
- the overhaul of the fines system by providing holistic support, making it easier for people experiencing homelessness to have their fines waived or reduced, and ensuring penalties are proportionate to a person's income.

You can read our full submissions and all of our recommendations [on our website](#).

COVID-19 advocacy

With the onset of COVID-19, we advocated for legal and policy changes that better protect members of our local community who are experiencing hardship during the pandemic. We helped to secure important changes to law and policy in the areas of tenancy and fines, and we continue this work. You can read more [on our website](#).

COVID-19

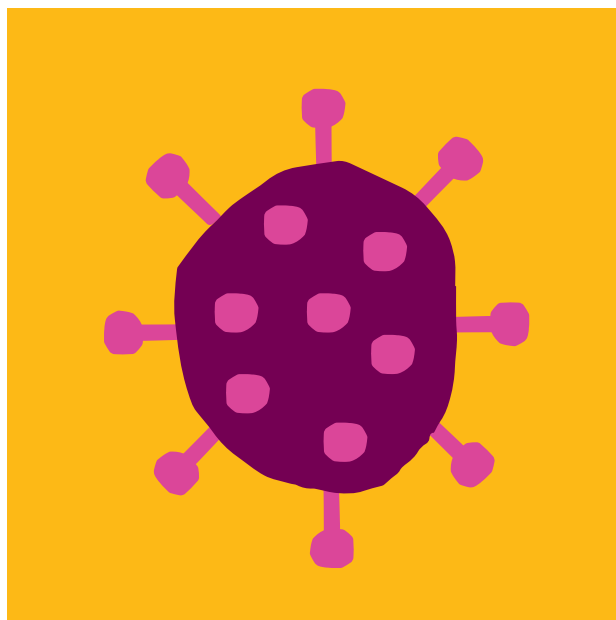
In March 2020, like all service providers, IMCL had to adapt quickly to restrictions imposed to limit the spread of the coronavirus. Instead of meeting clients face to face, lawyers conducted all consultations by telephone, as was the case with remote duty lawyer and court appearances.

Our strong hospital relationships meant that social workers remained confident to refer patients for phone legal help, and our collaboration with homeless services and service providers for young people also enabled support workers to continue to refer their clients for legal help.

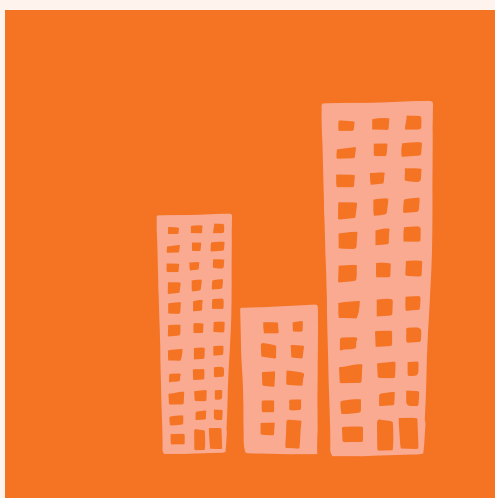
The three months from March to June already showed the impact of COVID-19 lockdowns on people in our local area, and our ability to respond.

With uncertainty around the duration of the lockdowns and increasing housing insecurity as a result of escalating financial distress, more people with tenancy problems sought our assistance. You can read more about our COVID-19 tenancy response [on our website](#), including our advocacy to secure important rental protections.

COVID-19 fines also emerged as a significant problem within Victoria, particularly within inner Melbourne. Using our clients' experiences, our lawyers began advocating for a review of unfair fines for individuals and fairer laws for the community. Read more [on our website](#).



On July 4 in the very early days of the new 2020–2021 financial year, public housing estates in our catchment were subject to a hard lockdown, detaining residents in their homes. As the local CLC, we mobilised quickly to assess the lawfulness of the intervention and respond to tenant needs through individual and systemic advocacy. You can read more about our continuing response to the lockdown [in our newsletter](#).



CAROLINA'S STORY

Carolina had been trying to negotiate a rent reduction with her landlord after she lost her job in hospitality due to the COVID-19 lockdowns. She reached out to IMCL, and our tenancy lawyer helped her with a VCAT application, which succeeded in securing a 50% rent reduction.

Read Carolina's full story [on our website](#).

Our foundations

Monitoring & Evaluation

We aim to make legal services accessible for people who would not otherwise be able to speak with a lawyer. Feedback from some of our clients shows that we continue to succeed in this.

Our legal service was accessible:

75% OF CLIENTS SAID THE LOCATION WAS APPROPRIATE FOR THEM

80% SAID THEY WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SEE A LAWYER ELSEWHERE

All clients stated that they felt they were listened to by the lawyer:

“...LAWYER HAS GREAT KNOWLEDGE ON FAMILY LAW AND...EMPATHY”
— FAMILY LAW CLIENT

Meeting with a lawyer also helped clients to understand their legal matter and to have more confidence to address it.

Legal matters can also cause stress for people. Knowing that someone is listening to them and that their legal matter is being addressed will start to relieve this stress, even if a resolution is not forthcoming.

When the legal matter is closed, there are benefits for the client beyond the legal:

64% SHOWED SIGNS OF REDUCED STRESS AND ANXIETY

36% WERE BETTER ABLE TO FOCUS ON THEIR HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

31% WERE IN A BETTER FINANCIAL POSITION

Working with volunteer law students

IMCL offers placements to law students who work in administration roles and alongside lawyers. This provides students with valuable experience in a community legal centre, and their assistance provides support to lawyers by conducting research or assisting with legal tasks such as drafting court documents. Feedback from the students demonstrates that they value the opportunity. Most say they feel the experience will help them in future employment and that they greatly enjoy the opportunity to work at IMCL and to be able to make a positive difference within the community.

In feedback, some of our volunteers said:

“...THIS IS PRACTICAL LEGAL EXPERIENCE THAT CANNOT REALLY BE GAINED DURING UNIVERSITY.”

“...I FEEL THAT I AM GENUINELY DEVELOPING THE SKILLS I NEED TO BE A LAWYER.”

“I LOVE ANY...WORK WHERE I CAN SEE I'M MAKING A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE.”



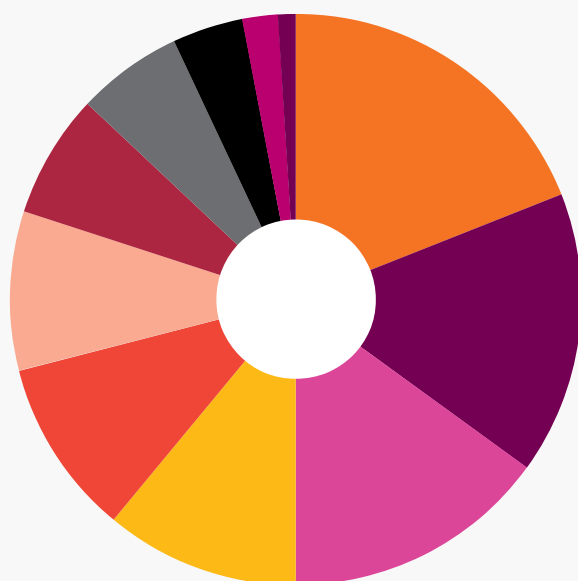
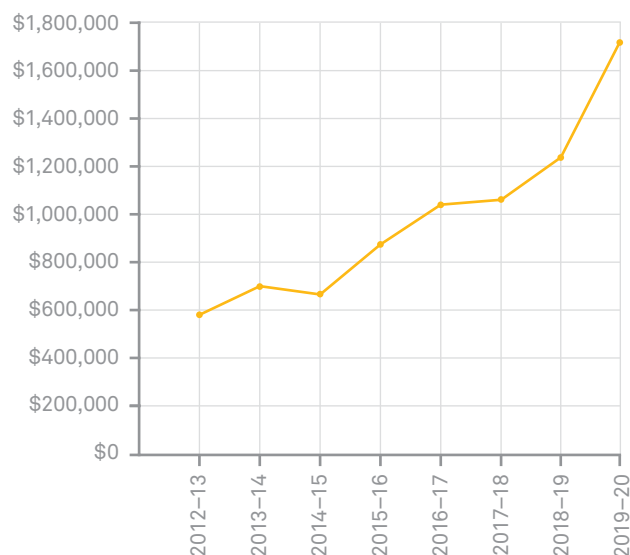
Financial report

The audited financial result for the 2019-20 year shows our total income to be **\$1,754,778**, which is a **42.14%** increase in the year before.

We are funded by a range of government, statutory, philanthropic and individual sources. This includes the federal and state governments, the City of Melbourne, the Legal Services Board, the Victoria Law Foundation, Ross Trust and individual donors. In addition, we received COVID-19 related subsidies and grants that enabled us to support our staff team to prepare for the anticipated rise in legal need.

We are grateful that core federal and state funding has been secured for the next three years, and we continue to seek project-specific funding to trial innovations in service delivery and partnerships that promote community wellbeing through law.

IMCL's complete audited financial report can be downloaded [from our website](#).



2019-2020 FUNDING SOURCES

- 17.72% — Other grants (Commonwealth)
- 16.25% — Core funding (Victoria)
- 15.25% — Core funding (Commonwealth)
- 11.00% — Other grants (Victoria)
- 10.19% — Department of Justice
- 9.57% — Federation of CLCs
- 6.18% — City of Melbourne
- 5.92% — Legal Services Board
- 4.00% — Other
- 2.25% — Victoria Law Foundation
- 1.71% — Ross Trust



Pro bono support

IMCL's capacity to meet legal need within our local community is enhanced by our critical pro bono partnerships with law firms.

Since 2009 **Moray & Agnew** have seconded a full-time specialist lawyer to lead our homelessness outreach and criminal law and fines work, which makes up a significant proportion of our total advice work. This is coupled with fortnightly family violence duty lawyer support.

For the 12th year running, the **Victorian Government Solicitor's Office** placed one of their lawyers within our team full-time to support our family violence duty lawyering, fines and criminal appearance work.

During the year, **Herbert Smith Freehills** continued to show its unwavering support of our organisation by seconding a lawyer to assist with family violence duty lawyering, health justice partnership outreach, as well as to provide corporate assistance with our merger project. This merger assistance was supplemented

by the very generous and expert help of their merger and acquisitions, employment and charity law teams.

IMCL board member and **Lander & Rogers** partner, Jo Renkin, continued her many years of dedicated service by coordinating property law and other complex family law referrals from IMCL, as well as support for the Peter Mac partnership by providing legal education to health workers.

A valued pro bono partner of over 20 years, **Clayton Utz** continued to assist IMCL with our employment law matters and commercial matters, including through the acceptance of client referrals from our health justice partnership outreach programs. This assistance is in addition to covering some of IMCL's operational costs.

WLW Migration Lawyers provided both pro bono and discounted migration advice to our clients, who would otherwise be unable to access help, as well as foundational migration training to IMCL staff.

Several other firms also accepted pro bono referrals for matters outside of our areas of expertise, including: **Ryan Carlisle Thomas**, in the areas of family law, superannuation and total and permanent disability claims; **Hall & Wilcox** for property matters; as well as **Collins Biggers Paisely** and **DLA Piper** in the area of employment law.

We also wish to acknowledge a number of our contractors who demonstrate their motivation to champion a fairer society by offering substantially discounted rates to help us achieve our goals: our graphic designer [Susan Fitzgerald](#), web developer [Andrew Strachan](#) and IT provider [ConnectedIT](#).



Future of our funding

In 2019-20 we joined with the legal assistance sector across Australia in welcoming the federal and all state and territory governments signing the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-2025, and confirmation of core funding to IMCL for the next three years administered by Victoria Legal Aid. Certainty of core funding allows us to make evidence-based decisions on how we shape our services in the medium-term to meet the needs of our community. We also welcomed the multi-year commitment by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department to contribute to our health justice partnerships.

IMCL has a long history in innovative service design, creating strong partnerships to reach people who would

otherwise not address their legal problem. We will continue to support our sector's advocacy for ongoing integrated services funding. This funding enables community lawyers to work with other professionals who notice legal problems, to provide holistic support for our common clients.

Most importantly, we will continue to listen to our community and clients about when and where legal services are best delivered, and we will seek project funding to trial service innovations that ensure the individual is at the centre of the system designed to support and empower them.



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