

Your rights Your voice

Legal | Advocacy | Education

Annual Report 2018-2019



**Seniors Rights
Service**

The purpose of Seniors Rights Service is to foster communities where older members of society are aware of, actively exercising, and defending their individual rights in a society that respects and values older people and promotes and upholds their rights.



Principles

In all of its endeavours, Seniors Rights Service will:

- empower older people as rights holders and active contributors to society
- provide high-quality and timely service
- provide access and equity in service to seniors, regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, gender, marital status, disability, religion, political beliefs, sexual preference, or other characteristic
- support capacity development of staff to ensure they can deliver high quality service
- collaborate with other organisations in pursuit of common goals
- work with broader civil society to foster respect for older members of society and their individual rights.

Priority Populations

Seniors Rights Service will prioritise engagement with older people who are:

- disadvantaged and vulnerable
- in regional, rural and remote locations
- culturally and linguistically diverse
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and/or others.

Seniors Rights Service is a proud member of:



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Seniors Rights Service recognises and acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia’s First Peoples. We pay our respects to Elders – past, present and emerging – and to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities on whose lands we work.

2018-2019 at a Glance

Legal

3,422

legal services to older people

^ 24.8%

from previous year

Customer satisfaction percentage:

92%

Based on feedback from more than 1,100 clients

Advocacy

4,451

advocacy services to recipients of aged care

^ 27.3%

from previous year

Over 50%

of the clients for our advocacy services were from regional, rural or remote locations.

Education

34,366

people attended our

1,042

education events and forums

^ 21.3%

and

^ 29.4%

respectively from last year

Strata Legal Service

Growth in Strata Legal Service over the past two years



57.5%

of the

1,042

education sessions were in regional, rural and remote areas with

15,671

attendees

President's Report

The extraordinary outcomes Seniors Rights Service has produced over the past year – a service delivery increase of 20-25% from the previous year – demonstrates the passion and commitment of our staff and volunteers as well as the positive relationships we have with state and federal bodies.



This increase is partly a result of our staff expansion and extended reach across NSW. But it is also clear that demand for our services from seniors, carers and stakeholders has risen. To meet this demand year after year may present an issue in future if our limited resources cannot increase. I look forward to working with our funders to guarantee

that we can adequately meet the needs of older people living in NSW.

As part of our 2025 Strategic Plan, which we are currently developing with the input of staff and board members, the future of Seniors Rights Service will likely involve the streamlining of some of our services, ensuring that the organisation prioritises the work that matters most.

One of our organisation-wide priorities is the development of our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), the implementation of which is already underway, and which ensures we are better able to provide culturally safe and appropriate services and workplaces.

We acknowledge Reconciliation Australia for their oversight and future collaboration.

It gives me great pleasure to see our relatively small organisation participating in the United Nations Open-ended Working Group on Ageing. Alongside CEO Russell Westacott, I attended the working sessions in New York. We are proud to be remedying Australia's historical lack of participation in this working group, which promotes the need for an enforceable framework for the rights of older people.

I sincerely thank the staff and volunteers of Seniors Rights Service, CEO Russell Westacott and fellow board directors for their expertise and sheer hard work. I welcome Carolyn Parker and Carole Ferguson to the board, and thank Kwesi Addo for his year-long – and excellent – contribution as a board director. Very recently we have included two new board members, Ross Halfacree and Anne Zele, and we look forward to working with them. Maureen Walsh, board director and Chair of the Reconciliation Action Plan Advisory Group, has resigned. I thank her for bringing her extensive experience and unique insights to the table and helping to bring about cultural change within the organisation. We look forward to the future inclusion of other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members to our board.

I would also like to thank our client group for their trust in us and for seeking our support. We don't take this lightly and will continue to provide effective services to older people across the state.

Margaret Duckett
President, Seniors Rights Service



Chief Executive Officer's Report

It is particularly pleasing to report that Seniors Rights Service continues its upward trajectory of growth in the reporting period of 2018-2019. This makes five years of increased funding support as well as increases in the number of people across NSW we reach from year to year.



As CEO of Seniors Rights Service, I am delighted to report an overall 20-25% increase in the past year alone in the utilisation of all our key services. This service uptake increase spans our aged care advocacy services, our legal services and advice, and also our educational services and awareness-raising events.

Demand for our services continues to increase due to a range of factors. After hosting the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference in 2018, the announcement of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, together with the growing media focus on abuse of older people and the rights of older people more generally, combined to raise community awareness of the issues. People now have a much clearer understanding of the needs of seniors and their rights and the fact that organisations such as Seniors Rights Service are here to help.

While the key achievement of serving almost 25% more people in one year alone across all our services is something to be celebrated, it also underscores the issue of resources and demand on a relatively small team of staff and volunteers. We will continue to ensure all our funding bodies are aware that the level of unmet rights-based need across NSW is growing, not shrinking.

We are pleased to learn of NSW's establishment of a new Ageing and Disability Commissioner. Seniors Rights Service looks forward to working closely with the new Commission and developing meaningful referral pathways between our two agencies. We do note however, that community-based services are often preferred by many older people over government agencies, particularly in regard to elder abuse.

In the 2018-2019 reporting period our staff dealt with more than 750 issues of abuse presented to this agency. This is one of the largest – if not the largest – single agencies that directly work with older people affected by abuse. This is why we strongly believe that Seniors Rights Service needs to recruit on-site social workers and caseworkers who can support our solicitors and aged-care advocates when they encounter the often complex and hidden issues surrounding abuse.

Our current staff of one social worker/case manager is clearly stretched. This person works alongside our aged care advocacy and legal teams in supporting those of their clients who present with complex abuse issues. Many of these clients are reluctant to be referred to another 1800 number and do not want to deal with a government agency, particularly in cases where the abuse is perpetrated by their own children or grandchildren.

One of the greatest successes across our organisation over the reporting period has been the growth in the availability of our services statewide. As of this reporting period we now have all five regional staff in place. Our regional staff are based at sites in Port Macquarie, Nowra, Wagga Wagga, Dubbo and Lismore. This regional presence has extended our reach enormously, and once the team is fully set up and operating smoothly, we expect that Seniors Rights Service will be able to build on its already strong service record from across regional and rural NSW.

Following on from our 2018 conference held in Sydney, Seniors Rights Service has taken on board the feedback that we needed to provide more access to events for people from non-metropolitan regions. As a result, we invested in six large-scale regional forums addressing

the issue of elder abuse this year. The forums were highly successful and attracted almost 200 people per event.

Some regional events have used an increasingly popular format to engage with community. Our infotainment format manages to engage community members who come along for a day's worth of information as well as fun. The regional forums have used Info Bingo as a way to attract people to each event. Collaborating with the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, we managed to discuss ageism, abuse of older people, power of attorney documents and other issues while having some fun games of bingo and other entertainment on stage. Probably the most poignant feedback I received at one of the events was from an older lady who told me she had a neighbour who experiences abuse from her son. She would never have come to an event to discuss abuse, but by entwining the topic into a game of bingo, she learned a lot and now has the names of organisations that can assist her neighbour.

Also, in late June we partnered with the Older Women's Network and the Older Persons Advocacy Network to conduct an interactive forum in Narrabri, in western NSW. This event attracted almost 60 people, many of whom drove long distances to be there.

Our commitment to hosting events across NSW will continue in the 2019-20 year. This includes a series of LGBTIQ+ events in conjunction with ACON (health promotion organisation specialising in HIV prevention and support). The project consists of a series of LGBTIQ+ film events in cinemas across regional NSW involving an afternoon matinee with drag performances during the intermission. This collaborative event supports and engages older LGBTIQ+ people from regional areas to raise awareness of aging positively with dignity and respect. Seniors Rights Service will have a

(continued next page)



strong presence at each event and will encourage those who may benefit from one of our legal or aged care advocacy services to reach out or pass the details of our organisation on to friends.

Another great success of this reporting period has been the development of the Seniors Rights Service Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). A special thank you goes to outgoing board member Maureen Walsh who led this process. This will be a vital organisational document in the future. The RAP will be launched in November 2019 with keynote address by the Hon Linda Burney MP.

Seniors Rights Service is committed to supporting work internationally to develop an international human rights instrument that will benefit older people not only in Australia but also around the world. Margaret Duckett, President Seniors Rights Service, and I attended the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group in New York in July 2018 and again in April 2019. We are delighted that at the ninth meeting in 2018 we were given the opportunity to present the Seniors Rights Service report Abuse of Older People – A Community Response. The report and its development are considered to be examples of best practice community engagement when lobbying national governments. In the years ahead, Seniors Rights Service will continue to lobby both major parties on the key issues and advocate to gain support across Australia for an international charter addressing the human rights of older people.

I'd like to congratulate all staff and volunteers whose extraordinary work led us to being nominated as a finalist for a 2018 Human Rights Award, Australian Human Rights Commission, in the category of Community Organisation. This recognition was a great honour and one of the highlights of our year.

Our new media room – only a year in operation – has proven a successful enterprise, with regular events taking place including World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, attended by speakers the Hon John Sidoti MP, Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, the Hon Dr Kay Patterson, AO, Age Discrimination Commissioner, Ms Wendy Morgan, Director, Gandangara Local Land Council and Superintendent Bradley Hodder, Commander Botany Bay Police Area Command. The room is a great asset and means we can now host key events and have sector leaders discussing issues of importance in a public forum over lunch.

As co-chair of Elder Abuse Action Australia (EAAA), I am pleased to report EAAA has now accepted 50 members in the short time since its launch. EAAA has undertaken extensive scoping and consultation work concerning the national Elder Abuse Knowledge Hub. We have been working closely with the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department on the Knowledge Hub and have been successful in our submission for funding for the construction of the Hub in July 2019.

Our existing Strategic Plan comes to its conclusion in 2020. At the time of writing this annual report, we have already started planning for our Strategic Plan 2025. I look forward to working with you to provide innovative ways to continue the excellent work accomplished by Seniors Rights Service and to reach many more older people who are in need across NSW.

Before closing, I would like to make special mention of our volunteers. We have a growing base of competent volunteers who assist our staff across the organisation, providing administrative support, high-level project support and guidance, legal support and legal service delivery. This volunteer base helps our organisation

“In the years ahead, Seniors Rights Service will continue to lobby both major parties on key issues and advocate to gain support across Australia for an international charter addressing the human rights of older people.”

perform better and more efficiently, as well as achieve more in terms of service reach. I offer heartfelt thanks to every volunteer who has given their time to ensure Seniors Rights Service is a strong and trusted organisation delivering vital services across NSW.

It has been a pleasure working alongside our board, staff, volunteers and external colleagues across the legal and aged care sectors. I very much look forward to the year ahead.

Russell Westacott
Chief Executive Officer,
Seniors Rights Service



Meet the Team

Russell Westacott
Chief Executive Officer

Reception and Intake

Sue Rogers-Harrison
Reception/Administrative Support

Janette Fitzgerald
Intake Officer

Tess Olchaway
Reception/Intake

Carolina Perdulovska
Reception/Intake
Charmian Powell
Reception

Organisation Support

Stella She
Financial Controller
Bernadette English
Finance/Administrative Support

Christine Ai
Policy and Quality Improvement Coordinator, Company Secretary
Jane Polkinghorne
Manager Communications and Media

Jane Schneider
Manager Communications and Media
Miwa Blumer
Communications and Media Assistant

Thomas Linnane
Communications and Media Assistant
Robyn Short
Business Services Manager

Legal

Tom Cowen
Manager Legal Service, Principal Solicitor
Jennifer Smythe
Assistant Principal Solicitor
Christine Ai
Solicitor

Melissa Chaperlin
Solicitor
Trevor Collier
Solicitor
Stephen Etkind
Solicitor
Mitchell Harvey
Solicitor

Mary Hawkins
Solicitor
Robert Lollbach
Solicitor
Nalika Padmasena
Solicitor
Fiona Spencer
Solicitor

Charlotte Steer
Solicitor
Tim Tunbridge
Solicitor
Shirley Yeung
Solicitor

Advocacy

Pat Joyce
Manager Advocacy
Margaret Crothers
Regional Coordinator, Advocate/Education Officer
Tammy Cabban
Advocate/Education Officer

Gerard Dunlop
Advocate/Education Officer, Navigator Trial - Information Hub LGBTI, Lismore
Janette Fitzgerald
Navigator Trial - Information Hub Homeless, Sydney
Ray Horsburgh
Advocate/Education Officer

Kate Kennedy
Social Worker
Amadis Lacheta
Advocate/Education Officer
Lisa Johnson
Navigator Trial - Volunteer Coordinator for Community Hub, Dubbo

Jill McDonnell
Advocate/Education Officer
Jenny Samuels
Advocate/Education Officer
Shanel Tighe
Advocate/Education Officer

Education

Diana Bernard
Manager Education and Community Services

Volunteer Board as at 30 June 30, 2019

Margaret Duckett,
Board President, BSc, MSc (Med), MScSoc, FAICD

Carole Ferguson,
LLB(Hons), Grad Diploma Bus MAICD, MGRCI

Carolyn Parker, MBA, Grad Dip Stat Leadership, WH&S Consultation, JP, CMC, GAICD

We gratefully acknowledge the service of **David Puls**, who retired from the board during the 2018-2019 financial year.

Kwesi Addo,
MBA (Hons), MA, LLB, MConstLaw, FAICD, FGIA

Elaine Leong, BA LLB, BA Comms (Hon), Grad Dip Legal Prac, GAICD

Maureen Walsh,
Community Representative

Barbara Anderson,
BA, MA

Volunteers and Pro Bono Support

We thank the law firms **Baker McKenzie**, **Dentons, Hall & Wilcox**, **Holding Redlich**, and **Wotton + Kearney** for their continued generosity in providing pro bono support to our organisation.

We are very grateful for the contributions of every staff member involved,

and particularly thank the Pro Bono Coordinators for their assistance in organising each program.

The following individual volunteers and student interns have also provided invaluable assistance during the year:

Hemani Balasingam
Miwa Blumer

Sarah Daniel
Jennifer Doria
Maria Gomes
Amelia Gould
Irene Madden
Nick Maunsell
Tarun Mahajan
Roisin McEntegart
Sophie Morgan
Lalitha Nair
Tess Olchaway
Halil Ozbeyazli

Karunyah Paskaran
Brianne Perera
Carolina Perdulovska
Nabeela Rashid
David Rollinson
Holly Schuster
Kajol Segran
Lucille Schaeffer
Fiona Spencer
Jenny Templeman
Catherine Vye
Shirley Yeung

Funders

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following funders. Without the support of these funding bodies, Seniors Rights Service would not be able to achieve its goals:

Australian Government Department of Health
Legal Aid NSW
Fair Trading NSW
NSW Department of Communities and Justice
Commonwealth Bank/ASIC

We also thank **Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)** and **COTA Australia** for our aged care advocacy and Navigator Trial funding.

Meet the Team



Pictured above are some of our team from the Sydney office and Regional Advocates

In order for Seniors Rights Service to deliver its range of services, staff members come from a variety of disciplines. Here is a brief profile of three of our staff members, each coming from a major area of service.

Tess Olchoway is studying a Bachelor of Social Work at the University of Western Sydney. Her role at Seniors Rights Service as an Intake Officer means she helps to answer the 70-100 calls we receive on the 1800 number each day.

Initially embarking on a three-month social work placement in February 2019, Tess found the work extremely rewarding and informative.

Communication techniques are essential within her role. 'We are the first ones they [clients] talk to so it's vital to get a clear grasp on what support they need, what's going on in their lives and who they should speak to, legal or advocacy services or other referral options.'

Tess acknowledges callers are often stressed, frequently concerned with issues relating to family members. She has found 'massive' support in Seniors Rights Service social worker, Kate Kennedy, who discusses with her how best to assist clients.

Melissa Chaperlin has been a solicitor practicing in the area of

elder law with Seniors Rights Service for more than 10 years. She has a Combined Science Law Degree from the University of Technology Sydney.

She has a particular passion for work concerning Guardianship, Power of Attorney, Wills and Estates and applications before the Guardianship Division of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. Melissa also presents at many of our education sessions around the state. 'As people age they are more vulnerable ... there's a need for older people to know how to protect themselves.'

Melissa reflects on the importance of providing enough time with the client and genuinely listening to the older person's story. Sometimes the legal issues can be addressed immediately over the phone. However, if the client experiences abuse or other personal issues we work closely with the client and social work support to get a full understanding of the situation and where Seniors Rights Service can help.

Jenny Samuels, an Advocate and Education Officer, has a background in community aged care, welfare and domestic violence issues. Crucial to her role is having current

information and an understanding of any changes regarding aged care service and delivery, funding, what resources are available and any trends or shifts within the community.

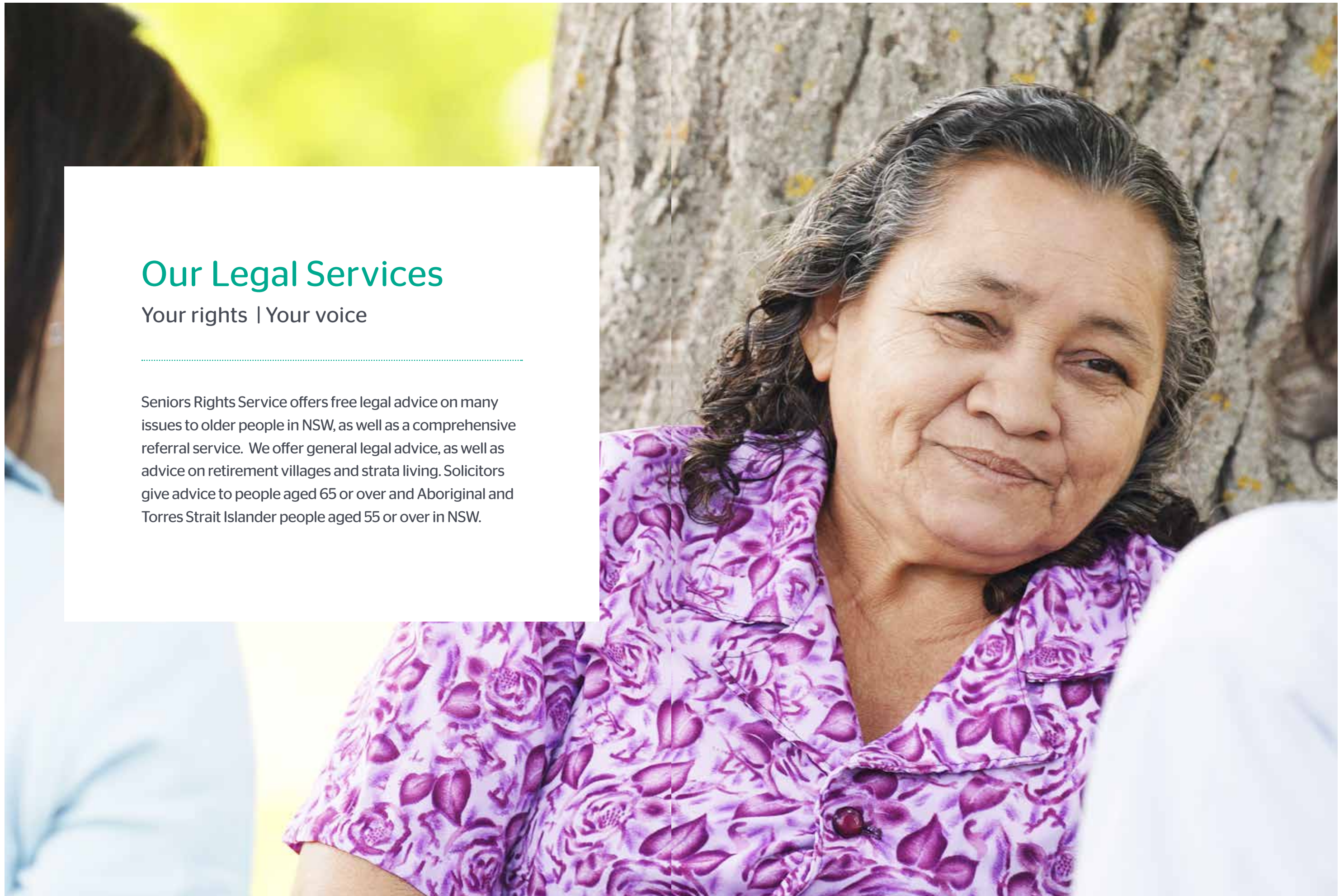
As well as advocating for those receiving aged care services, Jenny leads information sessions at aged care facilities as well as with community groups. At the latter events Jenny is able to reach people at an earlier stage in their lives and empower them to better plan for their future. Jenny, along with the team of advocates at Seniors Rights Service, delivers numerous information sessions a week.

Jenny is passionate about her work 'because it makes a difference to the quality of life of the older person receiving care'. They are also our forefathers, she adds, so have the right to the best quality care in their later stages of life.

Our Legal Services

Your rights | Your voice

Seniors Rights Service offers free legal advice on many issues to older people in NSW, as well as a comprehensive referral service. We offer general legal advice, as well as advice on retirement villages and strata living. Solicitors give advice to people aged 65 or over and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 55 or over in NSW.



Our Legal Services

Seniors Rights Service has had an outstanding year. Following the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, which we hosted in February 2018, our legal service has experienced unprecedented demand. During this reporting period we provided legal services in response to 3,422 enquiries. Services include providing legal information, legal referrals to other services, legal advice on specific issues and, where appropriate, escalating legal advice to opening a legal case in which we represent the client.

The bulk of legal assistance that our solicitors undertake is legal advice given over the phone. Of the 2,516 enquiries resulting in legal information, advice and referral, 94% were provided by phone, 4% were interviews with the client and 2% were by letter and email. Advising clients by email, as the only or first means of communication, is fraught with ethical dilemmas and as a rule we do not provide legal advice this way. We have responded by email in very rare instances where there is no alternative method of providing an advice.

Seniors Rights Service also presents community legal education sessions. This year solicitors delivered more than 100 legal sessions to the community. The advocacy and education staff who provide these sessions also promote our legal service.

The newest division of the Legal Service, the Strata Advice Service, was established to provide legal advice and assistance to disadvantaged older people living in strata complexes where there is a proposal to sell off the entire complex for redevelopment. Its original purpose has since been expanded to include general strata law advice to older people, particularly where the legal issue involves the older person in dispute with the strata committee or strata manager. This service has expanded since its beginning from nine legal assistance services in the first quarter of 2017 to 126 instances of legal assistance in the first quarter of 2019, a 14-fold increase. An intensive strata law education campaign was conducted during October and November 2018, which resulted in a considerable increase in older people becoming aware

of their legal rights as strata unit owners and calling the Seniors Rights Service Strata Advice line for assistance. Our thanks to Charlotte Steer, who developed the education program and conducted many of the community education sessions, and to Robert Lollbach and Mitchell Harvey, who have continued to present strata education sessions in both metropolitan and regional areas.

There have been legal staff movements during the year. Charlotte Steer resigned to take up a position with the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal. We wish her well in her new role. Trevor Collier retired from working as a solicitor in the Older Persons Legal Service (OPLS). We suspect that Trevor will be back in the community legal sector, at least as a volunteer, in the near future. Mary Hawkins, also an

OPLS solicitor, resigned in June and we wish her the very best in her future endeavours. Mary made an excellent contribution to the legal service.

Seniors Rights Service Legal Service is developing focused expertise in areas of the law that most affect older people. There are the two specialist services providing legal assistance in retirement village law and strata law. In addition, the generalist legal service, which advises older people on a wide range of civil law, has developed specialist skills and experience in the areas of alternative decision-making (including Guardianship and Powers of Attorney), family provision claims and 'granny flat' arrangements. In the past year, Seniors Rights Service has represented older disadvantaged

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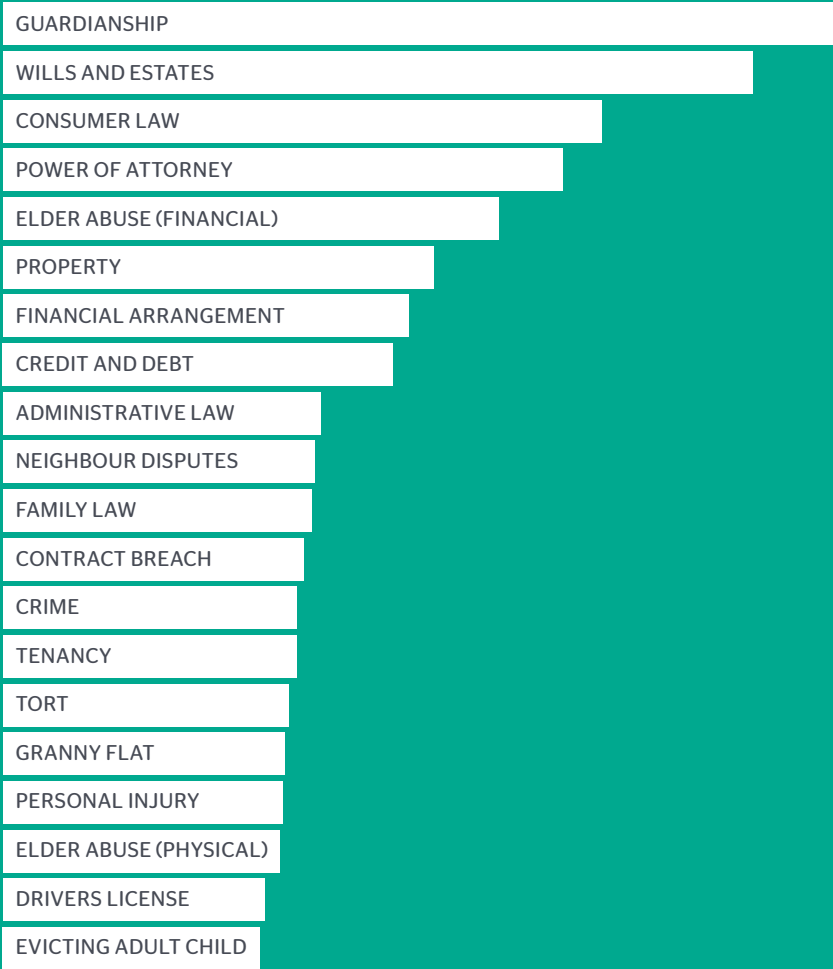
3,422

legal services were provided to older people in 2018-19

^ 24.8%

growth in Strata Legal Service over the past three years

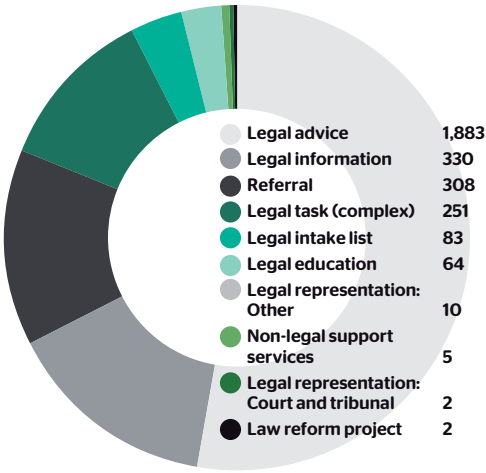
Most common issues raised by clients - General Legal Service



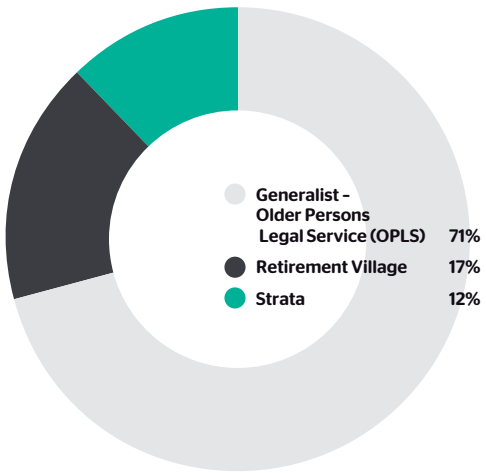
The top four most common issues remain substantially the same as last year but elder abuse (financial) has moved up the ladder. This is undoubtedly due to the increased awareness that older people now have of what financial abuse involves and a willingness to report this form of abuse. Quite often an older person is willing to seek assistance when they are subjected to financial exploitation but less willing to report physical and psychological abuse in the first place. Our solicitors have become aware that a person seeking assistance about financial exploitation will often reveal that they have been subjected to other forms of abuse as well, although they are not necessarily seeking to take action against the perpetrator, rather just wanting the abuse to stop.



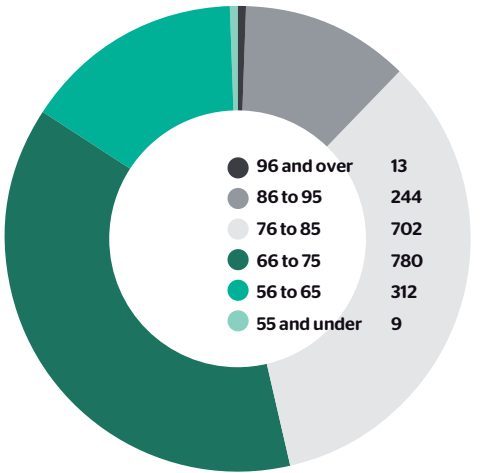
Legal Service Work Type 2018-19



Type of Legal Inquiry



Legal Inquiries by Age



clients in the NSW Court of Appeal, the Supreme Court and the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). We are also representatives on NCAT Consultation Forums including the Retirement Village Group and the Guardianship Group.

Our pro bono pool has expanded this year, with the Sydney law firm Dentons adding their contribution on our Wednesday and Thursday pro bono advice lines to that of our existing law firms, Baker McKenzie, Hall & Wilcox, Holding Redlich and Wotton + Kearney. Our solicitor Stephen Etkind has been very active in engaging with private law firms to raise the level of pro bono assistance from those firms. The pro bono partners and managers of these firms have all been impressive in their support of Seniors Rights Service, as indeed have the solicitors who turn up regularly to advise clients.

We thank these solicitors, whose contribution is invaluable. Our wait times for clients are greatly reduced by their help. The collegiate nature of the legal profession is also improved by private law firms helping the not-for-profit sector deliver legal help to disadvantaged members of the community who would not otherwise have access to legal support in times of need.

Jennifer Smythe has settled into the role of Assistant Principal Solicitor this year, managing the pro bono program and supporting our team of enthusiastic legal volunteers. Her focus on improving our administrative functions has been invaluable as we work to meet increasing requests for legal assistance from our clients.

Robert Lollbach, our strata and retirement village solicitor, has been heavily involved in an NCAT application to clarify the law on reduction of services in a retirement village. He represented all the residents of the village in a two-day hearing in Gosford just before Christmas 2018.

Robert attended the inaugural Elder Law Symposium on the Gold Coast in June last year. He also attended the third Elder and Retirement Law Conference in Sydney earlier this year. In addition to his principal duties Robert has also been providing legal advice as an OPLS solicitor.

Nalika Padmasena, our retirement village solicitor, has been active in joint ventures delivering education on retirement village law and providing legal assistance, touring through NSW with the Retirement Village Residents Association (RVRA).

Nalika also attends the Retirement Village Reference Group meetings organised by Fair Trading NSW regarding the reforms to retirement village legislation and regulations arising from the Greiner report recommendations.

Seniors Rights Service has been developing a comprehensive volunteer program over the past year. One solicitor, Shirley Yeung, began life as a volunteer at Seniors Rights Service and has now become a staff member specifically assisting the pro bono solicitors to provide advice. Shirley has been an excellent mentor to these solicitors.

Mitch Harvey has fulfilled many roles since joining Seniors Rights Service, providing legal advice as a

strata solicitor, a retirement village solicitor and as an OPLS solicitor. He has also helped develop a calendar system which, when rolled out, will inform clients precisely when to expect a call from a solicitor in response to the issue that they have raised with us.

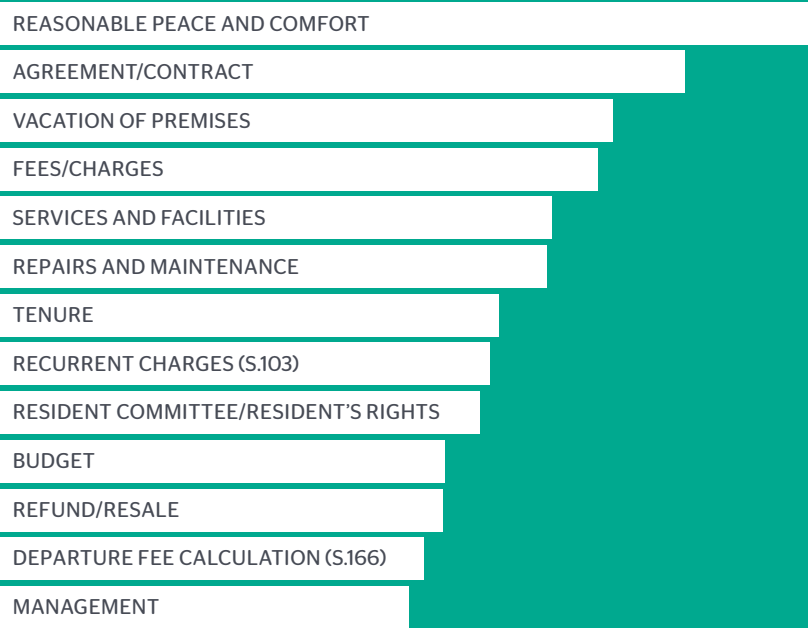
Tim Tunbridge has consistently achieved high performance with the advice line but has also been involved with several Supreme Court matters including a 'granny flat' case going to the Court of Appeal. He has developed expertise in delivering community legal education sessions to non-English speakers through an interpreter.

Melissa Chaperlin has continued her involvement in law reform work, as well as constantly reaching high levels of quality and quantity on our phone advice line. Of particular interest to Melissa is the move to standardise Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship law across Australia. Melissa also delivers community legal education to regional areas of NSW undertaking trips to the southern part of the state to engage with communities in rural NSW.

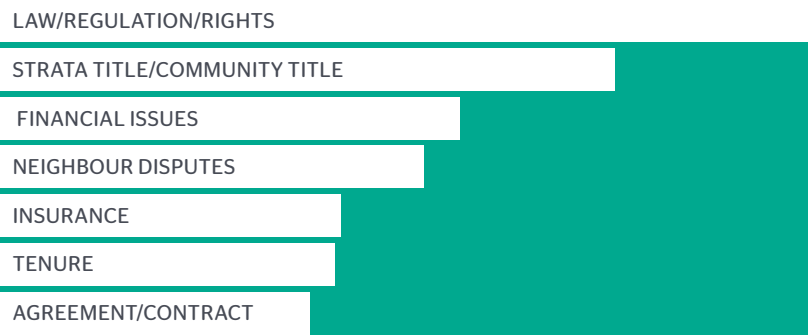
Both Melissa Chaperlin and Christine Ai are providing legal assistance to clients at our outreach centre. This is a new program where we work alongside Legal Aid NSW and other organisations to provide free legal help to residents in the Surry Hills Community Housing Development.

Tom Cowen
Manager Legal Service
Principal Solicitor

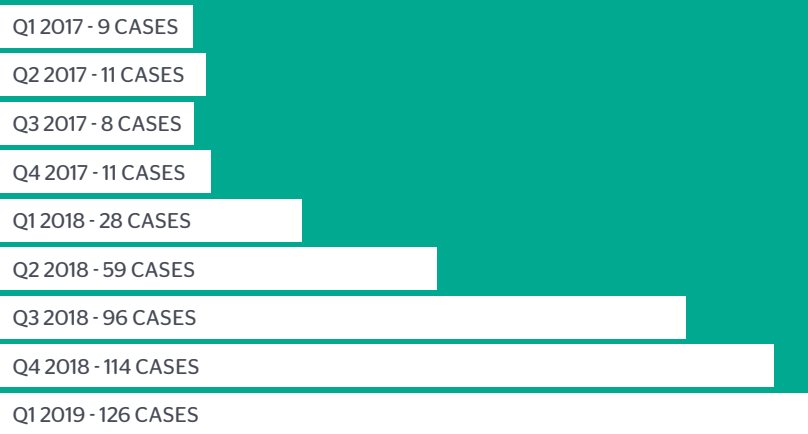
Most common issues raised by clients - Retirement Village



Most common issues raised by clients - Strata



Growth in Strata Legal Service over the past two years



Legal Case Studies

***Please note: All client names and identifying details have been changed to preserve confidentiality.**

Case Study 1

Mrs Lee* lived in a high-rise block with more than 100 apartments. She was concerned that her front door, a fire-rated safety door, had a crack around the hinges. The door was inspected by a contractor who reported it to the strata managing agent.

Mrs Lee was not provided with a copy of the report and was concerned that it had been some time since the inspection. She had spoken with her strata committee representative and managing agent but the front door had still not been repaired at the time of calling our service.

Our advice:

Seniors Rights Service advised Mrs Lee that she should first check with a member of the strata committee to obtain a copy of the report to see what it recommended for repair/replacement. We confirmed that a front door is part of common property and therefore it is the responsibility of the owners' corporation to maintain and repair (s106 SSMA 2015).

We advised that under NSW Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000 Part 9: Fire Safety, 'the owner of a building, to which an essential fire safety measure is applicable, is required to maintain each essential fire safety measure in the building'. Failure to comply with this legislation can lead to significant fines and possibly serious legal ramifications for those responsible.

Fire doors are 'an essential safety measure'.

We advised Mrs Lee to remind the strata committee and managing agent of this obligation and demand immediate action to repair or replace the door if so required.

Case Study 2

Ms Sokol suffered from debilitating arthritis and needed to modify her bathroom in a strata unit to remove a bathtub and replace it with a shower and install new taps that she could operate.

Ms Sokol had obtained a plumber's quote with a scope of works. She also sought to modify a by-law in relation to her proposed renovations.

Ms Sokol wanted to know what approvals she needed to go ahead with the renovations.

Our advice:

Our solicitors advised the client that her proposal appeared to be for a major renovation of her bathroom because removing and replacing the bath would require resealing and waterproofing the wall and floor, as well as accessing piping which is in the wall and thus is common property. She therefore needed the approval of the owners' corporation via a special resolution at a meeting of the owners' corporation called to consider her request.

We further advised Ms Sokol that she should contact the secretary of the owners' corporation or the strata managing agent and provide the tradesman's scope of works, together with a draft motion setting out her request, for consideration at

a meeting of the owners' corporation to be called by the secretary or managing agent.

It would also be best to provide the draft of change to strata by-laws to be adopted along with the special resolution to allow waterproofing because it would affect common strata property.

Case Study 3

Mr Pond is a 72-year-old man. He has some disabilities.

Earlier this year, he was involved in a minor car accident as he was crossing an intersection on his bike. The other party had indicated left but appeared to be in the process of parking and appeared to have yielded right of way to Mr Pond. However, the driver failed to correctly park and, apparently agitated, proceeded forward, colliding with our client's bicycle. The driver continued the collision, forcing Mr Pond to the pavement while apparently unaware of the presence of our client or the collision until Mr Pond loudly banged on the front of the vehicle.

Following this, the driver, a male in his early 40s driving an expensive vehicle, exited the car and grabbed Mr Pond aggressively. They exchanged details but the driver refused to let Mr Pond leave the scene. Fearing for his safety with a larger, agitated and younger male, Mr Pond wisely called his landlord to intervene while they awaited police.

The damage to the vehicle was cosmetic at best and Mr Pond thought nothing else of it until he received a

letter from the driver's insurer asking for \$1200 in damages. Meanwhile our client suffered the loss of his bike, costing about \$800.

Our action and result:

We discussed the various remedies with Mr Pond, before assessing the prospects of success of each. While there was the additional prospect of a claim personally against the other party for an action in battery and assault/false imprisonment as a result of his actions when leaving the car, we advised that the amount of damages payable without any injury and when against a member of the public rather than police would be disproportionate to the prospects of success.

Instead, we drafted a letter to the insurer for our client to sign, setting out a defence and cross claim for contributory negligence. The intent of the letter was to be framed in such a way that the client could easily amend it into documents written in a legally coherent manner, ready for filing in the Court should the matter progress.

Apparently the insurer felt the matter was not worth its time, as they quickly wrote back to Mr Pond informing him that they had determined that each party go their separate ways, that is, cover their own costs. Mr Pond was hugely relieved to learn this, as \$1200 would have taken him years to pay off on his modest means.





Case Study 4

The vexed question about noxious smoking by neighbours in strata complexes and in retirement villages has been raised with our service on many occasions. The following case study is just one example.

Ms Laramie contacted us as she was 'at her wits' end' trying to deal with the other tenants in her strata-titled affordable housing building (mixed use). An 85-year-old widow, she complained about various elements of anti-social behaviour from other tenants but nothing quite so much as the constant smoking in the common areas, most distressingly in the courtyard just outside her kitchen window. Compounding the matter, some of the lot owners in nearby units also smoked on their balconies and the smoke then drifted into her living room. She was particularly conscious of the hazards caused by smoking as she was a life-long non-smoker herself and had lost her husband to mesothelioma.

The most obvious thing to do was to review the by-laws and make a complaint to the owners' corporation. Ms Laramie did this, however the owners' corporation did nothing to action her complaints, particularly where the offending lot owners were concerned. Making it worse was the fact that she had no standing to bring the matter as an item at a general meeting as she was only a tenant.

Our action and result:

We initially advised Ms Laramie that she could potentially apply to

the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) under s153 regulating nuisance generally (and, crucially, providing standing to an interested person rather than a lot owner) to seek orders, but the process was highly complex to her and she disengaged, citing stress.

We decided that we could instead write a letter to the owners' corporation and the community housing provider outlining the proper interpretation of the model by-laws, s153 and citing the recent developments in case law in which the lessor – in this case the community housing provider – was held liable for failure to prevent smoke drift rendering the tenant's unit uninhabitable.

In short time, the community housing provider as a lot owner (of a large number of lots) raised the matter at a general meeting where it was decided to issue compliance notices to all offending parties and amend the by-laws to adopt option A, instead of the previous model option B, to avoid future confusion. Ms Laramie was very happy with this and notified us that the tenants now confine their smoking to their own lots.

Case Study 5

In 2016 Mr Judd signed a lease to rent a house for a period of 12 months and paid the owner a rental bond. At the end of the 12-month period the lease continued as a fortnightly tenancy. In November 2018 the owner of the house died. Mr Judd heard nothing further from

the deceased's representatives about the tenancy. He continued to pay rent each fortnight into the deceased's nominated bank account. Mr Judd made enquiries and found out that the deceased had never passed on the bond to the Rental Bond Board.

Our advice:

Seniors Rights Service carried out an online probate search and found out that in March 2019 the deceased's de facto partner had published a Notice of Intended Application for Letters of Administration. We advised Mr Judd that there would be no legal personal representative of the deceased's estate until the Supreme Court of NSW makes an order granting Letters of Administration and appoints an administrator. Mr Judd was referred to the Tenants Advice Service for action against the administrator for recovery of his rental bond. He would need to notify a debt against the estate to be recovered against the assets of the estate once the petition for Letters of Administration is granted.

Case Study 6

In 2009 Mr Day entered into an oral agreement with his son JT. Under the agreement Mr Day contributed the sum of \$15,000 to enable JT to buy a house, and in return Mr Day would have a right of residence for life, subject to paying a fixed amount each month for rent. In 2017, JT died. His widow, who was also the administrator of his deceased estate, did not

recognise the oral agreement that JT had entered into with Mr Day. The widow demanded that Mr Day vacate the house.

Our action and result:

Seniors Rights Service acted for Mr Day (now aged 76) in defending his right of residence in the house. The question of establishing whether a life interest, as distinct to a mere license to reside (albeit for life), proved difficult. This is often the case when the agreement has not been reduced to writing and parties are relying on terms reached orally.

A settlement on satisfactory terms was negotiated, on the basis that Mr Day vacates the house in six months' time and receive an amount of \$35,000.

Case Study 7

A retirement village was undergoing major redevelopment works. When the retirement village residents were moved in order for the works to be carried out, our client, Mrs Meza, had negotiated various special conditions for her apartment and these were in writing in her transfer agreement at the time she moved out to the alternative accommodation.

However, when she moved back to her renovated apartment, she found out that the agreed work had not been fulfilled or carried out in a workman-like manner. Mrs Meza had tried to resolve this with the management many times with no success. Her requests for a meeting were also neglected.

Our action and result:

Seniors Rights Service advised Mrs Meza about her rights and discussed various strategies and options in resolving the matter.

With Mrs Meza's instructions, we assisted her to arrange a meeting with the CEO of the village operator. Within weeks of the meeting request, the village operator offered a number of options to resolve the matter including another alternative accommodation.

Case Study 8

Mrs Levy, a retirement village client with some major health issues, tried to negotiate with the operator to permit her son to live in the village with her to support her in her day-to-day activities, with no success. Mrs Levy lost the function of her right arm after a major operation. She is otherwise independent in her day-to-day activities and managing her affairs perfectly but because of the loss of function of her arm, she requires some assistance. This is critical for her dignity and self-esteem for managing her own affairs.

After our advice, Mrs Levy requested permission from the village manager in writing for her son to live with her for the duration of her occupation in the unit. She was given permission but then the operator withdrew permission, informing her that he could not live with her and she had to vacate the retirement village premises, giving only two weeks' notice.

Our action and result:

Seniors Rights Service assisted Mrs Levy to negotiate with management

to allow her son to live with her until she leaves the village, so that her quality of life be improved and she could live independently.

Case Study 9

Three residents contacted us regarding their tenure protection under the Retirement Village Act. These residents have a self-care accommodation agreement with the village operator but have not paid an ingoing contribution. Their monthly charges are referred to in the contract as 'rent'.

The village also has a group of residents who paid an ingoing contribution and a group who has not paid an ingoing contribution.

Now the village is under major redevelopment and is relocating all the residents. The operator has informed the group without an ingoing contribution that they are tenants under the Residential Tenancies Act and therefore, they are not entitled to all the benefits provided to the other group who qualified as retirement village residents.

The operator told our clients that they have only limited options to choose their alternative accommodation and also when they sign the new contract to their new alternative accommodation, it is to be a residential tenancy agreement under the Residential Tenancy Act rather than a retirement village contract. The operator has issued a letter to that effect by only giving them the 90 days' termination notice.

Our action and result:

Seniors Rights Service wrote to the operator on behalf of the group of

residents to establish their tenure protection.

Following our intervention, the group received their alternative accommodation under a retirement village contract.

Case Study 10

Some years ago, after his wife passed away, Mr Wells transferred all his ownership in the family home to his eldest son. He had two sons. He understood his eldest son was working and would be able to pay the outstanding mortgage. Later, his eldest son met a new partner and the new partner and Mr Wells did not get along. She asked Mr Wells to leave the home. Mr Wells ended up in Department of Housing accommodation, as he had no funds for a new home. Mr Wells approached our service seeking advice as to how to recover the family home from his eldest son.

Our advice:

Mr Wells was advised to lodge a caveat on the title to the property, preventing the son from selling the property on the basis Mr Wells has a constructive trust. A constructive trust is where a client is promised a beneficial interest in a property, a right to reside in the property for life, in return for making a financial contribution to the property. We advised Mr Wells to seek assistance from a solicitor to obtain the caveat.

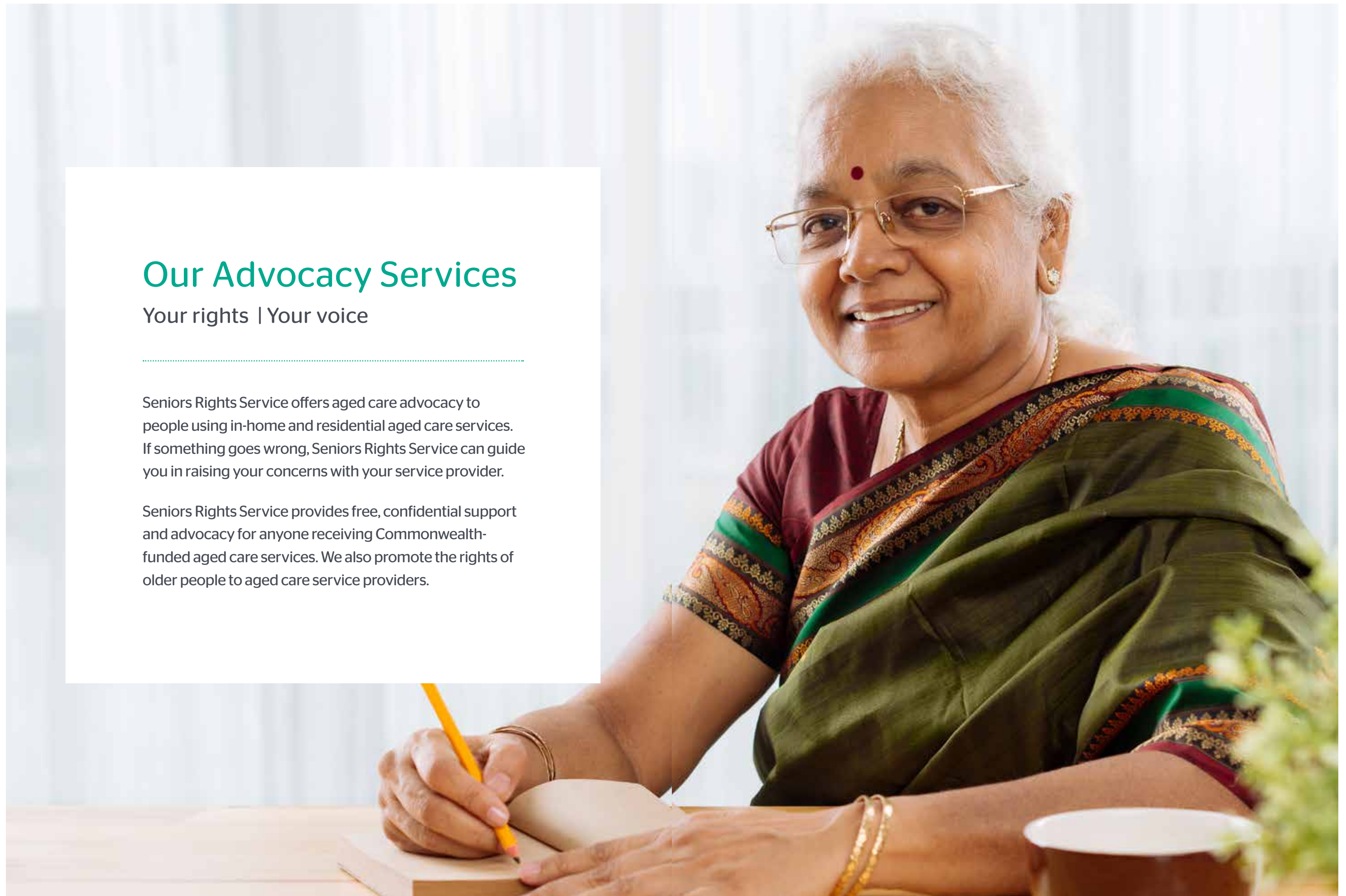


Our Advocacy Services

Your rights | Your voice

Seniors Rights Service offers aged care advocacy to people using in-home and residential aged care services. If something goes wrong, Seniors Rights Service can guide you in raising your concerns with your service provider.

Seniors Rights Service provides free, confidential support and advocacy for anyone receiving Commonwealth-funded aged care services. We also promote the rights of older people to aged care service providers.



Our Advocacy Services

This has been a year of change and growth for the advocacy team. As always, our primary focus has been on our vulnerable clients, who are not always aware of their rights or how to voice concerns about their care and services. In the past financial year, we have provided advocacy services to more clients than ever before, reaching 4,451 people. We have also needed to respond to industry changes in order to assist older people and their representatives as they navigate the shifting landscape of aged care.

Our advocacy team now has eight advocacy/education officers, including two new regional advocates who are already making an impact in their regions, and a social worker who is providing social support services to older people at risk. We are a highly skilled and passionate team, sought after for our advocacy and education services and our involvement in elder abuse prevention projects across the state. The articles, interviews and podcasts we produce to increase awareness of our services are also in demand with

audiences of all backgrounds. The team provided a comprehensive service, as reflected in our increased numbers. The regional advocacy team travelled many thousands of kilometres across NSW to assist older people and worked in a variety of settings. Our metro-based advocates continued to deliver high quality, individualised advocacy and education services across the broader Sydney area. I would particularly like to thank Marg Crothers, our Regional Coordinator,

who provided support and guidance to assist new regional advocates to find their feet. We have seen an emphasis on reaching a broader range of people in the community this year, with an increase in service delivery to older people with diverse backgrounds and needs. These included contact with Indigenous Elders, veterans, and those who reported social disadvantage and isolation, including those who live in remote areas of NSW. With 52% of aged care residents living with some degree of

dementia, we are seeing an increased demand for support and services in this area. We have provided support and advice to families and also to individuals with the diagnosis, some of whom report they are struggling in aged care settings. Family and carers can benefit greatly from learning about the rights of their loved ones living with dementia. This year, we also provided information sessions to 65 targeted carers' groups and 173 sessions for aged care staff from residential and

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Our Advocacy Work - Quick facts

Advocacy	Total	2671
	Advocacy cases	1143
	Complex advocacy cases	7
	Advocacy enquiries	1166
	Social support	273
	Navigator	82
General enquiries	Total	330
Information	Total	1450
	TOTAL	4451

Major Service Categories

Education	Sessions for residents and relatives	273
	Sessions for home care recipients/carers	81
	Community education	58
	Community workers	59
	General public	206
	Sessions for residential staff	109
	Sessions for home care staff	64
	Cold calls to aged care services	33
	Promotions to aged care services	123
	Navigator Information Hub	26
	Navigator Community Hub	18
Referrals to:	ACAT	16
	Aged care provider	178
	My Aged Care	56
	Dementia Australia	15
	Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit	6
	Carers NSW	14
	Community Legal Centre	21
	NCAT	14
	Centrelink	145
Referrals from:	ACAT	15
	Centrelink	23
	Community Legal Centre	88
	Elder Abuse Helpline	32
	Health professional	54
	My Aged Care	178
	Previous contact	433
	Aged care provider	58
	Member Parliament	16
	Web	228
Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission	Referrals to	95
	Referrals from	25

“Advocates continue to build and strengthen relationships with our network partners and with community groups, to ensure the older people they assist receive accurate information that helps them to make informed decisions about their care and wellbeing”.

home care services. Advocates feel strongly that staff are in a position of power and also protection, and it is essential that they also receive education about rights and the role of advocacy in the complaints framework. It is pleasing to report that there is a growing shift in attitudes within the industry towards viewing advocacy as a valuable part of quality and early complaints resolution.

In the past 12 months we have seen many changes within the aged care sector, including the merger of two

agencies to form the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission, and the commencement of The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in October 2018. The Royal Commission is exposing significant faults and inadequacies in aged care, and has allowed many people to share their often-harrowing experiences. A new Serious Incident Response Scheme, together with a new NSW Ageing and Disability Commissioner are welcome additions to the sector and the community. Working within this framework, our advocates have this

year attended 21 meetings at aged care homes where the Department has notified residents and their families of sanctions being imposed on their facility.

Advocates continue to build and strengthen relationships with our network partners and with community groups, to ensure the older people they assist receive accurate information that helps them to make informed decisions about their care and wellbeing. We have worked with Aged Care Roundtable, Carers NSW,

Relationships Australia and the NSW Police Force, as well been a part of emerging Elder Abuse Prevention Collaboratives and interagency meetings across the state.

Reflecting our focus on building awareness of our services to diverse communities, we are particularly pleased with the large increase in members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities contacting our services. Our advocates delivered 21 targeted education services to Aboriginal and

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Top Five Client Concerns

- 1. Access to appropriate care and services
- 2. Assets/income/fees
- 3. Individual care planning
- 4. Quality of Health and Care
- 5. Alternative decision making

Advocacy Work Types 2018-19

Empowering Clients for Self-Advocacy	807
Assisted advocacy	171
Representation and Face-to-Face	61

Advocacy for Special Needs Groups

Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islanders	61
Culturally Diverse	395
LGBTIQ+	2
Veterans	29
Regional/Rural/Remote	821
Care leavers	2
Homeless	5
Socially disadvantaged	198

NB: Some clients identified as belonging to more than one special needs group.

Advocacy Client Types

Residents of Aged Care Homes	909
Residential Respite	51
Prospective Recipients	288
Previous Recipients	13
Home Care Recipients	744

Aged Care Advocacy Geographical Areas

Metro	1425 clients
Regional/Rural	814 clients
Remote	17 clients

Social Support for older people at risk of, or experiencing, abuse

Regional/Rural	66 clients
Metro	180 clients

Aged Care Education Geographical Areas

Metro	142 sessions
Regional/Rural	230 sessions
Remote	24 sessions

Advocacy Issues
Raised by Clients

Access to appropriate care	298
Assets/income	359
Quality of health and care	187
Care options	178
Human and consumer rights	135
Financial hardship	96
Alternative decision making	136
Individual care planning	210
Abuse, harassment, retaliation	78
Duty of care	29
Agreements	35
Complaints	25
Environment	31
Food/nutrition	21
Behaviour management	15
Medications	18
Communication	19
Assessment	31
Transport	8
Security of tenure	46
Advocacy	453

Torres Strait Islander aged care facilities and this year assisted three times the number of Indigenous elders with individual advocacy, compared to last year. We have also seen a three-fold increase in enquiries from older people identifying as veterans and doubled the number of enquiries from those with a culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Sixty-four education services were delivered to culturally and linguistically diverse aged care services, six education services to aged care services for veterans, and four education services to aged care services for LGBTIQ+ older people. In addition, aged care recipients who live in rural, regional and remote parts of the state benefited from more education services from an expanded regional advocacy team.

Internally, as part of continuous improvement, we have seen the formation of a Senior Advocacy Management team and a Work Health and Safety team. We have established working groups on risk, quality and community engagement with the assistance of current board members.

I wish to thank the advocacy team, the broader Seniors Rights Service team and other senior managers, our CEO Russell and our board for their consistent and passionate work. It has been a year that has seen some staff members face personal challenges while continuing to deliver quality services to enhance and protect the rights of vulnerable older people.

Pat Joyce
Manager Advocacy



Social Worker Service for Clients Experiencing Abuse

Following a successful pilot program to scope the outcome of a social worker within the advocacy team, Seniors Rights Service received further funding this financial year from Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) to continue and expand the service.

It is common for older clients contacting our service to disclose experiences of abuse. It is rare that these clients do not also have social, psychological and family issues alongside their need for aged care advocacy or legal services. These complex issues can include domestic and family violence, homelessness or housing stress, mental health issues or a history of childhood trauma. In these circumstances, the social worker was of great benefit in assisting clients to identify and address some of the social and family issues that contribute to the abuse.

This financial year, 270 advocacy clients accessed our social work service, exceeding the funding target for the

service by over 100%. Social work interventions included assessment and safety planning, counselling, casework, information and warm referrals. A number of these clients also required legal advice and were able to benefit from the in-house legal service while receiving case management support from the social worker. A display poster was produced, highlighting the success of having a social worker within the legal team, for the 6th National Elder Abuse Conference 2019.

Older people were linked to the social worker internally via the intake officer or aged care advocates. In addition, external warm referrals came from other agencies, including the Elder Abuse Helpline and Resource Unit, social workers in hospital and community settings across NSW, Police Domestic Violence Liaison Officers and Relationships Australia.

Kate Kennedy
Social Worker



This poster was displayed at the 6th National Elder Abuse Conference 2019

Regional Advocacy Report

This reporting period has been a very busy and satisfying one for the regional service. It has been an interesting time to be an advocate, with new Standards, a new Charter of Rights, and a Royal Commission; it is a time of real change. We have welcomed four new staff members and have initiated a new outreach program for regional centres – Info Bingo (see Info Bingo article on page 40). The regional staff membership has increased from three to seven.

South West NSW, based in Wagga

Tammy Cabban commenced in July 2018 and brings experience in aged care and sector support. Tammy's experience and knowledge helped her to settle into the position immediately and she is a highly regarded member of the regional team.

A highlight of the year for Tammy was being a guest speaker at Griffith Soroptimist Elder Abuse forum, following Emeritus Professor Rosalind Croucher, president of the Human Rights Commission. Tammy was also guest speaker at The Riverina Murray Meals on Wheels conference. Tammy has also worked intensively during the year with local groups such as U3A Wagga and Griffith, Probus, seniors groups and residential care staff.

Far North Coast NSW, based in Lismore

Gerard Dunlop commenced in November 2018 and comes from a disability advocacy and education background. Gerard took no time to adjust to the complexities of the aged care system and is a skilled and determined advocate for the elderly.

Gerard has also taken on the position of Aged Care Navigator for the Aged Care Navigator Trial, currently running nationwide.

Gerard has travelled extensively around the region introducing himself and providing advocacy and information sessions to a wide range of older people. For example, he attended the Byron Bay Seniors Expo, which proved to be very interesting, featuring seniors drumming, cardboard coffins and alternative death rituals. He is also looking forward to the very well attended Northern Rivers Communities of Practice Aging interagency forum with its varied and interesting guest speakers.

Far South Coast NSW, based in Batemans Bay

Amadis Lacheter commenced in June 2019 and comes from a sector support and project management background. Amadis is using that experience and skill as she settles into the role of advocate/educator.

Aged Care Navigator Hub Dubbo

Lisa Johnston comes from an aged care and business background and is coordinating the Community Navigator Hub Trial in the Dubbo region. Lisa is a coordinating dynamo and has brought enthusiasm and expertise to the project.

We welcome the professionalism of all our new regional advocates and navigators and value their experience and hard work.

Shanel Tighe, Central West NSW, Jill McDonnell, Mid North Coast NSW and Margaret Crothers, South Coast NSW continue their hard work in their respective regions.

Central West NSW, based in Dubbo

Shanel Tighe, along with her education and advocacy work, has been working collaboratively with aged service providers. She has also established and runs the Dubbo Aged Services Interagency [DASI], which brings together service providers for well received information and support.

Shanel also had significant trips to Broken Hill with Dubbo Seniors in September 2018 and delivered water to the Walgett community, as well as providing information sessions to seniors in April 2019.

Shanel has been joined by Community Hub Navigator coordinator Lisa Johnston.

Shanel's crowning glory this year has been the highly successful Info Bingo Forum held in Dubbo in May. Shanel and Lisa worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the event and have set a benchmark to which we all aspire.



Mid North Coast NSW, based in Port Macquarie

Jill McDonnell's range of activities across the region continues to support the importance of the presence of Seniors Rights Service in the community. These include attending interagencies and networking, exhibiting Seniors Rights Service resources at expos and community days, participating in forums and contributing to media opportunities.

One of the highlights of the year has been the two Info Bingo events, held to observe World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, and presented in collaboration with the Hastings Elder Abuse Prevention Network. Bago Day Club and Probus Oxley Clubs had enjoyable mornings with presentations from Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre, NSW Fair Trading, NSW Trustee & Guardian, ACAT, our new Mid North Coast Aged Crime Prevention Officer and Seniors Rights Service. These free events featured abuse-prevention information, skits, useful resources, bingo games, lunch and prizes.

‘We initiated the program because we felt we needed to address the challenge of reaching the more isolated, frail and vulnerable seniors in our community. Our answer was to use entertainment, food and meeting with friends as the draw cards. Thus we developed Info Bingo ...’

South Coast NSW, based in Mollymook

Like Jill, Margaret Crothers continues to attend and participate in a range of activities across the South Coast community. These include attending interagencies and networking, exhibiting Seniors Rights Service resources at expos and community days, participating in forums and contributing to media opportunities. Margaret is looking forward to working with and receiving support from Amadis on the south coast.

A highlight of the year has been the initiation and implementation of the Info Bingo concept.

Margaret worked with Emma and Di from Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre to establish and trial the concept. We initiated the program because we felt we needed to address the challenge of reaching the more isolated, frail and vulnerable seniors in our community. Our answer was to use entertainment, food and meeting up with friends as the draw cards. Thus we developed Info Bingo, with keynote speakers, regular bingo games interspersed with ‘information bingo’, quizzes and skits.

The format has been very successful. Our first Info Bingo in Nowra had 150 older people register. Then Dubbo had 160, followed by Wauchope (using a slightly pared down version) with 55. We already have further Forums planned for Wagga, Lismore, Broken Hill, Batemans Bay and Bega and plan to take it to other regional centres.

The regional advocates work very hard to meet the needs of their regions and this involves a huge amount of time spent travelling to all areas of each region. I would also like to acknowledge the true dedication and professionalism of each regional worker; they work by themselves with limited face-to-face support to provide an extremely valued service.

Thank you and well done all.

Margaret Crothers
Regional Coordinator

Aged Care Navigator Trial

Seniors Rights Service is part of a nationwide Aged Care Navigator Trial, funded by COTA Australia, which helps older people access government-funded aged care services. The Aged Care Navigator Trial is testing different types of services and activities aimed to assist people to learn about and access aged care programs. The trial began in February 2019 and will run for 18 months. Seniors Rights Service has three trial locations.

DUBBO

The Dubbo Hub is a Community Hub staffed by volunteers and overseen by our coordinator Lisa Johnston. The Hub provides information to older people about accessing aged care through activities run by volunteers which are located around the district, such as at local libraries. Seniors Rights Service works collaboratively with Dementia Australia who have an Aged Care Navigator Trial Information Hub in Dubbo.

LISMORE

The Lismore Hub is an Information Hub. An information hub provides both information and one-on-one assistance to older people wanting to access aged care. It is run by Gerard Dunlop, Seniors Rights Service Regional Advocate for the area. Gerard will use his contacts and connections already established to engage with the target groups.

SURRY HILLS HOMELESS

The Surry Hills Hub is an Information Hub specifically targeting the inner-city homeless population, or those who are at risk of becoming homeless, in the Sydney CBD. It is run by Janette Fitzgerald, Seniors Rights Service Intake Officer. Janette has previous experience working with the homeless. Her role is to provide information and assistance, where needed, for the homeless to access aged care.

Navigator Trial Education	Sessions
Navigator Information Hub	23
Navigator Community Hub	17
Navigator Homeless	46



Info Bingo ... our Advocates across NSW

As part of our commitment to regional NSW we created information events about awareness of certain types of abuse and how to prevent it. The creation and delivery of Info Bingo is one of the more significant initiatives of the year – extending our reach and deepening our engagement with older people living in regional communities.

Advocates from Seniors Rights Service created Info Bingo to address the issue of wishing to reach more people who were isolated and more at risk of abuse. This includes older people living in regional, rural and remote communities who may not be aware of their rights, or of the organisations that can assist them to exercise those rights.

A typical Info Bingo forum began with guest speakers opening proceedings. Traditional bingo games were called and prizes won. These bingo games were interspersed with short skits and tailored bingo games, which were designed to educate the audience about scams, power of attorney and enduring power of attorney issues. A game of true or false concluded the day to test the audience's knowledge and to reinforce the information presented during the forum. The activities that ran during Info Bingo were designed to not only assist older people in identifying potential problems, but also to help them understand and exercise their rights.

Guest speakers at the Info Bingo events have included Aged Discrimination Commissioner the Hon Dr Kay

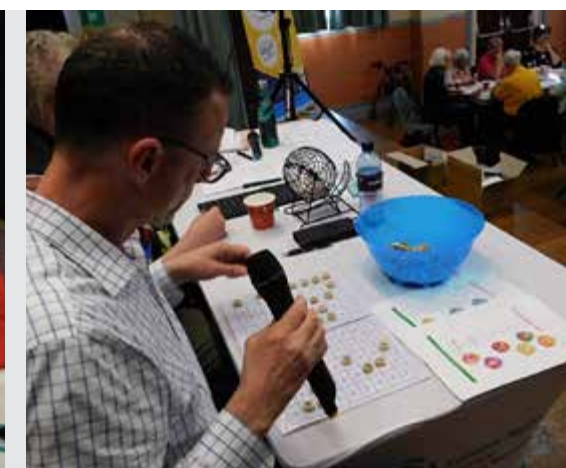
Patterson AO, former Aged Discrimination Commissioner Susan Ryan AO, Seniors Rights Service CEO Russell Westacott, and Shoalcoast CLC manager Emma Wood.

We held events in Nowra, Dubbo, Wagga and Port Macquarie. More are planned for Lismore, Moruya, Merimbula and Broken Hill.

The events have attracted audiences of up to 150 with 90% reporting that the information provided was helpful and relevant.

Info Bingo successfully provides tools to seniors that help them prevent or stop abuse. These events also address, in part, the problem of social isolation.

Other positive outcomes from the sessions include participants making appointments with advocacy staff, as well as discussing with advocates abuse issues affecting their neighbours and friends. These participants reported that they were now empowered to share the information they learned at Info Bingo with those people, and would encourage them to call for help.



Advocacy Case Studies

*Please note: All client names and identifying details have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

Case Study 1

A friend of Tom*, an older person in aged care, rang our advocacy service, as they felt that Tom was not receiving appropriate care and services. When one of our advocates made contact with Tom, he disclosed that he had trouble with his eyes and had requested help for a long period of time but nothing had been done. He also disclosed that he had left the facility on several occasions and was returned by the police each time. He did not have a diagnosis of dementia. Further assessment highlighted that Tom had significant issues of concern, including possible financial, emotional and psychological abuse by family members. He reported feeling pressured by family to access his money. Our advocate attended visits with Tom and escalated a specialist assessment while waiting for a tribunal hearing. At tribunal, a period of financial management was formally provided to give time for assessments and to look further into Tom's financial affairs. He reported feeling better having an aged care advocate who listened to him and who helped him take back control of his affairs.

Case Study 2

Dana and her husband John contacted our advocacy service to ask for help on behalf of Dana's mother, Gina, an older person living on her own with home care support. They disclosed that while visiting Gina recently they had found a letter detailing that she owed \$3,500

in unpaid home care fees to her service provider. Gina was greatly distressed as she did not have any knowledge of ever receiving an account. She had been paying fees by direct debit from her bank account for the past six months. Our advocate assisted the family by explaining the basic fees for home care packages, and assisting family members to check the older person's home care agreement and fee payment structure of the service provider. Armed with this information, John assisted Gina by contacting the provider to question the account. She was greatly relieved. The advocate provided back-up support and assurance of further escalation if need be, however the issue was resolved with family self-advocacy.

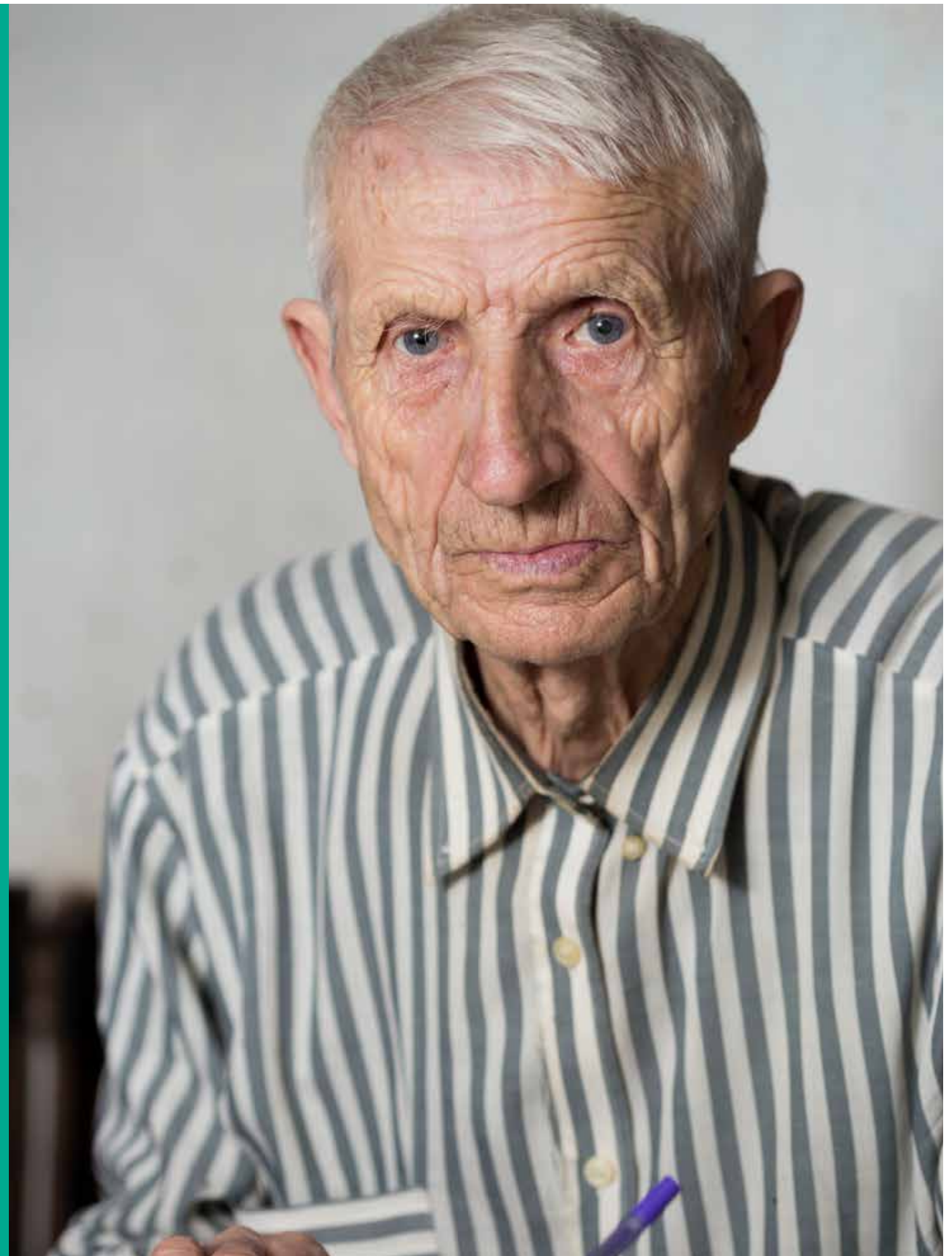
Case Study 3

Timothy, the son of Aldo, an older person living in aged care, contacted our advocacy service to report concerns regarding his father's care. He reported that Aldo's GP had wanted to prescribe anti-psychotic medication for him. Timothy disclosed that he believed that the aged care facility's staff were involved in this push to medicate his father and was concerned about Aldo's risk of side effects, including the risk of falls. An advocacy meeting was arranged and attended by an advocate, the GP, family members and aged care staff. The issue of behaviour management was discussed and everyone had an opportunity to share their concerns, with Aldo and his needs as the focus.

A plan was agreed to implement a one-month trial, which included a psycho-geriatrician assessment and the involvement of the Dementia Behaviour Management Service. Management at the aged care facility agreed, at first reluctantly, after encouragement from the advocate. Following the trial, which included assessments and identified supports to settle Aldo, it was determined that there was no need for increased medication. Regular pain management, coupled with access to care workers who spoke his first language, ensured that Aldo is able to live a more settled life at the home. His son Timothy is greatly relieved.

Case Study 4

While talking to one of our aged care advocates regarding options for aged care services, Sylvia, an older woman from a small regional town, disclosed financial and psychological abuse by her daughter and son-in-law. The advocate referred Sylvia to the in-house social worker, who assessed Sylvia's situation, including her initial risks and safety needs. The social worker worked with the advocacy team to refer the client to aged care and community supports. The client was also linked into legal advice via our legal service, and received counselling for emotional support. The final outcome for the client is still unknown but she reports she is more able to take legal steps and feels empowered to assert her rights.



“Belinda is still at home and reports feeling more empowered to make decisions after receiving advocacy and legal advice and with a safety plan in place.”

Case Study 5

Jimmy, an older person, rang our service. He reported he had been in respite care for three weeks in an aged care facility. He told us that at a recent residents’ meeting it was disclosed that sanctions had been imposed on the aged care home. At the meeting, the management had informed the residents that the facility could not accept new residents for the duration of the sanctions. Jimmy had been considering permanent residency and wondered what his options were. The advocate spent some time with Jimmy and researched his rights under the Aged Care Act 1997. Jimmy learnt that as he was already a respite resident at the facility, he could continue in respite or could enter into a permanent agreement to stay there. The advocate reassured Jimmy that the facility would need to address any areas of concern and that he was entitled to receive quality care and services.

Case Study 6

Belinda is an older client in rural NSW. While talking to an aged care advocate, she disclosed ongoing physical and psychological abuse by her husband. Belinda reported a history of domestic violence that had escalated recently due her husband’s dementia. The advocate escalated an assessment for aged care services for Belinda and her husband and referred her to the in-house social worker. Belinda identified that she has no access to her pension and that she does not feel safe at home. She disclosed that she has few informal supports to assist her. The social worker provided risk assessment and safety planning and linked Belinda into local domestic violence and police services via a warm referral. The social worker also supported Belinda while she accessed legal advice from a Seniors Rights Service solicitor. Belinda is still at home and reports feeling more empowered to make decisions after receiving advocacy and legal advice and with a safety plan in place. She is linked into local community and aged care services and her husband is currently in aged care respite.



Our Education Services

Your rights | Your voice

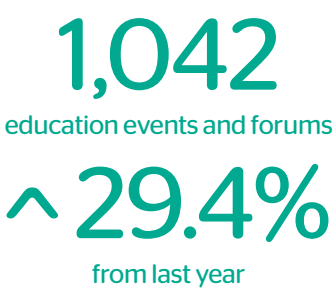
Education is integral to Seniors Rights Service. One of our key roles is to raise awareness about the rights of older people. Our aged care advocates, solicitors and education staff travel across NSW giving talks to aged care recipients and the wider community.

We hold information sessions at community groups, clubs, social and professional groups, aged care homes and retirement villages. We also organise forums and discussion panels. These sessions are offered to service providers, service users, relatives and carers, as well as in-home service providers, seniors groups, professional groups and others.



Education Report

Education is an essential component of the work Seniors Rights Service does in engaging the community and creating awareness of our services. Connecting with all corners of NSW through education is crucial as it spreads awareness about the rights of older people and enables discussions amongst participants about issues that are pertinent to them.



Crucial Role

Education sessions have continued to generate significant referrals for our legal and advocacy services, with many clients becoming aware of Seniors Rights Service’s scope at our community events and expos. Thanks to carefully tailored promotion and advertising, including radio ads, newspapers, and social media, Seniors Rights Service education sessions have been well attended throughout the year, and more than 150,000 of our publications and promotional materials were distributed. This means an increased number of older people have become aware of their rights and how to exercise them, as well as what services are available to assist.

Underpinning all of our educational work is a commitment to extend our reach to our priority populations. We reached over 34,000 people in 2018-19 through education – more than 6,300 were from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, more than 2,500 were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and nearly 900 identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, and/or others (LGBTIQ+). Understanding that a ‘one size fits all’ approach is ineffective, we tailor our education sessions to meet the needs of the different communities that engage us.

Over the year demand has more than doubled for our education

services. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety has shed light on fundamental issues in aged care. As a result, requests by aged care staff for education about the rights of older people receiving aged care has increased dramatically. People in aged care often have complex needs and issues, and the Royal Commission has shown that these are not always addressed adequately, leading to a strong need for our education services.

Abuse of Older People

A large part of our community work has involved sessions about the abuse of older people and how to prevent it. To provide more effective and relevant education, we have worked hard to develop creative ways to facilitate discussion on difficult issues with culturally and linguistically diverse groups. This is because education about abuse must be presented in culturally sensitive ways that raise awareness, reduce stigma and shame, and build trust with community. This is important so attendees feel able to disclose possible abuse by family members and are able to access help.

Our educational forums primarily focused on psychological and financial abuse, often with facilitated expert panel discussions. Occasionally, video clips were interspersed throughout with culturally relevant stories, both providing the message in compelling ways and generating discussion amongst the panellists and audience. We saw an example of the success of this method at Women Ageing & Disadvantage: Caring in Cultural Contexts, where short videos developed from a previous event were used to emphasise pertinent points about the issues faced by multicultural and

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander female carers. The panel and attendees discussed these topics in depth, and the audience feedback was extremely positive.

Awareness of the abuse of older people has increased this year, especially in light of the events run for World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Seniors Rights Service was involved in multiple events throughout the week to raise awareness of what can be done. Among those was ‘Safety and Wellbeing for Older Women’, held in conjunction with the Inner West and Canterbury Elder Abuse Collaborative, where a panel discussion and video clips emphasised the importance of empowering older women. This was followed by ‘Lifting Up Voices’ later in the week, where more than 70 guests gathered in the Seniors Rights Service office to commemorate World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The panel included Aged Discrimination Commissioner Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO, and NSW Minister for Seniors Hon John Sidoti MP. Each event was tailored to a different audience, and both were equally effective in providing information and dispelling myths surrounding the abuse of older people.



Location and identification of sessions and attendees 2018-2019

	Sessions	Attendees	LGBTIQ+	A&TSI	CALD*
Metro	442	18,665	849	1,393	5,056
Regional	449	13,048	35	1,144	1,179
Rural	99	1,906	0 disclosed	10	154
Remote	52	717	0 disclosed	31	0 disclosed
Total	1,042	34,336	884	2,578	6,389

*Highest numbers of CALD audience are Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Arabic and Indian (Hindi). Other CALD Groups include Vietnamese, Spanish, Sri Lankan, Macedonian, Croatian, Serbian, Filipino, Italian, Greek, Turkish.

Infotainment Strategies

Seniors Rights Service encourages conversations and empowers people to know their rights in all communities. This year we joined other sponsors for ‘Afternoon Delight’, movie matinees which offer older LGBTIQ+ people an afternoon at the cinema accompanied by tailored information about services available to them as they age. We have also maintained our presence at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras with a stall at Fair Day, and were invited to facilitate a panel about Diversity in Aged Care at a screening of the inspirational biopic *Becoming Colleen* at the Film Festival.

The successful Info Bingo event series was also created to address issues of social isolation and to raise awareness of abuse in regional, rural and remote communities. All three events attracted more than 150 participants, all of whom received pertinent information about their rights as they age.

The creative *Piano Forte* screening trial has continued this year. *Piano Forte* is a play developed by Suncoast Legal, and its viewing is followed by a panel discussion of experts who examine the issues it raises. This program has continued to be an engaging and

thought-provoking way to stimulate conversation about elder abuse, and screenings have occurred across metropolitan, regional and rural NSW.

Seniors Rights Service has also expanded the languages we offer our Legal Tips Playing Cards in. They are now available in English, Arabic and Chinese, and are effective learning tools as they can subtly impart legal messages.



Summary of education 1 July 2018 to 30 June 2019

Aged care service education	Sessions	Attendees
Residential aged care recipients	427	8593
Residential aged care staff	31	346
Home care/home support recipients	19	414
Home care/home support staff	13	84

Legal education	Sessions	Attendees
General legal sessions	34	1026
Retirement village sessions	29	704
Strata specific sessions	43	526

Other education	Sessions	Attendees
Community education	204	6740
Carer-specific education	29	417
Professionals	40	902
Students	8	156
Events	39	5450
Expos	31	6684
Projects	28	99
Promotion/cold call	19	19
Interpreted sessions	27	140

	Sessions	Attendees
Sanctions meeting for aged care facilities	21	1,800

	Sessions	Attendees
Elder Abuse in topic requested/provided for education	271	8133
	120 in 2017/18	4309 in 2017/18



‘A member of South West Sydney Elder Olympics team stated that, “we love you guys because you put your money where your mouth is and you DO stuff”.’

Other Engagement Strategies

To facilitate best practice in connecting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Seniors Rights Service engaged an Aboriginal Consultant to advise us. As part of this work, we delivered a carload of water to the Dharriwaa Elders Group in Walgett, and sponsored the production of the team shirts for a group of older Aboriginal people participating in the South West Sydney Elder Olympics. We also sponsored a table and cash prize for the winning team of the 2019 Elders Olympics in Port Macquarie. These sponsorships enabled us to build trusting relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, allowing us to assist with issues that affect them.

This collaboration has established the groundwork for us becoming a trusted provider within these communities, and early feedback has been positive. A member of the South West Sydney Elder Olympics team stated that, ‘we love you guys because you put your money where your mouth is and you DO stuff’.

Seniors Rights Service has continued our collaboration with cultural bodies such as Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra (MCCI) and AASHA Australia to run

educational events that engage their culturally diverse communities. These forums included a live performance and panel discussion. The play *I am My Boss* was developed by the Macedonian Theatre Group in collaboration with MCCI and Seniors Rights Service. Delivering elder abuse education in culturally appropriate ways ensures that all older people are aware of and can exercise their rights, and can seek help should abuse occur.

The Surry Hills Community Connect clinic has continued to produce positive results for the disadvantaged and vulnerable residents of the Northcott Housing Estate. The fortnightly clinic involves the Seniors Rights Service social worker and bi-lingual solicitors working with the clients, who often present with complex issues that require more than legal advice. This year we collaborated with the Older Women’s Network Theatre Group who performed elder abuse skits at the clinic to invoke discussion and to dispel myths and stigmas around the issue.

Following the development of videos produced at the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference in 2018, Seniors Rights Service commissioned a whirlwind tour to

utilise these resources to stimulate discussions about elder abuse in rural NSW. This has been an excellent way to raise awareness and start conversations on different aspects of abuse, which is often considered a taboo topic in these areas. These videos are available on our website and YouTube channel (over 5,000 views to date).

We continue to work closely with aged care providers, staff and home care providers on our core work, which enables residents and aged care recipients to be aware of and exercise their aged care rights. Relevant expos and specific cultural events in the community also continue to be a focus.

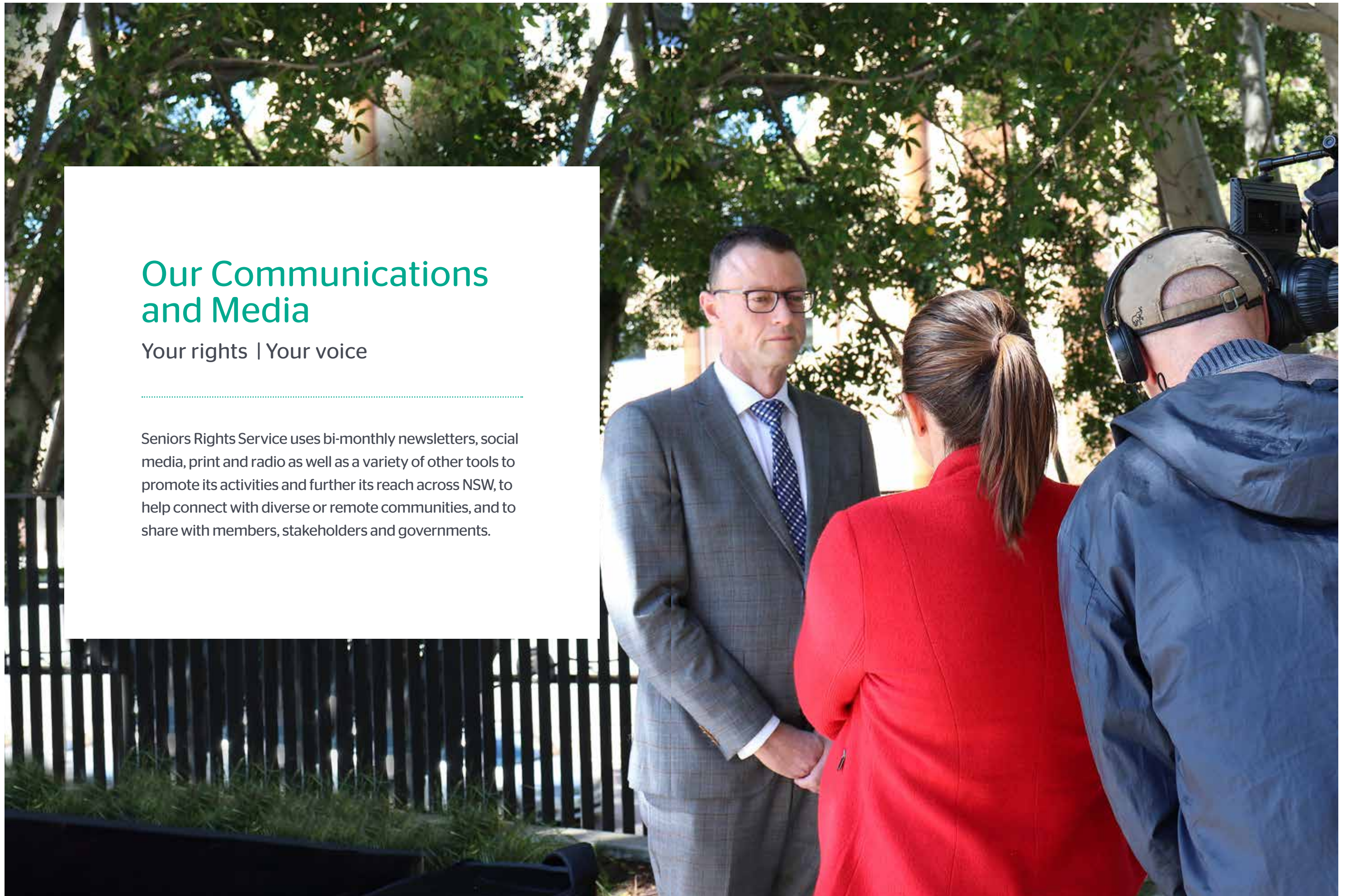
Diana Bernard
Manager Education and
Community Services



Our Communications and Media

Your rights | Your voice

Seniors Rights Service uses bi-monthly newsletters, social media, print and radio as well as a variety of other tools to promote its activities and further its reach across NSW, to help connect with diverse or remote communities, and to share with members, stakeholders and governments.



Communications and Media Report

This year the Communications and Media team supported staff expansion at Seniors Rights Service as well as a number of new projects and initiatives, many aimed at reaching further across NSW and remote communities. We also developed – and have now launched – our new website, improving its information, design and navigation. Our bi-monthly electronic newsletter has continued to inform and build our audience, as has our social media activity.

Our new website

During the past year we designed, developed and built our new website and it has now been launched. The website includes revised and updated content, easy navigation, more information and news on the homepage and is a great base for us to enrich with new video and print material. We worked closely with the Centre of Inclusive Design, a best practice organisation specialising in accessibility. We also thank Parramatta Computer Pals for Seniors for their volunteer user testing.

In the 2019-20 year we will continue to enhance this dynamic resource.

Regional work

Print, radio and social media promotion of Info Bingo events around the state have contributed to their great success – a new promotional look for our organisation and one that has clearly resonated with seniors in regional areas. It's a great privilege to work with our creative and energised team of regional advocates. (See separate story about Info Bingo.)

In the previous financial year we created a suite of compelling videos about abuse issues affecting seniors. These were interviews of

key stakeholders and spokespeople in the space, conducted by Ellen Fanning. This year we toured those videos to targeted Sydney and regional centres as part of abuse-prevention community events. We held 26 forums across the state, which promoted significant interest online – almost 2,500 browser visits to the host web page and almost 5,000 YouTube views of these videos alone. We thank Family and Community Services (now the Department of Communities and Justice) for their support of this and other projects this year.

Connecting with people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities

Seniors Rights Service recognised the need to deliver culturally safe and appropriate services to people from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and organisations. Over the past two years we developed our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), focussing on our delivery of culturally safe and appropriate services, as well as our workplace culture. We acknowledge the leadership provided by our Aboriginal staff and board member. Our RAP – a living and operationally integral document – will be launched early in the 2019-20 year

and is a blueprint for lasting change for us and the people we work with and for.

This year we collaborated with Dr Elizabeth McEntyre, an Aboriginal consultant. This has resulted in several introductions to and invitations from Aboriginal communities and organisations. In the past year the profile of Seniors Rights Service has gone from relatively unknown to being a sponsor of a major cultural event for Aboriginal Elders, the Elders Olympics NSW.

'Seniors Rights Service really listened and was very accepting of those initiatives put forward to have proper engagement and collaboration with Aboriginal Elders and senior people they really got it that for those relationships to be real and enduring, the engagement needed to be genuine and ongoing,' said Dr McEntyre.

Major events

Seniors Rights Service hosted the symposium Women, Ageing & Disadvantage: Caring in cultural contexts, held in Bankstown in March 2019. This event included two forums and addressed financial and social issues facing women as they age, with a focus on caring roles. Panellists were

from a range of community and sector organisations and discussion included issues, research and policy. The event was facilitated by Ellen Fanning and was promoted extensively and webcast live.

Another major event was Lifting Up Voices, our World Elder Abuse Awareness Day event held in our Surry Hills media room in June 2019. This yearly event again attracted a full house of sector professionals and community members and was also webcast live. The Minister for Seniors, John Sidoti MP, was one of the keynote speakers, alongside the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO and Wendy Morgan, Director of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council. Radio promotion included live reads by 2CH breakfast hosts Indira Naidoo and Trevor Sinclair.

We are proud to have both these webcasts on our website.

Acknowledgements

Finally I'd like to thank and acknowledge Dr Jane Polkinghorne for her phenomenal work as Communications and Media Manager over the past two years. She left Seniors Rights Service in February 2019. I'd also like to thank Tom Linnane, a highly valued member of the Communications team, who left us in June 2019, and

we welcome Miwa Blumer, who has replaced Tom.

We look forward to continuing this work, representing and supporting staff, board, Seniors Rights Service members and, of course, seniors across NSW.

Jane Schneider
Manager Communications
and Media

875
Twitter followers
^ 29%
from previous year

1,504
Facebook followers
^ 18.1%
from previous year

72,617
website views
^ 38.9%
from previous year

85.7% first-time
visitors to the website



25,295
website users
^ 45.4%
from previous year

34,054
website sessions
^ 40.9%
from previous year

Our Commitment to Customer Satisfaction

Over the past year, Seniors Rights Service has continued to prioritise customer satisfaction. Our legal and advocacy clients are invited to complete written surveys. Participants at our community education forums and expos are given the opportunity to complete evaluation forms.

92% customer satisfaction

Based on feedback from more than 1,100 clients

Beyond traditional surveys and evaluation forms, Seniors Rights Service uses a diverse range of methods to garner feedback from people we provide services to. Educational sessions are often attended by people with limited capacity. The facilitator will gain their feedback by asking for a show of hands or asking open-ended questions instead of written feedback. We also receive letters, emails and comments on social media from customers. There is a feedback form on our website and clients are always invited to provide feedback about our services over the phone.

This year saw more than 1,100 completed surveys and educational/event feedback forms returned to us. The respondents reported a 92% satisfaction rate, up 2% from the 2017-2018 financial year. This emphasises that an overwhelming majority of our customers are pleased with our work and that we are continuing to improve our customer service.

We utilise feedback to work towards improving our services and to ensure that we are meeting our customers' needs.

Feedback from several of our educational forums has indicated that despite the interesting

and relevant content, the short timeframe did not allow a deep enough exploration of the subject matter. In future we will seek to address this issue by extending the events, or by more strictly enforcing a running sheet to guarantee that the most relevant and pertinent issues are thoroughly addressed and examined.

Another area where our customers felt that we could improve was the delay in being contacted for legal advice, with the legal service being described as 'overworked and understaffed'. The popularity of this aspect of our work reached an all-time high in 2018-2019, with 3,422 customers receiving advice. We hope to work with our funders in the coming year to ensure that the strong demand is more adequately met.

Comments from our community forum participants:

'Information I didn't know was talked about and now I can act on it.'

'Great experience, [regional area] usually misses out on such expert advice. So appreciated.'

'Brought me up to date and where to seek advice (impartial) on very pertinent issues of ageing and care.'

'The session increased my awareness of care recipients' rights and

provided an opportunity for me to reflect upon my own practice. Thank you for the service you provide.'

'I was expecting info on retirement village lifestyle but I came away with a lot more useful information that is really essential to my family and everyone. Appreciated this free presentation very much.'

'Change is never ending and we need to know the relevant changes to keep informed.'

'I really liked the play. Very down to earth and educational.'

'Action will be taken. An excellent wake-up call.'

Where we can improve:

'There needed to be more time to discuss lots of these issues. Unfortunately ran out of time.'

'Too short - would have liked more info! Excellent presentation - thank you.'

Comments from clients of our Legal and Advocacy services:

'Thank you very much for the valuable advice to me to deal with the challenging situation. After they were aware that I sought help from your service, suddenly they (the nursing home) became more helpful and understanding. Notwithstanding that they have a lot to improve. Thanks again.'

'I am very grateful to Seniors Rights Service for the much needed help and support I received from the wonderful, caring staff. They listened to me about my concerns, treated me with respect and helped me resolve the problems I was having. The kindness and caring of your staff gave me the strength to keep going when I was exhausted. Thanks to Seniors Rights Service I now have my life back and am able to move forward and enjoy my life.'

'...I felt like I had a voice and my father had a voice...'

'Thank you for supporting me and for your help. Us seniors need a group like yours.'

'Thank you for your welcome both on the phone at reception and from [your solicitor]... I could not fault the service. It is a much needed support for older, vulnerable people who are often not in good mental or physical health and do not have many financial resources. They also may have little education or come from NESB background which puts them at huge risk of abuse and exploitation. I cannot praise your service and your staff enough.'

'Thanking you. Keep advertising in the Seniors Magazine. It is nice to know that you are only a phone call away.'

'The lady who I was fortunate enough to have on the phone was amazing - very knowledgeable, supportive and all I could ask for.'

'I hope now that I am more knowledgeable, that I will not need help any more but if I do I would not hesitate.'

'Thank you sincerely for your wonderful representation. SRS should serve as a model for all legal practices, especially community legal services... I commend the persons who answer the phone. They are calm and reassuring, ask appropriate questions and set out an appropriate plan to follow. They encourage you to explain your situation, rather than rush to get you off the phone.'

'I am very pleased with the way Seniors Rights Service are trying to help us.'

'The matter I rang about is ongoing and we will be needing the service again. I was very impressed with the service.'

'It's nice to know you can talk to someone and they will listen.'

'I'd like to thank [your solicitor] again. If it wasn't for his knowledge and professionalism the outcome would have been quite different.'

'They steered me in the right direction who to ring.'

'I had no idea what to do, but some support was helpful. Thanks.'

'I was provided with information to help me make the right decision in relation to the matter I needed help on. The lawyer was very helpful and friendly manner.'

'I cannot thank you enough for your help. Prior to your intervention, I had not received any assistance or response after months of negotiating on my own. To have this matter resolved with such a good outcome is truly priceless for me and it would not have happened without the assistance of the Senior Rights Service.'

Where we can improve:

'The lady from Seniors Rights Service couldn't help with the problem but was very helpful with other information. So I feel this wasn't very helpful to me.'

'I was happy with answers but my problem did not resolve.'

'I do not feel my problem was taken seriously enough and the course of action I felt like pursuing was not supported enough.'

'Your legal service is overworked and understaffed.'

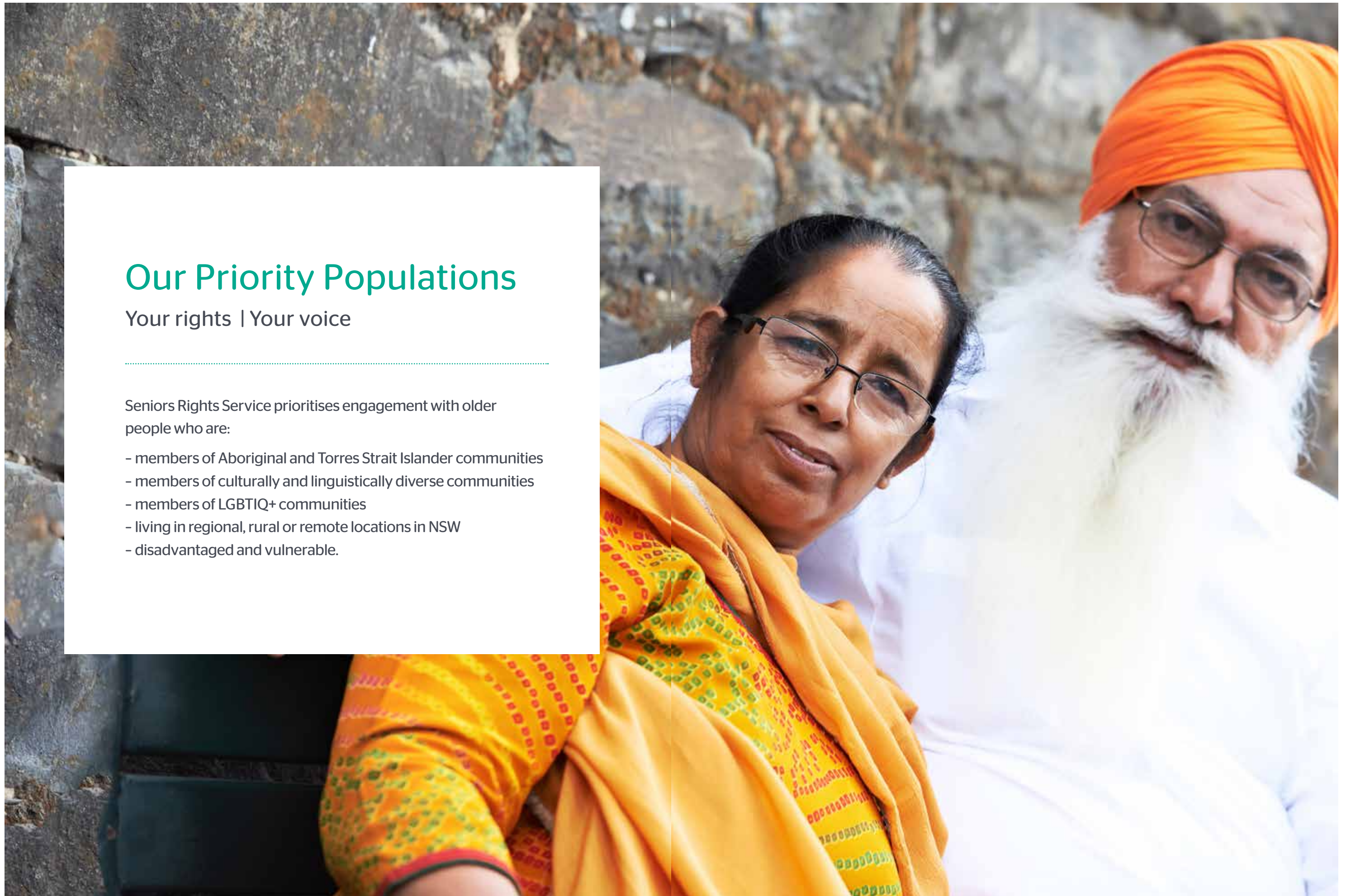
'Delay in being contacted regarding enquiry was experienced. Otherwise full praise to the service.'

Our Priority Populations

Your rights | Your voice

Seniors Rights Service prioritises engagement with older people who are:

- members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities
- members of LGBTIQ+ communities
- living in regional, rural or remote locations in NSW
- disadvantaged and vulnerable.



Our Work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Seniors Rights Service is working hard to connect with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, as building trust and good relationships within these communities is essential to ensure they are aware of how our services can benefit them. With Indigenous people forming approximately 2.9% of NSW's population (around 220,000 people), it is vital that Seniors Rights Service forms valuable connections with these groups.

To build constructive relationships with Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal-led organisations and Elders across NSW, Seniors Rights Service engaged Worimi/Wonnarua First Nations woman and research consultant Dr Elizabeth McEntyre. With Dr McEntyre's knowledge and assistance, Seniors Rights Service has made connections with several Aboriginal groups across NSW, leading to our sponsorship of the 2019 Elders Olympics in Port Macquarie. Dr McEntyre will continue this work in the coming months to help establish Seniors Rights Service as a trusted provider amongst Aboriginal communities and organisations.

In response to a request from an outer South Sydney Elder Olympics Team, we sponsored the production of their team shirts for the South Sydney Elder Olympics, which were developed with the Seniors Rights Service logo on the back. Moreover, we sponsored a table and cash prize for the winning team of the 2019 Elders Olympics in Port Macquarie, at which a board member and aged care advocate were present to answer questions about the work of our organisation. These

sponsorships enabled us to build relationships of trust with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, allowing us to assist with issues that affect them, such as abuse.

We participated in the annual Yabun Festival for the first time this year, which celebrates the proud history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through music, dance, discussion and activities. More than 35,000 people attended the festival, which is Australia's largest one-day gathering celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. More than 350 people visited the Seniors Rights Service stall, where they were provided with resources and information. We received a number of legal and social work enquiries as a result.

Our Dubbo aged care advocate took a carload of water to Walgett, where the Namoi River was dry. This visit enabled Seniors Rights Service to engage with the Dharriwaa Elders Group, and gave the Elders an opportunity to voice their concerns about the community, as well as issues affecting them as Elders, such as access to aged care.



Our Work in Regional, Rural and Remote NSW

The year 2018-19 saw more additions to our existing regional services. We now have five: the South Coast, Mid-North Coast, Central West, South West and Far North Coast of NSW. We genuinely have a statewide presence. The expansion means we are more able to reach our target populations, regardless of geographic location.

All regions have sizeable Aboriginal populations. The South West has many residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, particularly Italian, while the NSW North Coast is home to many people from the LGBTIQ+ communities. We have also targeted disadvantaged, isolated and vulnerable regional populations with a new outreach initiative, Info Bingo.

Seniors Rights Service's efforts to build awareness of - and to facilitate the prevention of - elder abuse, specifically for the most isolated and vulnerable, has been a highlight this year. In order to enhance awareness of our legal and advocacy services and of other services available in the regions, our advocates devised Info Bingo events, where older people are brought together for a day of fun, games, information and social interaction [see separate report]. These events were held in Nowra, Dubbo, Wagga and Wauchope and were very well received by the participants. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and many more events are planned for next year.

Seniors Rights Service was present at the Elder Olympics at Port Macquarie. South West Advocate Tammy Cabban attended with board member Maureen Walsh. We had an information stall and sponsored a table, and also donated a prize of \$500 to the winning team.

Jill McDonnell, Mid North Coast Advocate, attended and was involved in the NAIDOC Week Family Day, Hastings, an Aboriginal women's family day and the Booroongen Djugun Elders Day.

Shanel Tighe, Central West Advocate, was involved in the Water for Walgett project. In April 2019, Seniors Rights Service donated and delivered hundreds of litres of water to the water-starved township. Shanel also attended the annual Multicultural Interagency meeting in Dubbo in July 2019.



Gerard Dunlop, Far North Coast Advocate, participated in many well-attended activities linked to his focus group: Lismore Lads Lunch Club, ACON Afternoon Delight Cinema Event, ACON education session. A highlight was the Tropical Fruits Fair Day with 425 people attending. (Some of these events were conducted just outside of the reporting period.)

South Coast Advocate Margaret Crothers attended and had an information stall in conjunction with Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre and Nowra Legal Aid at both the Nowra and Ulladulla NAIDOC week events.

Our Work with Disadvantaged and Vulnerable People

Seniors Rights Service's efforts to build awareness of our legal and advocacy services are especially important for older people who may be experiencing disadvantage or have particular vulnerabilities. Our work over the past year has sought to break down barriers to service delivery, ensuring that all older people are aware of and have access to Seniors Rights Service.

In collaboration with Family and Community Services (FACS) NSW, Seniors Rights Service has been running a fortnightly legal and social work clinic for the older residents of a local housing estate. The clinic, called Surry Hills Community Connect, allows vulnerable older people to gain free and confidential legal advice and social support services. The clients often present with multifaceted issues that can put them at risk of further vulnerabilities and abuse, and the presence of the social worker and bilingual solicitors offers the older person a multidisciplinary approach to assisting with their complex needs.

This approach was repeated in Western Sydney at a monthly Community Hub in Wentworthville. This was particularly pertinent for older residents from multicultural backgrounds, who may not be able to access free and confidential legal advice and social support elsewhere. Western Sydney is a metropolitan region of great cultural, linguistic and economic diversity, and it is essential that we continue to build relationships with the growing population of older people living there.

As part of the Aged Care System Navigators Trial, Council on the Ageing (COTA) Australia engaged Seniors Rights Service to help older people navigate the often complex aged care system. This has been done through the establishment of Information Hubs in Inner Sydney and the Northern Rivers, which both provide locally targeted information to older people about the aged care options available. Outreach is also provided to vulnerable groups, such as homeless people, or those unable to contact My Aged Care or fill out forms.



Our Work with People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds

To ensure our services are available to all, Seniors Rights Service works hard to provide programs and activities targeted to culturally and linguistically diverse groups that address the specific needs of that community.

Seniors Rights Service has continued working with Sydney's South Asian community to stimulate discussion about the abuse of older people in order to reduce stigma surrounding this issue. This was done at a Community Information Forum, Everyone Deserves Respect, in partnership with AASHA Australia, a community organisation that provides services and support to older Indian and South Asian people. The event was well received and around 200 people attended.

To inspire conversation about the challenges facing older women, particularly the experience of carers from different cultural backgrounds, six short videos were developed and shown at our forum in Bankstown, Women, Ageing & Disadvantage: Caring in Cultural Contexts. A panel comprising representatives from the Islamic Women's Association Australia, Multicultural Communities Council Illawarra, Carers NSW, Bankstown Older Women's Network and Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council, enabled invaluable discussions about complex issues facing female carers and what supports are available. More than 70 people attended the forum and feedback was very positive.

In other work, our Mandarin- and Cantonese-speaking lawyers attended the Australian Seniors Expo 2019, an event that promotes active ageing for Chinese and South East Asian seniors. Having our bilingual solicitors present meant they could engage with more than 5000 attendees about our work and how to access our legal and advocacy services.

In collaboration with Multicultural Communities Council of Illawarra, Seniors Rights Service worked with a Macedonian Theatre Group to develop a play that explored elder abuse issues in culturally and linguistically diverse contexts. This play was then shown at three events around regional NSW, which stimulated panel discussions about its subject matter. The events were extremely well attended by culturally and linguistically diverse groups; the Newcastle event had 26 different nationalities in the audience. This meant that a wide range of people left with a deeper understanding of what can constitute abuse, and how organisations such as Seniors Rights Service can assist when it occurs.



Our Work with Older LGBTIQ+ People

Older LGBTIQ+ people have remained another focus for Seniors Rights Service this year, especially as a population whose specific needs often are not met by mainstream services. More than 1200 people attended LGBTIQ+-related Seniors Rights Service events during the year, significantly exceeding expectations.

As part of the 2019 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Film Festival, we had the privilege of attending the screening of the inspirational biopic *Becoming Colleen*. The documentary follows Colleen's journey towards gender affirmation in her 80s, and her experience in navigating the aged care system during her transition. Following the movie, Seniors Rights Service Education Manager Diana Bernard facilitated a panel discussion on Diversity in Aged Care. More than 350 people attended and feedback was extremely positive.

We also held a stall at the 2019 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Fair Day. More than 80,000 people passed through this fabulous event, and more than 400 visited the Seniors Rights Service stall. As one of our lawyers was present at the stall, many older LGBTIQ+ had their legal questions answered and felt comfortable contacting us should they require further assistance.

A major initiative of the last year was the revival and re-launch of our Q&A for LGBTIQ+ booklet, which

answers some of the most common questions asked by LGBTIQ+ people as they age. This resource was launched in partnership with AIDS Council of New South Wales (ACON) at LOVE Club, ACON's social group for older LGBTIQ+ people.

Continuing our work with ACON, we again took part in Afternoon Delight, movie matinees in six locations across NSW, which provide older LGBTIQ+ people opportunities to connect with their community and gain tailored information about services available to them as they age. Seniors Rights Service representatives attended each session and explained to the audience the value of our organisation and how we could assist them.

Seniors Rights Service has continued its presence in regions with large older LGBTIQ+ populations, with aged care advocates on the Mid and Far North Coast. This has allowed us to maintain and build strong connections with LGBTIQ+ contacts in those regions, as well as tailoring our services to meet the needs of those communities.

Some Media Coverage of Our Work 2018-2019

Media Outlet	Date Published	Headline/Program	Potential Reach
ABC News and Radio	20 September 2018	Interview with CEO Russell Westacott on aged care abuse and how to access assistance.	636,000+ views on TV
Media release	17 September 2018	Media release in response to the announcement of the Royal Commission into Aged Care and the <i>4 Corners</i> report on aged care.	Resulted in numerous approaches from the media
ABC Life	27 September 2018	Advocacy manager, Pat Joyce interviewed by ABC reporter on what to consider when looking into aged care services.	500,000+
ABC Radio Wagga	12 November 2018	Education Project Manager, Maree Montgomery interviewed on ABC local radio to discuss how to access video resources.	684,000+
Australian Ageing Agenda	12 November 2018	Editorial on Women, Ageing & Disadvantage, written by Communications and Media Manager, Jane Polkinghorne.	National Coverage
<i>Northern Star</i>	Jan 2019	Editorial on the social support services that Seniors Rights Service provides statewide.	222,000 readership
<i>50s Plus Lifestyle</i>	Jan 2019	Editorial written by Jane Polkinghorne on aged care advocacy targeted at Western Sydney.	200,000+ older readers in Western Sydney
2RPH	Jan 2019 –Dec 2019	Seniors Rights Service now sponsors <i>Optimal Life</i> program on 2RPH.	15,000 older listeners each fortnight
ABC 7.30	11 February 2019	Russell Westacott and Jane Polkinghorne commented on the mistreatment of people in retirement villages.	610,000 nightly audience
ABC New England	10 February 2019	Russell Westacott called to comment on the Federal Government's announcement of extra funding as Royal Commission into Aged Care gets underway.	120,000 listeners weekly
<i>Canterbury Bankstown Torch</i>	27 February 2019	Editorial by Jane Polkinghorne on upcoming Women, Ageing & Disadvantage: Caring in Cultural Contexts event.	140,000 weekly readers
ABC Radio	28 June 2019	Advocate Jill McDonnell spoke about the New Charter of Aged Care rights, consent and best practice around 'restraint'.	Mid-north coast
ABC Radio	19 June 2019	CEO Russell Westacott was interviewed by Cassie McCullagh on <i>Focus</i> . He spoke about financial abuse within the family, particularly housing issues.	1.95 million



Our International Work

Seniors Rights Service continues to play a role in the development of an international convention on the rights of older people.



The organisation has sent delegates to the United Nations Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing for more than five years. In the reporting period 2018-19 the United Nations held the 9th and the 10th sessions of this working group. For nine years it has been held in July of each year. However the UN decided to move these sessions to April as of 2019 – hence the two meetings in one year. This move by the UN is seen as significant as sessions held outside of the summer months are better resourced by the UN and have greater prominence on its calendar of events.

Like any international instrument developed under UN processes, it is essential to have civil society present to help shape the final outcome. A human rights convention on the rights of older people will be more meaningful and strategic if rights-based organisations such as Seniors Rights Service are able to participate in the discussions between member-state representatives. That is why over the past 12 months or so Seniors Rights Service has been active in consulting a number of civil society organisations and individuals from across Australia that regularly attend the UN OEWGA sessions.

Australia's role in this international process is important. Often Australia brings other countries on board and in support of conventions it signs up to. For example, many Pacific states vote as a bloc alongside Australia on similar issues. That is why Seniors Rights Service sees this process as multi-pronged: garnering support from the Australian government; influencing the issues that would be a part of such a convention and ensuring a broad engagement of civil society.

At the July 2018 meeting Russell Westacott and Margaret Duckett co-chaired a 90-minute sideline workshop at the UN event. The workshop outlined Australia's community response to elder abuse in relation to the 5th National Elder Abuse Conference, which was hosted by Seniors

Rights Service earlier that year, and the government response and commitment at a domestic level both at the conference and in the months after. This workshop was attended by civil society representatives from about 20 different member states from across the globe.

Seniors Rights Service will be presenting a paper at the annual Australasian Association of Gerontology conference in November 2019. While we will be outlining the UN process to date, and the members who represent Australia's civil society contingent at each year's UN session, we will make a pitch at this national event for other interested parties to join this process. The greater the civil society input from Australia means the more leverage we can place on the Australian government to support an international convention.

Unfortunately the current Australian government is not in support of such a convention as it believes the current overarching UN human rights convention is adequate. Seniors Rights Service and other civil society groups will continue to argue that a targeted convention focusing on older people can provide language that reflects the inequities and discrimination that are specific to older people the world over, including Australian citizens.

In the year ahead Seniors Rights Service intends to continue to play a key role in organising Australian civil society and collectively lobbying federal government to actively support such a convention at the UN level.



Some Highlights of the Year

FINALIST - Human Rights Award 2018



Seniors Rights Service was delighted and humbled to be selected in the 2018 Human Rights Awards as a finalist for the **Community Organisation Award**.

The Human Rights Awards are conferred by the Australian Human Rights Commission and embrace individual and group achievements in advancing human rights both in Australia and globally. As a finalist, Seniors Rights Service was in good company with the winner being Australian Marriage Equality.

This was an incredible achievement, particularly given a record number of nominations were received for the Community Organisation Award this year. Being selected as a finalist is a wonderful acknowledgement of the great work done by our staff, volunteers, pro bono solicitors and board members. A number of us attended the awards ceremony on 14 December.



Some Highlights of the Year

Women, Ageing & Disadvantage Symposium 2018



In November 2018 Seniors Rights Service hosted a symposium on women and ageing. It asked many questions such as: Why are older women the fastest growing demographic of people experiencing homelessness? Why are over 70% of older people who report abuse women? What can be done to halt the rapidly increasing number of older women experiencing social disadvantage? Interest was so strong, within 24 hours of the promotional launch, we were 'sold out' and had to move to a

bigger venue. Many people watched our live webcast. Facilitated by Ellen Fanning, speakers at the symposium approached the issue of women's ageing and disadvantage from a broad range of perspectives.

Strong common themes emerged - the need to combat ageism, change attitudes and listen to older people from all communities; how being respected, living visibly and with good community connections led to better health outcomes; and the crucial need for more social and affordable housing.

In her Welcome to Country, Aunty Ann Weldon, from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council, said respecting Elders was the essence of her Wiradjuri culture.

'My upbringing as a child was certainly led by the Elders, by old people,' said Aunty Ann, who grew up on an Aboriginal reserve in Cowra. Now she was an Elder herself, 'our wisdom and our journeys can certainly pave the way for young ones to come'.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2019



On 14 June 2019, Seniors Rights Service commemorated World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Hosting a panel of experts, the event was attended by sector professionals, Senior Rights Service members and members of the public. It was also live-streamed as a webcast. CEO Russell Westacott chaired the event and was joined by the Hon John Sidoti MP, Age Discrimination Commissioner the Hon Dr Kay Patterson AO, Director of Gandangara Local Aboriginal Land Council Ms Wendy Morgan,

and Superintendent Bradley Hodder. The theme, Lifting Up Voices, was addressed from different angles, highlighting the need for community awareness of abuse, abuse-prevention strategies and cultural awareness.



Financial Report Year Ended 30 June 2019

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DIRECTORS’ DECLARATION

The directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 72 to 82, for the year ended 30 June 2019 are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:

(a) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards (including the Australian Accounting Interpretations) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013; and


(b) give a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the company.

2. In the directors’ opinion, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.


Margaret Duckett
Board Director
President

Sydney
Dated this 8th day of
November, 2019


Elaine Leong
Board Director
Vice President

Sydney
Dated this 8th day of
November, 2019



MEAGHER, HOWARD & WRIGHT
CERTIFIED PRACTISING ACCOUNTANTS
ABN 42 664 097 441

PARTNERS
K.J. WRIGHT J.P. M.COMM. F.C.P.A
G. MIDDLETON B.COMM. ACA

FINANCIAL PLANNING
MARK MAYCOCK J.P.

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Independent Auditor’s Report
To the Members of Seniors Rights Service Limited

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Seniors Rights Service Limited (“the Entity”) which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, the statement of comprehensive income, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by those charged with governance

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Entity’s has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

a) giving a true and fair view of the Entity’s financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and

b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Division 60 the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulations 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the auditor independence requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board’s APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (“the Code”) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*, given to those charged with governance, would be in the same terms if given as at the time of this auditor’s report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intend to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

We also provide the those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

Meagher Howard & Wright
CPA

Kenneth Wright
Partner



Suite 506 55 Grafton Street Bondi Junction NSW 2022
Dated this 8th day of November, 2019



MEAGHER, HOWARD & WRIGHT
CERTIFIED PRACTISING ACCOUNTANTS
ABN 42 664 097 441

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AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT 2001
TO THE DIRECTORS OF
SENIORS RIGHTS SERVICE LTD

In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 for the Audit of Seniors Rights Service Limited, for the year ended 30 June 2019, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

(i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and

(ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Name of Firm: Meagher Howard & Wright
Certified Practising Accountants



Name of Director: Ken Wright

Address: Suite 506, 55 Grafton Street BONDI JUNCTION NSW 2022

Dated this 8th day of November, 2019

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019			
	NOTE	2019 \$	2018 \$
Income			
Revenue	3	3,485,020	3,156,037
Expenditure			
Advertising expenses		(90,965)	(122,480)
Auditor's remuneration	4	(13,310)	(16,900)
Depreciation and amortisation expenses		8,898	(7,083)
Employee benefits expenses		(2,370,894)	(1,861,497)
Other expenses		(986,298)	(1,134,783)
		32,451	13,294
Surplus for the year	5	32,451	13,294
Total comprehensive income for the year		32,451	13,294

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2019			
	NOTE	2019 \$	2018 \$
ASSETS			
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	6	996,481	1,456,944
Trade and other receivables	7	30,203	30,636
Other current assets	8	2,650	2,175
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		1,029,334	1,489,755
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	9	36,262	27,364
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		36,262	27,364
TOTAL ASSETS		1,065,596	1,517,119
LIABILITIES			
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	10	332,153	874,540
Provisions	11	440,260	381,848
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		772,413	1,256,388
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	11	81,154	81,153
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		81,154	81,153
TOTAL LIABILITIES		853,567	1,337,541
NET ASSETS (LIABILITIES)		212,029	179,578
EQUITY			
Retained earnings	12	212,029	179,578
TOTAL EQUITY		212,029	179,578

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019			
	NOTE	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	TOTAL \$
Balance at 1 July 2017		166,284	166,284
Profit attributable to equity shareholders		13,294	13,294
Balance at 30 June 2018		179,578	179,578
Profit attributable to equity shareholders		32,451	32,451
Balance at 30 June 2019		212,029	212,029

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019			
	NOTE	2019 \$	2018 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from Grants & Funding		3,260,520	3,839,509
Payments to suppliers and employees		(3,744,022)	(3,031,606)
Interest received		23,038	21,381
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities	14	(460,464)	829,284
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		(460,464)	829,284
Cash at beginning of financial year		1,456,944	627,660
Cash at end of financial year	6	996,480	1,456,944

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

The financial reports cover Seniors Rights Service Ltd as an individual entity. Seniors Rights Service Ltd is a not for profit Limited by Guarantee company incorporated and domiciled in Australia.

The functional and presentation currency of Seniors Rights Service Ltd is Australian dollars.

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

1. Basis of Preparation

The financial statements are general purpose financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with the Australian Accounting Standards and the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012. In the opinion of the board the company is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to exist users of the financial statements who are not able to command the preparation of reports so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs.

These financial statements and associated notes comply with International Financial Reporting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board.

The financial statements have been prepared on an accruals basis and are based on historical costs modified, where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities.

The significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and are consistent with prior reporting periods unless otherwise stated.

2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment of losses.

Plant and equipment

Plant and equipment are measured using the cost model.

Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, is depreciated on a straight line basis over the assets useful life to the Company, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

Leased assets and leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or their estimated useful life.

Employee Benefits

Provision is made for the company's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits that are expected to be wholly settled within one year have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Employee benefits payable later than in one year have been measured at balance date plus related on costs.

Provision for parenting leave and redundancy are made due to statutory obligations and factors that may be impacted by changes to grant funding. Current wage rates are used in the calculation of these provisions.

Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the company has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

Provisions are measured at the present value of management's best estimate of the outflow required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting year. The discount rate used is a pre-tax rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the liability. The increase in the provision due to the unwinding of the discount is taken to finance costs in the statement of other comprehensive income.

Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprises cash on hand, demand deposits and short-term investments which are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Revenue

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

Government Grants

A number of the Company's programs are supported by grants received from the federal, state and local governments. If conditions are attached to a grant which must be satisfied before the Company is eligible to receive the contribution, recognition of the grant as revenue is deferred until those conditions are satisfied. Where a grant is received on the condition that specified services are delivered to the grantor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction. Revenue is recognised as services are performed and at year end a liability Grants In Advance is recognised until the service is delivered.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST), except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of GST.

Cash flows in the statement of cash flows are included on a gross basis and the GST component of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which is recoverable from, or payable to, the taxation authority is classified as operating cash flows.

Comparative Amounts

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

Where a change in comparatives has also affected the opening retained earnings previously presented in a comparative period, an opening statement of financial position at the earliest date of the comparative period has been presented.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
--	------------	------------

3 Revenue and Other Income

Revenue

Sales revenue:		
Rendering of services	3,411,583	3,051,460
Other revenue:		
Interest received	23,039	21,381
Other revenue	50,398	83,196
	73,437	104,577
Total revenue	3,485,020	3,156,037

Interest revenue from:		
Interest Received	23,039	21,381
Total interest revenue on financial assets not at fair value through profit or loss	23,039	21,381

Other revenue from:		
Strategy Day Revenue	-	60,000
Sundry Income	50,398	23,196
Total other revenue	50,398	83,196

4 Auditor's Remuneration

Auditors Remuneration - Fees	13,310	16,900
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5 Profit for the year

The result for the year was derived after charging / (crediting) the following items:
Profit before income tax from continuing operations includes the following specific expenses:

Expenses

Employee benefits expense:		
contributions to defined contribution superannuation funds	195,627	151,528
Depreciation of property, plant and equipment	(8,898)	7,083

6 Cash and Cash Equivalents

Cash in Hand	400	400
Cash at Bank	996,081	1,456,544
	996,481	1,456,944

Reconciliation of cash

Cash and Cash equivalents reported in the statement of cash flows are reconciled to the equivalent items in the statement of financial position as follows:
Cash and cash equivalents

	-	-
	-	-

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
7 Trade and Other Receivables		
Other Debtors	650	650
Trade Debtors	2,231	-
GST on Acquisitions	27,322	29,986
	30,203	30,636
The carrying value of trade receivables is considered a reasonable approximation of fair value due to the short term nature of the balances.		
8 Other Assets		
Current		
Load to Go	2,650	-
Prepayments	-	2,175
	2,650	2,175
9 Property, Plant and Equipment		
PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Plant and Equipment:		
At cost	210,151	210,151
Accumulated depreciation	(173,889)	(182,787)
Total Plant and Equipment	36,262	27,364
10 Trade and Other Payables		
Current		
Grants in Advance	184,434	704,852
Accrued Expenses	59,765	57,307
Reserve for Asset Replacement	48,000	48,000
GST on Supplies	39,954	64,381
	332,153	874,540

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
11 Provisions		
Provision for Holiday Pay	151,245	139,839
provision for Long Service Leave	250,969	208,962
Provision for Parenting Leave	38,046	33,047
Provision for Redundancy	81,154	81,153
	521,414	463,001
Total provisions	521,414	463,001
Analysis of Total Provisions		
Current	440,260	381,848
Non-current	81,154	81,153
	521,414	463,001
12 Retained Earnings		
Retained earnings at the beginning of the financial year	179,578	166,284
Net profit attributable to members of the company	32,451	13,294
Retained earnings at the end of the financial year	212,029	179,578
13 Capital and Leasing Commitments		
Operating Lease Commitments		
Non-cancellable operating leases contracted for but not capitalised in the financial statements:		
Payable - minimum lease payments		
Not later than 12 months	184,200	177,116
Between 12 months and five years	256,253	440,453
	440,453	617,569

The organisation signed a lease commencing 1 November 2016. This lease is for 5 years to 31 October 2021 and has a 3 year option

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2019

	2019 \$	2018 \$
14 <u>Cash Flow Information</u>		
Reconciliation of result for the year to cashflows from operating activities.		
Reconciliation of net income to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Profit after income tax	32,451	13,294
Cash flows excluded from profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in profit		
Depreciation adjustment prior year	(13,098)	-
Depreciation	4,200	7,083
Changes in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/decrease in other assets	(475)	1,382
(Increase)/decrease in trade and other receivables	433	9,211
Increase/(decrease) in Grants in Advance	(520,418)	669,853
Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(21,968)	48,689
Increase/(decrease) in provisions	58,412	79,772
	<u>(460,463)</u>	<u>829,284</u>

15 Financial Risk Management

The company is exposed to a variety of financial risks through its use of financial instruments.

The company's overall risk management plan seeks to minimise potential adverse effects due to the unpredictability of financial markets.

The company does not have any derivative instruments at 30 June 2019.

Objectives, Policies and Processes

The board of directors receives overall responsibility for the establishment of the company's financial risk management framework. This includes the development of policies covering specific areas such as interest rate risk and credit risk.

Risk management policies and systems are reviewed regularly to reflect changes in market conditions and the company's activities.

The day-to-day risk management is carried out by the company's finance function under policies and objectives which have been approved by the board of directors. The chief financial officer has been delegated the authority for designing and implementing processes which follow the objectives and policies. This includes monitoring the levels of exposure to interest rate and assessment of market forecasts for interest rate movements.

16 Statutory Information

Seniors Rights Service Ltd

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The staff and board of Seniors Rights Service would like to thank all of the organisation's supporters.

We rely on volunteers, media, funders, policy-makers, partners, friends, politicians and people in the community to help us spread the word in ensuring older people's rights are upheld and their interests are to the fore.

Undoubtedly, it is due to this support that Seniors Rights Service continues to grow and deliver vital services to vulnerable older people. Please share any knowledge or information you have gained from this report to others.

Seniors Rights Service looks forward to making a meaningful difference in the lives of older people in the months and years ahead. We ask that you continue to include us in conversations in your own community and refer to us when an older person needs assistance.



**Seniors Rights
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