Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc.

WORKING FOR GOOD

Our Vision

A professional and viable organisation working collaboratively within the expanding Sunshine Coast community to provide accessible legal services to those in need.

Our Purpose

To address disadvantage by providing quality legal advice, information and education to the Sunshine Coast community through volunteers and staff.

This Centre is accredited by NACLC National Association of Community Legal Centres ® Registered Trade Mark NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME

32ND ANNUAL REPORT - 2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Our services are provided with funds invested by the Queensland Government from the State Budget and Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund.

PIPPA COLMAN & ASSOCIATES
SOLICITORS

1. INTRODUCTION

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc (SCLS) commenced operation in 1984 with the provision of one evening volunteer advice session per week, run and operated by volunteers from the Maroochydore Neighbourhood Centre. Thirty-two years later, Suncoast Community Legal Service has 100 volunteer Lawyers and 45 volunteer Receptionists providing services to Sunshine Coast residents in seven locations. Up to fifteen advice sessions are held per week, provided by volunteers and staff.

The Service covers a span of over 3,000 square kilometres and is available to the rapidly growing Sunshine Coast population, currently approximately 330,498.

In December 2015 SCLS took on a regional service delivery role with the Queensland Statewide Tenants Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS). This service covers the Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie local government areas.

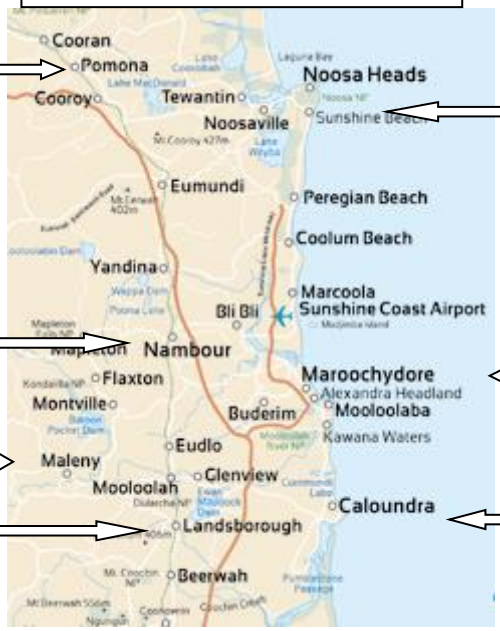
This report is the opportunity to highlight our work from across the 2015–16 year. As well as reports, statistics and financial information, there are several case studies depicting the provision of services we provide.

Thank you for your interest in our organisation. If you'd like to know more, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Gympie QSTARS Outreach
Established 2016

Pomona Outreach
Established 2010

Noosa Outreach
Established 2004



Nambour Outreach
Established 2009
QSTARS established 2016

Maroochydore, main office
Established 1984
QSTARS established 2016

Maleny Outreach
Established 2009

Landsborough Outreach
Established 2009

Caloundra Outreach
Established 2009
QSTARS established 2016

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170 Horton Parade (PO Box 423)
Maroochydore Qld 4558
Ph 5443 5827
Email: info@suncoastcommunitylegal.org Website: www.suncoastcommunitylegal.org

2. GOVERNANCE – Management Committee 2015/16

Sarah Quilliam President	Appointed SCLS President in October 2015; Member SCLS Committee since 2011; LLB, Victoria University, New Zealand; Admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor in the High Court of New Zealand in 2010; Admitted to practice as a Solicitor in the Supreme Court of Queensland and the High Court of Australia in 2010; Accredited Specialist in Family Law – Queensland Law Society; Employed Solicitor at Pippa Colman and Associates, practicing in all areas of family law.
Peta Yujnovich Vice-President	Member SCLS Committee since 2009; LLB, Queensland University of Technology; Admitted to practice as a Solicitor in 2005; Appointed as a Principal Lawyer at Slater and Gordon Lawyers in 2015; Works exclusively in personal injury litigation, including Workcover, Motor Vehicle and Public Liability Claims. Prior role in Personal Injury and Commercial Litigation at Schultz Toomey O'Brien Lawyers.
Anita Owens Treasurer	Appointed SCLS Treasurer in August 2014; Bachelor of Business, University of Southern Queensland; Graduate Certificate in Forensic Studies (Accounting), Monash University; Over 30 years' experience in public practice, audit, insolvency and forensic accounting; Partner at Worrells Forensic Accountants, providing forensic accounting and expert witness services in commercial litigation, fraud investigations, family law, personal injuries and valuations.
Samantha Bolton General Member	Member SCLS Committee since 2011; SCLS President 2012-14; Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Griffith University; Admitted to practice as a Solicitor in 2008; Senior Family Lawyer at Butler McDermott Lawyers, commencing employment in 2007; Currently a member of the Queensland Law Society and an Entrant on the Role of Practitioners in the High Court of Australia; Also a member of the Independent Children's Lawyer Panel and Separate Representative Panel of Legal Aid Queensland, and the Family Law Practitioners Association of Qld (FLPA); Also a current committee member of the Sunshine Coast Law Association.
Sarah Webb General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2015; Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Post Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice, Griffith University; Admitted to practice as a Solicitor in 2008; Associate with Maurice Blackburn Lawyers.
Bernadette Farnell General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2010; LLB, Queensland University of Technology; Accredited Specialist in Family Law since 1998; Sole Practitioner at Maroochydore specialising in Family Law.
Dr Susan Douglas General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2012; PhD Sunshine Coast, GradCertEd RMIT, LLB Monash, BSW (Hons) Monash; Admitted as a Barrister and Solicitor in the Supreme Court, Victoria; A teacher of law since 1989. Areas of teaching and research interest include mediation, legal education, employment and industrial relations law, anti-discrimination and workplace harassment law and occupational health and safety regulation; Currently Lecturer, Business Law, USC; Also a member of the USC Human Research and Ethics Committee (since 2007) and Chair of the FAB Health and Wellbeing Committee (since 2012).

Trina Cash General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2014; LLB, GDipLegPrac; Admitted as a solicitor of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 1995; Currently Special Counsel, HBM Lawyers; Specialising in insurance litigation, including workplace liability, public and product liability, and catastrophic personal injury litigation.
David Bell General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2015; Bachelor degrees in Law and International Relations, Bond University; Admitted as a solicitor in 2011; Associate with Maurice Blackburn Lawyers; Current memberships include Queensland Law Society, Australian Lawyers Alliance, Australian Institute of International Affairs, Australian Lawyers for Human Rights Association, Sunshine Coast Law Association member.
Dr John Cronin General Member	Member of SCLS Committee since 2015; LLB, Southern Cross University, 2014; Grad Dip Legal Practice, Law, 2014; PhD, Economic Sociology – Ethics and Investment, 2004; GDip (Law), Southern Cross University, 2001; MA (Mgt), Business Management, Macquarie Graduate School of Management, 1994; A corporate advisor, commercial lawyer and litigator with Cockburn Legal - practicing in commercial law, contracts, mergers, acquisitions, insolvency, banking and financial services disputes; commercial mortgages; debt recovery; corporate insolvency; debt financing and securitisation; business structuring; shareholder agreements; and employment contracts. John is also Principal, Sustainable Venture Partners. With over 30 years' experience in business, John provides practical commercial solutions to clients including listed and private companies, not-for-profit organisations and growing commercial enterprises. He is also Chairman of RTC Foods Pty Ltd, and a Non-Executive Director of Sundale Ltd.

3. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

What a very busy year it has been for the Suncoast Community Legal Service.

The year began strongly with an agreement reached between SCLS and the state-wide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS), which saw three new staff members come on board in December 2015 to provide advice and advocacy in relation to residential tenancy matters.

Early this year, we were successful in tendering for a place on the roster for the new DV Duty Lawyer and Child Protection Duty Lawyer roles. Our family lawyer, Alexandra Brunswick has stepped in to assist in these roles.

One of the many highlights of 2016 was the SCLS receiving the Sunshine Coast Australia Day Award for Community Services. This is a significant achievement, and testament to all the hard work of our staff, volunteers and students that help keep our service running.

In April, we held our Inaugural Gala Event "Lawyers Play up for a Cause". This event was a huge success and our thanks goes out to all involved in organising and running this event, in particular our own Carolyn Beaton, Julian Porter and Louise Jeffs. It cannot be emphasised enough just how much work goes into preparing for these fundraising events. A huge thank you also goes to our sponsors, including our Presenting Partner, UnitingCare Community, and the teams that participated and provided the evening's entertainment. From that event, a total of $25,194 was raised for the benefit of SCLS.

During the year, we received some additional Commonwealth funding to provide services relating to family law and domestic violence, and we welcomed two experienced part-time lawyers, Kristy Crabb and Linda Hagen to provide more of those much needed services.

Additionally, SCLS is working closely with SunnyKids, who provide us with referrals from their service.

Our positive relationship with the USC continues, as we move into our third year of partnership. It is great to see the law school student enrolments continuing to increase. The law clinics continue to run smoothly, thanks to the assistance of Kirsty Mackie and David Wise, and also thanks to the many volunteers who have the students sit in with them during advice sessions.

We also continue enjoy a solid relationship with the Sunshine Coast Law Association.

Lastly, but importantly, SCLS continues to exceed performance targets; these are the highest targets achieved to date. To give an idea, here are the stats for the past year:

Advices – 3,114; Information activities – 2,160; Community Legal Education – 30; Closed cases – 106.

In addition to the above statistics, QSTARS staff has worked with tenants on their residential issues. In the first six months of the service over 1,000 hours were spent with clients to assist and advocate, enabling clients to maintain their tenancies and give them a voice. We look forward to seeing QSTARS develop over the coming year.

The various collaborations described above have seen us add nine additional new staff members to our organisation – a significant growth to the Service. Our various partnerships and additional funding has meant that the Service has been able to take on considerably more case work, allowing us to better help the disadvantaged and vulnerable people in our community.

As this outstanding year draws to a close, I would like to sincerely thank our volunteers, the Management Committee and our significantly expanded staff for your very hard work and support over the last year.

Sarah Quilliam

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The past year has seen some interesting financial developments for Suncoast Community Legal Service, with the committee drawing on the skills of members and exploring ways to develop new relationships and to implement plans to enable the Service to generate income from sources other than Government funding. While being self-sufficient in a financial sense is still some way off, these moves have seen the Service take substantial steps towards such a goal.

The inaugural "Lawyers Play Up For a Cause" gala dinner was not only a financial success, providing a welcome boost to the Service bank balance, it also unearthed some hidden theatrical talent! On a more serious note, the development of a partnership with Tenants Qld Inc enabled the Service to participate in the Qld Statewide Tenants Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS), receiving funding to provide independent and free advice to Queensland renters.

These may seem like two small steps, however they are the first moves in an attempt by the committee to move away from total reliance on the usual State and Commonwealth Government funding and to manage the Service's financial affairs in a business-like fashion, generating profits from its own endeavours.

The 2016 Profit and Loss statement shows the Service to have generated a surplus of $145,077 compared to the previous financial year where the service reported a surplus of $3,013.

The net asset position has improved from $71,668 in 2014/15 to $216,745 in 2015/16.

Income

The total income received by the service was $926,970 compared to $471,171 in 2014/15.

The primary increase in the income received was funding of $230,996 from Tenants Qld Inc to participate in the QSTARS program.

Expenses

The expenses for the year were $781,893, which is an increase of $313,735 on the expenses incurred in 2014/15 of $468,158.

The primary increase in expenditure relates to staff and contractor costs, which have increased from $411,542 in 2014/15 to $612,749 in 2015/16. The majority of the increase in staffing costs relates to additional wages for QSTARS staff.

Once again, the continued relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast has enabled the Service to keep operational overheads to a minimum.

Independent auditors, Focus Professional Group, HTA PARTNERS PTY LTD, have audited the financial accounts. The auditors are of the opinion that the accounts fairly present the financial position of the Service.

Anita Owens

5. STAFF – WHO ARE WE?

In this financial year there have been significant staff changes due to increased funding opportunities. We have had the privilege of welcoming nine new staff members.

Most of our staff are employed on a part-time basis. As of 30th June 2016, we have the equivalent of 8.3 full time staff.

Management

Julian Porter – Principal Solicitor
Louise Jeffs – Co-ordinator

Lawyers

Julian Porter – Principal Solicitor
Alexandra Brunswick – Family Lawyer
Kristy Crabb – Family Lawyer, *from February 2016*
Russell Faulkner – Volunteer Lawyer assisting the Principal Solicitor
Linda Hagen – Generalist Lawyer, *from February 2016*
Dr Gwynn MacCarrick - USC Lecturer in Law, *to December 2015*
Kirsty Mackie – USC Lecturer in Law, *from February 2016*
David Wise – USC Lecturer in Law, *from February 2016*

Law Students

Megan Girvan – Volunteer Law Student assisting the Principal Solicitor
Sjaana Steffens – Volunteer Law Student assisting the Principal Solicitor

Administration

Carolyn Beaton – Communications & Events Officer, *from September 2015*
Jodie Bruce – Administrative Officer, *from September 2015*
Jessica Elmes – Administrative Officer
Leah King – Administrative Officer, *to October 2015*
Natasha King – USC Law Clinic Coordinator
Toni Wills – Project Officer
Greta Wilson – Administrative Officer

Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS)

Christine Lepp – Team Leader, *from December 2015*
Val France – Tenant Advice Worker, *from December 2015*
Sharon Slack – Tenant Advice Worker, *from December 2015*

Groups and Committees

- **Sunshine Coast Domestic Violence Action Group** – Julian Porter
- **DFV Partners in Action –** Alexandra Brunswick (committee member)
- **Sunshine Coast Family Contact Centre –** Alexandra Brunswick (President)
- **Family Law Pathways Network –** Alexandra Brunswick (committee member)
- **DV Court Reference Group –** Alexandra Brunswick (committee member)
- **Queensland Law Society Elder Law Committee –** Kirsty Mackie (Chair), David Wise
- **Regional Legal Assistance Forum -** Julian Porter, Louise Jeffs

6. VOLUNTEERS AT SCLS

Volunteer Receptionists

Anastasia Tognoni
Ann Kuiper
Anne Doran
Annette Kitchin
Ashleigh Brown
Barbara Helsby
Bev Parkes
Brendan Richardson
Catherine Wallis
Christina Cameron
Dawn Gwynne
Debbie Schouten
Debra Gardam
Dee Della Sabina
Frankie Pitt
Glenn Brown
Greta Wilson
Hayley Stokes
Heather Manders
Helen Cooper
Holly Atkinson
Janet Dwyer
Jenissa Friend
Jill Markwell
Jodie Bruce
Kathryn Shewring
Kaylee Miller
Kylie Warner
Leilani Carter
Megan Ryman
Megan Watson
Michael Osborne
Nickolis Black
Rachael Boyce
Renee Wallerstein
Ruth Vorbach
Siobhan Makin
Sjaana Steffens
Suzanne Chumbley
Tamara Northam
Tenielle Muir
Victoria Dawson

Volunteer Lawyers

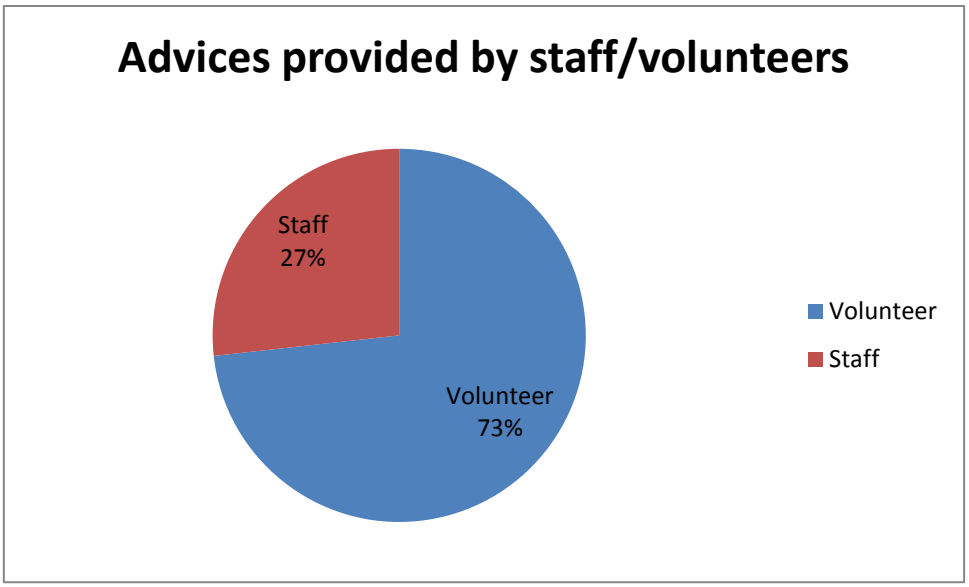
Alex McKean
Allison Callaghan
Andrew Markert
Andrew Needham
Ann Mary Edwards
Ben Rynderman
Bernadette Farnell
Brittany Smead
Brooke Keegan
Candice Rosborough
Cec O'Dea
Chelsea Emery
Chilemwa Nkowane-Poole
Christine Jones
Clemens Van Der Weegen
Cliff Fraser
Courtenay Ulyate
David Bell
David Crews
David Wise
Elizabeth Catton
Elsa Markula
Emma Webster
Glen Carpenter
Hazrabee Mustafa
Hugh Powell
Joanna Sheridan
Joanne Boughton
John Blayney
John Cronin
John Gallagher
John Watson
Kathryn Hodges
Keith Matsen
Kirsty Mackie
Kristy Asquith
Leah King
Lee McCallum
Linda Hagan
Lindsay Woods
Mala Roberts
Melanie Gibson
Mark Cowan
Mark Papallo
Matthew Woolley
Megan Garvin
Melanie Harris
Michael Robinson
Michael Bull
Michael Heiner
Michael Turner
Michael White
Michaela Carey
Michelle Bloomer
Nathan Turner
Nick Gould
Nicole Turnbull
Patrick Lynch
Patrick Meehan
Paul Clayton
Peta Yujnovich
Peter Boyce
Ray Barber
Renee Wallerstein
Rob Douglas
Robert McIntyre
Russell Faulkner
Russell Rose
Samantha Bolton
Samantha Shanahan
Sarah Bell
Sarah Bennett
Sarah Dennis
Sarah Quilliam
Sarah Webb
Scott Taylor
Shane Ulyatt
Shannon McDermott
Simon Gerber
Stephen Courtney
Sue Stannett
Susan Douglas
Tabetha Hilliard
Tayla Mejidi
Tim Hishon
Tim McClymont
Toby Nielsen
Tom Wood
Trent Johnson
Trina Cash
Tutt Matthew
Val France

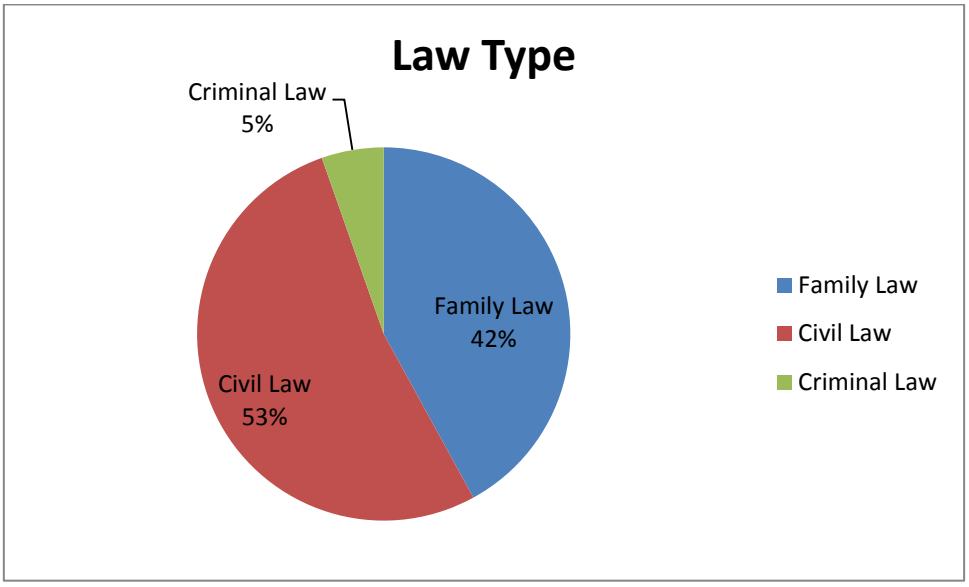
7. EVENTS – a snapshot

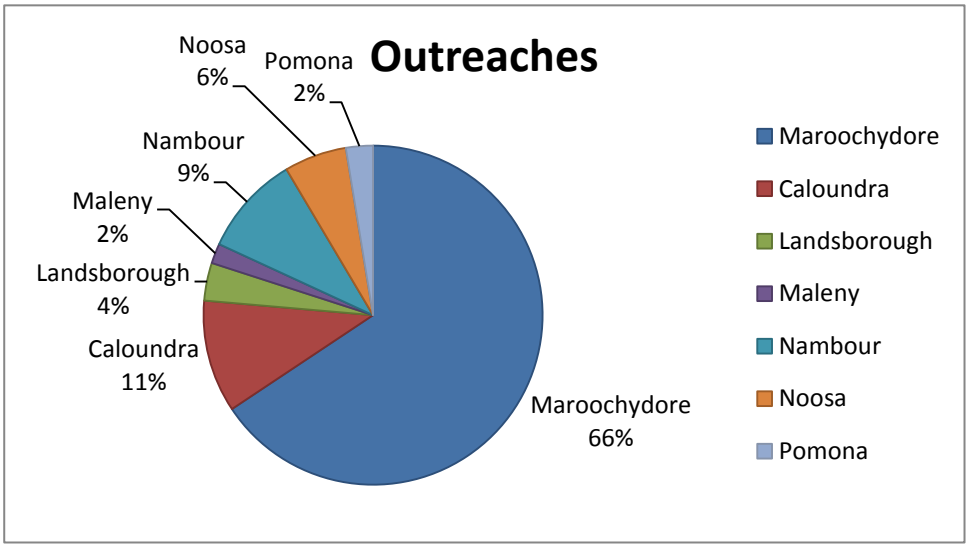
2015/16 events featured above: “Lawyers Play Up For A Cause” Gala Event; Christmas Drinks; Queensland Legal Walk, Sunshine Coast.

8. ADVICE TARGETS AND OUTCOMES FOR 2015/16

Type of Service	Target 2015/16	Actual	%
Advice	2,700	3,114	115%
Informations (information and/or referral support provided over the phone)	2,100	2,160	102%
Referrals (client is seen and referred to another community/support organisation or legal professional)	1,600	3,527	220%
Cases closed	90	106	117%
CLEs	26	30	121%
Duty Lawyer		36	
Total number of service actions	**6,536**	**8,973**	**137%**




Law Type
Criminal Law
5%
Family Law
42%
Civil Law
53%
Family Law
Civil Law
Criminal Law


Outreaches
Noosa
6%
Pomona
2%
Nambour
9%
Maleny
2%
Landsborough
4%
Caloundra
11%
Maroochydore
66%
Maroochydore
Caloundra
Landsborough
Maleny
Nambour
Noosa
Pomona

10. PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

The current Strategic Plan for Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc envisages a *professional and viable organisation working collaboratively across the expanding Sunshine Coast community to provide accessible legal services to those in need*. In 2015/16 the Service made huge steps towards this ideal, and matured vastly as an organisation along the way. Of note, our stats hit 3000 advices for the first time in our 32-year history, and our volunteer lawyer numbers nudged 100, with 45 volunteer receptionists.

Our relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast continues to flourish and, for the first time, a full cohort of students came through the Law Clinic in the second semester this year. Ably supervised by job-sharing lecturers Kirsty Mackie and David Wise, the students are bright and eager; a great addition to our practice. They have increased our ability to take on smaller casework matters significantly. Further, the University's largesse in arranging and paying for our purpose-built accommodation has maximised the amount of government funding we can allocate to direct service delivery.

The addition of three Tenancy Advice workers to our staff, funded under the state-wide QSTARS program, has given us huge capacity to assisted truly disadvantaged people with one of the most fundamental human needs; keeping a roof over their heads. It has also made the referral pathway to the generalist and family law streams far more accessible for this group.

We have always been big on outreach and the notion of bringing our services to the clients who need them the most. I am particularly proud of the efforts we have made this year to improve accessibility to our Service for people intersecting with the Domestic Violence and Child Protection systems, as well as children's matters in the family law jurisdiction. The Legal Health Check pilot we undertook with SunnyKids and Legal Aid Queensland proved a great way to identify needy clients and also some of their less obvious legal needs. This program will continue, and hopefully expand to cover more people who are homeless as a result of domestic violence. Our involvement on the Domestic Violence and Child Protection duty lawyer rosters also means we go to where the clients are, rather than expecting them to come and find us.

A viable organisation is one that can survive the vagaries of ever-changing government funding arrangements and still continue to serve its community. For the first time this year the Service undertook a significant fundraising event 'Lawyers Play up For a Cause' which raised $25,000. This has been directed to sustaining the Legal Health Check program into the uncertain future we face. As we meet, a tender for three years of both State and Commonwealth funding has been opened. By March 2017 we will know how the reduction of funding to the sector by the Commonwealth will directly affect us. However it goes, we know that the exceptional volunteer ethos in the Sunshine Coast legal fraternity will insulate our community to some extent, albeit that our ability to assist the most vulnerable clients will likely be diminished.

The mere fact that this year over 3000 individual Sunshine Coast residents received an appointment with an experienced lawyer at one of our seven locations, sat down with them, was listened to, had their matter considered, and received sensible, practical advice, is a massive achievement. It's certainly a great contribution towards the ideal of access to justice in our region. I think we should all be very proud of this achievement and appreciate that it is this remarkable level of service over 32 years. It's for these reasons we have been honoured as the 2016 Sunshine Coast Community Organisation of the Year.

Julian Porter

11. CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT

Looking over the past financial year it is now a pleasure to report on all the activities the Service has been involved in. The 32nd year has proved to be a very positive year for the Service and, for me personally, it has been a pleasure to work for a Service that is so committed to social justice and to work with staff and volunteers who are clearly motivated to make a difference.

In August 2015 we updated our website. With improved functionality, potential clients can now request appointments via our website. This has assisted in streamlining our administration and enabled the easy provision of background information to lawyers.

The website also has the facility for potential volunteers to apply to volunteer with the Service. We continue to have an increasing number of volunteers; we receive at least one application per week. We are very proud of the number of volunteers the Service engages and this year we had 100 volunteer lawyers and 45 volunteer receptionists work with us. 73% of Advices were provided by our volunteers, thus the contributions from volunteer lawyers and receptionists are invaluable and make this Service what it is.

As the Service has grown over the past twelve months, my position has had an increased emphasis on managing volunteers and staff. Again it is a pleasure to work with both. At the beginning of the year we had eight staff employed, with an equivalent full time (EFT) of 4.5. At the end of the financial year we had 13 staff, 8.3 EFT. As the staff has grown, the Service has strived to ensure the volunteers and clients are the core of our business and we believe this has been achieved. The Management Committee has been outstanding in this time of growth and has provided excellent leadership and support.

The Service was approached by Tenants Queensland to partner with them to establish the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service (QSTARS) in the Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie regions. There was a lack of advice and referral services for tenants since the previous tenants' service was closed under the LNP Government. Our lawyers had been in demand, trying to fill this need in the community. It was a relief therefore to see funding return to the Tenancy sector and SCLS was enthusiastic to take QSTARS on at a local level. QSTARS was established in December 2015 and the service has been developing and working collaboratively with SCLS and our partners for the benefit of clients with multiple legal needs.

In January 2016 we were notified of our successful application for additional Commonwealth funding for Family and Domestic Violence matters. We were able to employ two part-time lawyers and increased our administration hours to provide services in this area. We increased Advice sessions at Maroochydore, Noosa, Nambour, Caloundra and Landsborough. We have subsequently been able to take on more cases in this area and provide practical assistance to many clients with family violence matters.

This year we have also joined the Duty Lawyer rosters for Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence at the Maroochydore Court.

In February we participated in the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH) pilot project with SunnyKids and Legal Aid on the Legal Health Check. This pilot has enabled us to build on our relationship with Sunnykids and Legal Aid and we look forward to sharing the Legal Health Check with other local support service providers.

Also in February we welcomed two new Lecturers in Law to work with us and the University of the Sunshine Coast University (USC). The USC Clinic has gone from strength to strength, and they have achieved some excellent client outcomes. Another highlight was our first Gala fundraising event in April.

Louise Jeffs

12. COMMUNICATIONS AND EVENTS REPORT

I had the privilege of taking up the new position of Communications and Events Officer position in September 2015 (3 days per week). The creation of the role was one of the key outcomes of the Strategic Plan drafted in 2015. The following have been key areas of focus.

Collateral

I have updated our suite of collateral, including our DL brochure, letterhead, business cards, pull-up banner and other material, so that we have new, consistent branding across all touch points of the organization.

e-Newsletter

The e-Newsletter was initiated in November 2015 and is now sent monthly to our volunteers and partners. This includes information on current news, event activity and other social content. In the past year the number of subscribers to the newsletter mailing list has been grown to a current total of 185 contacts.

Social media

We have continued to proactively engage in social media, on Facebook, and more recently, Twitter. Our Facebook followers have almost quadrupled, to more than 300, in the past year. We have also developed video content for social media and web applications.

Traditional media

Julian Porter has continued to contribute a monthly column to the *Maroochy Weekly* newspaper.

While Julian's long-standing fortnightly segment on ABC Sunshine Coast ceased in January, due to a major programming reshuffle, we have continued to foster our relationship with the station and have been afforded periodic interview opportunities to talk about topical legal subjects.

We have similarly received good support from other local media outlets as a result of issuing media releases and being able to readily respond to media enquiries – see examples below. We have had particularly strong editorial support from the *Sunshine Coast Daily*, including one cover story - "Demolition Zone" in May 2016. The *Daily* also generously extended us free advertising support for our Gala Event, as part of their community engagement program.

Award

I nominated the Service for an Australia Day award, which culminated in it being awarded the *Community Organisation of the Year*, in recognition of its contribution to the community over three decades, its outstanding level of volunteerism, and its commitment to community legal education and improving community capacity. The award win has not only elevated our organisation's standing in the community, but provided increased public awareness of the services that we offer and forged a closer association with Sunshine Coast councillors and Council staff.

AUSTRALIA DAY

2016 winner

86 entrants for Australia Day honours

"For me, it's about sharing values, it's not about me pushing a religious agenda. It's about serving the needs of the community."

lives

SUNCOAST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Gala Event

In April we delivered the first gala event held in the history of the Service. I worked closely with a small but very dedicated organising committee. Attended by 148 guests, the occasion was made possible due to the support of many, including our Presenting Partner, UnitingCare Community, and sponsors Ord Minnett, Worrells Solvency and Forensic Accountants, Queensland Law Society, Think Office Technology and Hot 91.

We also particularly acknowledge and sincerely thank the four competing legal teams who did an outstanding job with their fundraising efforts (raising a combined $8092) and who took to the stage with great flair and good humour: Pippa Colman & Associates (top fundraiser), STO/Slater+Gordon Lawyers, Sunshine Coast Law Association, and the eventual theatre-sports winners Sunshine Coast Barristers Chambers. Our MCs Sam Coward and Nerissa Pace of Hot 91 kept everything on track, as well as contributing a great deal to the spirit of the occasion.

Special thanks are also due to His Honour Judge John Robertson (who judged the competition with great aplomb and shared personal anecdotes), Alex McKean and James Mather (who delivered fabulous music), together with Blue Summit Cottages, Brockenchack Wines, Crank Worx, Highwood Park Guest Lodge, Margi Fox Distributors, Maudy's Bistro and Bar, Novotel Twin Waters Resort, Pacific Motor Group, Riverside Beauty, Shaw & Smith, Smyths Inc Hairdressing, The Piano Bar, Travis Schultz, Uber, Vantage Building Group and Watermelon Red Homewares.

The event raised $25,194 in support of the Legal Health Check program.

Community Legal Education

Our community legal education (CLE) program continues to increase community awareness of the law, how people can exercise their legal rights and access legal services – through the delivery of library talks, training workshops, and attending community events.

Notably, we delivered thirty (30) library and community presentations, reaching 975 people face-to-face. The talks covered the following topics:

- Wills, Estates, Powers of Attorney and Advanced Health Directives;
- Retirement Living;
- Elder Law;
- Navigating the Law (focus on domestic and family violence);
- Navigating the Law (focus on family law and separation);
- Family Law (focus on grandparents' rights);
- Family Law (focus on single parents);

Volunteer CPD

The Service continued to ensure its volunteer lawyers were well prepared and trained for their role. Three Volunteer Induction sessions were conducted with Julian Porter speaking on practice management, and particularly the management of risk in our practice. He was joined by barristers Alex McKean (twice) and Clem van der Weegen on the topic of Ethics for Volunteer Lawyers. Additionally, Julian presented two different 'Three Top Topics' talks for general law volunteers. Our volunteers also had the benefit of authoritative case law updates from STO/Slater+Gordon lawyers Travis Schultz (twice - general litigation cases and dangerous recreational activities) and Liz Catton (family law cases) during the period. These events were well attended and highly regarded.

Other Community Events

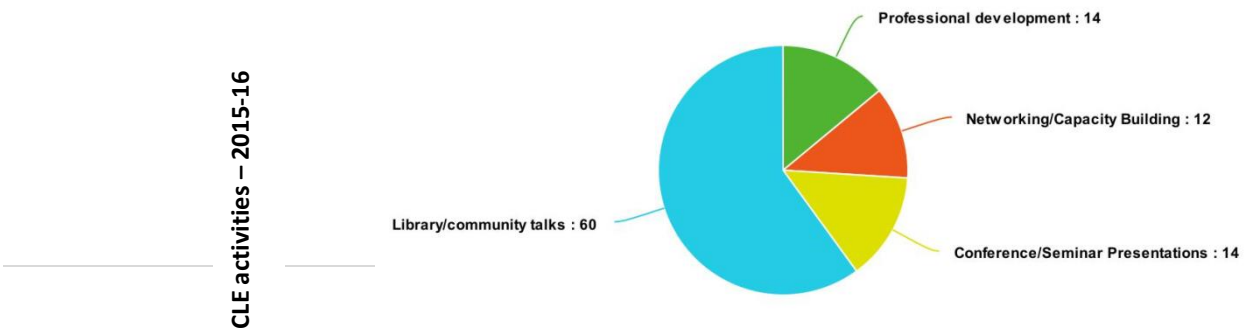
Julian and I represented the Service at the DV Symposium in December 2015, and promoted the Legal Health Check pilot project at the event.

Julian and I also teamed up with our friends at the USC Law Students Association and ran an information booth at the USC Open Day during Orientation Week in February 2016. We promoted the Legal Health Check as a means to talking to students about common legal problems, as well as the availability of QSTARS to assist students with tenancy issues.

We again co-ordinated a successful Queensland Legal Walk, Sunshine Coast and were pleased to support QPILCH, as well as catch up with other legal professionals on the Coast. We appreciated the assistance of several USC law students on this day.

We have also undertaken several other public relations activities, with a view to strengthening our existing partnerships and creating new ones.

Carolyn Beaton



13. FAMILY LAW

As already mentioned by our Co-ordinator, we have had an increase in funding this year, which means we were able to employ two more lawyers to assist victims of domestic violence and parties in child protection matters. This is making it possible for our Service to provide not only more advices in numbers, but also more in-depth assistance in the form of casework.

Clients who are the victims of domestic violence are often amongst the most disadvantaged. It is important that we can assist so many of them now. Most receive one or more advice sessions, some are referred to more appropriate support services and some receive consistent help as part of our casework. A lot of these very vulnerable clients are identified and referred to us by our volunteer lawyers.

We have also found that the Legal Health Check, in collaboration with SunnyKids and Legal Aid, uncovers legal issues that may not necessarily have been picked up in a legal advice session for another area altogether. This has resulted in clients being assisted who have domestic violence and/or child protection issues, but are also involved in debt or tenancy matters. It is very gratifying to be involved with such a worthwhile program, being able to provide broad assistance across various legal areas.

Legal Aid Queensland has provided us with funding to attend Court for their domestic violence and child protection duty lawyer programs. These programs enable us to be at Court on the relevant days in private rooms seeing clients without appointments, as they are able to just walk in. This means that we are helping and supporting clients who may not have sought legal advice otherwise.

Our successful relationship with the University of the Sunshine Coast is continuing. Some of the students, under the supervision of their lecturers in law, are undertaking family law and other legal work for domestic violence victims. Even in this context, the assistance is far reaching, from grandparents applying to have their grandchildren live with them due to the children being exposed to domestic violence, to applications for divorce. Understandably, they are generally not “straightforward” matters for people from disadvantaged or marginalised backgrounds, which is why our Service is essential.

Alexandra Brunswick

Case Study 1

Recently we had a notable win in the Magistrates Court, that we hope concludes what has been the longest, most complicated client matter in the history of the Service.

We have been acting for a client who has been involved in litigation with her former partner for eight years in both the Family Court and the DV jurisdiction of the Magistrates Court. Their two year relationship ended in 2007, and they had a child together. Our client is from a non-English speaking background, and has endured significant financial hardship.

The Service became her last avenue for legal representation after four separate sets of legal representatives withdrew or ceased to act due to safety concerns. Her former partner's behaviour rendered her unable to obtain government funded legal representation. He received a custodial sentence as a result of pleading guilty to stalking one such representative.

Over recent years, the self-represented former partner has filed more than forty applications in the Family Court. He was ultimately classified as a vexatious litigant but was still allowed to file new proceedings.

The applications presented by our client's former partner to the Magistrates Court have similarly been frequent and ultimately proven to be unfounded.

In July this year our own Alexandra Brunswick, instructing pro-bono barrister Michael White in the Full Court of the Family Court, succeeded in once again upholding the orders made in relation to the child. Hopefully once and for all!

In August Kristy Crabb appeared in the Brisbane Magistrates Court for hearing on the DV matter. The Court granted a continuation of the existing domestic violence order for further two years with all requested conditions granted and dismissed the ex-partner's baseless cross-application. The Magistrate described the cross-application as "an act of domestic violence in itself". The appeal period has now passed.

Without Suncoast Community Legal Service this client would certainly not have been able to navigate our legal system, to fight for fairness in the face of extreme and prolonged opposition, and ultimately receive justice for her and her child.

Case Study 2

A client attended the Service due to a rejection by the Fair Work Commission (FWC) for her unfair dismissal application. It stated she had failed to lodge her application on time.

We assessed that the client had however followed due process. Upon receipt of our submissions, the FWC listed her matter for mediation. The employer engaged in settlement negotiations with us prior to the mediation and the matter successfully settled.

Case Study 3

The Service successfully assisted an elderly couple in defending a motor vehicle insurance claim from an insurance company. The clients were involved in a motor vehicle accident where a young P-plate driver hit the back of their vehicle as they crossed an intersection. After filing a defence and counterclaim, an application was made to transfer the proceedings from the Magistrates Court to QCAT.

The Brisbane Magistrates Court saw fit to list the matter for a settlement conference where it failed to settle but agreed to transfer the proceedings to the Maroochydore Magistrates Court. Finally, after making an application to the Maroochydore Magistrates Court to once again transfer the proceedings to QCAT, the insurer decided to accept the clients' walk away offer.

Case Study 4

The Service represented a 97-year-old war widow receiving a Dept Veterans Affair (DVA) pension. Her husband had been a WWII veteran. The client has numerous health issues, is oxygen dependent and relies on a wheelchair for mobility. Approximately 10 years ago her GP suggested that she needed a carer and she asked her neighbour if he could assist her in that capacity. The client's needs have increased to the point now that the neighbour is her live-in carer. The carer, aged 75, receives a Centrelink pension.

At the end of 2015 the Department of Veterans Affairs requested details regarding our client's financial status and her "relationship status" which she duly provided them. In February 2016 she was advised in a telephone call that her DVA pension was to be cancelled in two weeks and she had to apply for the Aged Pension. In addition, she would be losing her subsidy for oxygen bottles. The reason given was that the Department considered her to be in a de facto relationship with her carer, as he was living in the same house.

This development devastated our client and her health deteriorated to the point of hospitalisation. She has remained faithful to her late husband since his death in 1997 and showed us pictures of all the memorabilia she has kept of him. His memory is still very strong with the client and she considers herself still married.

We wrote to the Department requesting that the decision be reviewed. Approximately two months later the decision was reversed and the client's pension payment was backdated.

14. PROJECTS

Currently our nominated projects have a consistent thread and reflect our community's abhorrence of the continued prevalence and perpetration of domestic and family violence. It is an organisational imperative for the Service to be part of the movement for change.

DV Symposium

We joined with the University of the Sunshine Coast, SunnyKids, SCOPE, In Place and UnitingCare Community to form the Sunshine Coast Domestic Violence Action Group in 2015.

The Group hosted the inaugural Sunshine Coast Domestic and Family Violence Symposium, with the theme of 'Make It Stop – A Sunshine Coast Plan to Stop Domestic Violence', in December 2015. Our guest speaker for the event was domestic violence campaigner and the 2015 *Australian of the Year*, Rosie Batty.

We are currently helping to progress the Action Plan which is based on feedback from the DV Symposium participants.

Legal Health Check

In the first quarter of 2016 we piloted the Legal Health Check, which is a user-friendly tool developed by QPILCH (Queensland Public Interest Legal Clearing House) for collaborating with community workers to assess and address their clients' immediate, as well as broader, legal needs. Our partners in this pilot project were Legal Aid Queensland and SunnyKids.

As a result of the success of the pilot project, all the partners are committed to the program continuing. It will do so until the end of 2016, and thereafter will be subject to further funding being available.

Duty Lawyer Service

Since January 2016, we have participated in the new Domestic and Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service at Maroochydore Magistrates Court. Suncoast Community Legal Service, Legal Aid Queensland and other lawyers assist domestic violence clients so they can readily access legal advice and support.

Piano Forte – a theatre education project

We produced *Piano Forte*, a radio play which uses a fictional narrative as a vehicle to impart legal information about wills, enduring powers of attorney and the subtleties of elder abuse. This is available for listening via the home page of our website. This was made possible due to the securing of community and local government grant monies from Sunshine Coast Council, Noosa Council, Legal Aid Queensland, Buderim Foundation and IRT Foundation. Written by our Project Officer, Toni Wills, the radio play was launched to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June 2016. The play was also subsequently staged at local theatres (in Noosa, Nambour and Buderim) in September 2016. A further grant has been secured from Legal Aid Queensland to develop a facilitator's resource.

15. SERVICES PROVIDED AND HOURS OF OPERATION

DUTY LAWYER SERVICE – MAROOCHYDORE MAGISTRATES COURT			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
DV – Advice and support	Every 3rd Tuesday	9.00 am – 12 noon	1 x family lawyer (from Jan 2016)
Child Protection – Advice and support	Once a month	10.00 am–12 noon	1 x family lawyer (from Jan 2016)

MAROOCHYDORE			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Casework advice	Wednesday and Thursday	10am to 2.00pm	1 x principal solicitor 1 x family lawyer 1 x general lawyer 1 x administration assistant 1 x co-ordinator
Advice	Monday	6.00pm to 7.30pm	2 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice	Tuesday	11.30am to 2.00pm	1 x volunteer lawyer 1 x administration assistant
Advice	Tuesday	6.00pm to 7.30pm	3 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice	Wednesday	10.00am to 2.00pm	1 x volunteer lawyer 1 x principal solicitor 1 x family lawyer 1x volunteer receptionist 1 x coordinator
Migration Advice	Fridays	10.00am – 12.00pm	1 x volunteer lawyer/Migration Agent 1 x administration assistant
Community Legal Education	Varies	Varies	Principal solicitor Communications & Events Officer (from September 2015) Volunteer lawyers
Information	Monday	9.00am to 6.00pm	2 x administrative assistants
Information	Tuesday	9.00am to 6.00pm	1 x administrative assistant 1 x co-ordinator
Information	Wednesday to Thursday	9.00am to 5.00pm	1 x administration assistant 1 x co-ordinator
Information	Friday	9.00am to 12.30pm	1 x administration assistant 1 x co-ordinator

The Noosa Outreach is located at the Noosa Leisure Centre, Wallace Drive, Noosaville. It has been in operation since January 2004 and is the longest- standing Outreach service. Noosa Council kindly enable SCLS to use this venue at no cost. This service was operating on fortnightly basis with two volunteer lawyers and a receptionist.

NOOSA			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Thursday	6.00pm to 7.15pm	2 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice/casework	Friday Fortnightly from January	9.30 am to 11.30am	1 x staff lawyer

The Nambour Outreach is located at the Nambour Community Centre, 2 Shearer Street, Nambour. It has been in operation since November 2009. The Centre staff constantly promote SCLS to their community and Centre users. This service operates on a fortnightly basis with two volunteer lawyers and a receptionist.

NAMBOUR			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Thursday Fortnightly from January	6.00pm to 7.15pm	2 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice/casework	Thursday – Fortnightly	9.30am to 12.00pm	1 x staff lawyer (to December 2015)
Advice/casework	Wednesday	9.30am to 12pm	1 staff lawyer from January 2016

The Caloundra Outreach is located at 58a Queen Street, Caloundra. It has been in operation since March 2009. There are many programs operating from the centre and therefore referrals are very common. This service operates on a fortnightly basis with two volunteer lawyers and a receptionist as well as during the day on a fortnightly basis with a staff lawyer.

CALOUNDRA			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Wednesday	6.00pm to 7.15pm	2 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice/casework	– Thursday	9.30 – 12.00pm	1 staff lawyer
Advice/casework	Thursday – Fortnightly	9.30 – 12.00pm	1 x family lawyer (to December 2015)

The Landsborough Outreach is located at Morris House Neighbourhood Centre, 478 Old Landsborough Road, Landsborough. The Landsborough Outreach service has been in operation since June 2009.

LANDSBOROUGH			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Monday – fortnightly	6.00pm to 7.15pm	1 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist

The Maleny Outreach is located at the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre, 17 Bicentenary Lane, Maleny which is a hub of activity in the community. The Outreach has been in operation since October 2009

MALENY			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Monday –fortnightly	6.00pm to 7.15pm	1 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist
Advice/casework	Monday – fortnightly	9.30 – 11.30am	1 x staff lawyer

The Pomona Outreach is located at the Pomona Community and District House, 1 Memorial Drive, Pomona. The volunteer receptionists volunteer at the Community Centre and are aware of services available in the local community. The Outreach has been in operation since May 2010.

Pomona			
Service	***Day***	***Time***	***Provided by***
Advice	Tuesday – fortnightly	6.00pm to 7.15pm	1 x volunteer lawyers 1 x volunteer receptionist

16. USC PARTNERSHIP

The successful and valuable relationship between Suncoast Community Legal Service and the University of the Sunshine Coast continued into its third year in 2015/2016.

In this financial year:

(a) *191* first year law students participated in a one-off clinical experience with volunteer legal practitioners on Tuesday nights. They attend in both first and second semester;

(b) *15* third-year law students undertook semester-long placements with the Service as part of the Law Professional Practice subject offered by the University.

The Tuesday night program for first years involves 12 students each week assisting the three volunteer solicitors with their advice session. The students conduct a pre-advice interview with the client, brief the volunteer solicitor, and then sit in while the practitioner provides advice to the client. It is a valuable early-immersion clinical experience for the students, and an opportunity for them to meet and assist the local practitioners who volunteer with the Service.

In Legal Professional Practice, groups of three to five 3rd and 4th year students spend one day per week at the Service doing client interviews and ongoing casework, supervised by qualified practitioners employed by the University. This program is of enormous benefit to the students as they gain the invaluable practical experience and skills needed to kick-start their legal careers. It also benefits the wider community, as the students perform additional casework for disadvantaged clients that would otherwise have been beyond the capacity of the Service.

During 2015/2016, students opened and worked on 83 cases, with a number of successes.

The program also completed 219 client advices, with students subsequently able to use their skills to enhance the detail of advice given and to render further assistance to many clients whose matters didn't become 'cases'.

Sadly, the Service said good-bye to Dr Gwynn MacCarrick in late 2015. Gwynn had been on placement here from the University since 2013, and was integral in establishing the programs for law students. Gwynn's role at the Service is now shared by two practitioners employed by the University, Kirsty Mackie and David Wise, who have settled in well, thanks to the support of the USC Law Faculty, and the team at the Service.

Case Study 5

An 80-year-old client had been driving for 60 years without a traffic infringement. He suffered a slight stroke approximately 4 years ago which impaired his speech slightly but with no other side effects. The client's GP decided, without any cognitive or capacity assessments, that purely due to the client's age he should not be driving any longer. The GP referred the client to an occupational therapist who deemed that he was unable to drive as she found he was 'argumentative' and then charged him $500.00. The client was forced to surrender his drivers' licence at the Department of Transport the following day.

The client lived in a small village with no public transport and relied on his vehicle to take him to shops and social outings. Without his licence, he was completely socially isolated.

The client attended our Service to obtain some advice. He was advised to seek a second medical opinion and to obtain the relevant cognitive and capacity assessments, as well as an eye test for good measure.

The client received a clean bill of health from the second GP who was more than happy to attest to the client's cognitive capacity and sign the relevant Department of Transport paperwork. The Department of Transport returned the client's licence and the client returned to the Service bearing flowers for the solicitor and students who assisted him.

Case Study 6

A client from a non-English speaking background had arrived in Australia as a refugee approximately 8 years ago with his wife and young daughter. The client held several lowly paid casual jobs to support his wife and daughter but needed a higher income as they had decided to apply for Australian citizenship which was expensive. He had decided on training to become a taxi driver and made the relevant applications however received a "show cause" letter from the Department of Transport advising him that, due to three driving offences, that they were going to refuse his application unless he gave them a reason not to.

Upon review of the letter and the offences, the Service wrote a submission to the Department explaining the unfortunate set of circumstances which led to the driving offences. The client had obtained a drivers' licence on his arrival in Australia but did not appreciate it was a restricted licence so when he was caught speeding on one occasion he lost his licence. His licence was suspended for three months due to expire on 15 May. The client interpreted this to mean he could resume driving on 15 May and was unfortunately picked up by the police on 15 May and he was charged with driving on a suspended licence.

Upon a full explanation of the circumstances and the unintentional error of the client by the Service, the Department decided to issue the client with a taxi licence.

Case Study 7

An elderly couple suffered damage to their vehicle when it hit some low hanging power lines on a road. Sagging of the lines was caused by a rotten tree that had fallen on them. The energy company initially refused the request for compensation. We researched the legal position, wrote to the company, and they subsequently agreed to pay compensation to our clients.

Case Study 8

We assisted an employee to secure $5000 in back pay from his employer as a result of underpayment over a two year period. Papers had been prepared for the client to bring the matter before the Magistrates Court and the matter settled upon the employer being served with the documents.

Case Study 9

An elderly pensioner had purchased a new car and wished to tow his caravan so required some auto electrical work done on the vehicle. He obtained several quotes and decided to use a local provider who held themselves out to be qualified auto electricians. Upon collecting his vehicle he noticed several warning lights flashing, so returned the vehicle to the mechanic who advised him it just needed to be "run in". The warning lights persisted and the client took the vehicle back to the mechanic a few days later and left the vehicle for the day to be looked at. He collected the vehicle and noted an additional problem had arisen in that the internal lights in the car would remain on whilst driving.

The client took the vehicle to another mechanic who declined to do any work on the vehicle as it had been wired incorrectly and was potentially dangerous. The client became very concerned and returned the vehicle to the mechanic who had the car for another day and announced it was fixed.

A further three visits to the mechanic failed to fix the problem so the client took his vehicle to the authorised dealer who fixed the problem at a cost of $4700.00. The client asked the original mechanic to compensate him for the repairs but the mechanic denied he had been part of the problem and if he had that his insurer would not cover the damage caused. The client lived in a remote location alone and relied on his vehicle to get into town.

The Service assisted the client with preparing a QCAT application for minor debt and upon filing and serving the application on the mechanic, the client received full payment of his claim from the mechanic.

17. QUEENSLAND STATEWIDE TENANT ADVICE AND REFERRAL SERVICE (QSTARS)

QSTARS commenced operation from our Maroochydore office in December 2015, following our securing of a contract as a regional service provider with lead tenderer, Tenants Queensland. Two tenancy advice workers and a team leader were recruited to administer the program.

Our QSTARS team provides specialised tenancy advice, advocacy and referral services to tenants within the North Coast region (Sunshine Coast, Noosa and Gympie regional government areas).

QSTARS has experienced a steady growth in clients accessing the service and assisted many to successful outcomes at QCAT. They have also engaged with community support workers, housing networks, Magistrates Courts and, overall, the service has been very well received in the community.

The team has outreach visits to Gympie, Caloundra and Nambour, operating from local community centres:

- Caloundra - every Monday
- Gympie - every Tuesday
- Nambour - every Thursday

The community centre networks within these areas assist our team to provide holistic support and outcomes, particularly to those at risk of homelessness.

Case Study 10

A Sunshine Coast tenant came to see us as her unit complex was being sold to developers. The developers, not yet owners, came to the site to give all the tenants notices requiring them to vacate the property after the sale of the premises was transacted. The tenants had lease agreements in place not due to expire for another three months. The developer advised the tenants the property would be demolished and they should find alternative accommodation without delay.

Our Service contacted the developer to advise that the tenants' had lease agreements in place and they had the right to reside at the premises and leave on the giving of two months' notice. The developer advised he did not care if they were there or not, the demolition team would be coming in and demolishing the building.

Our Service then sent a formal letter to the developer advising they could not demolish the premises nor harass the tenants on site and they must have vacant possession. There was no formal response, nor any offer from the developer to relocate the tenants or offer compensation to assist them to move early.

When the contract of sale was finalised within days the developer arrived on site with the demolition team and began demolishing the premises with our client still living in her unit. Her unit was a bottom unit of two and the bulldozer started demolishing the unit above her, pulling out asbestos all around her. She was told to get inside, while the demolition team wore protective clothing.

The client contacted the Service and we immediately arranged for a stop work order. At this time our client sought medical advice. With our client's permission, we also shared her story with the media. We were ultimately able to negotiate a financial settlement for our client to move on. The matter is still being investigated by Workplace Health and Safety.

Case Study 11

A tenant sought to have her name taken off her and her partner's lease agreement as she had to flee as a result of domestic violence and was left homeless.

Our Service assisted her to make an application to QCAT to have her name removed from the lease from the date she vacated the property at no penalty to her under the damage and injury provisions of the *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act*.

The Tribunal subsequently ordered her name be removed from the lease agreement from the date she vacated the premises at no penalty.

Case Study 12

We acted for two separate tenants who lived in houses on either side of their landlord's residence. One tenant is a single mother with children who had escaped domestic violence. The other tenants are a couple on disability pensions.

There were a number of issues of concern to the tenants. The landlord suffered from an alcohol problem and would, on occasion, fire his gun across both properties, resulting in the police being called. The police did not take the landlord's gun from him. The landlord did not keep rental ledgers and when intoxicated would also abuse the tenants and say they owed him rental money. Sewerage was present in the backyard due to overflow of septic tanks. The children could not play in the yard. The landlord berated their mother when she failed to mow the lawn in the affected area. The landlord would also make uninvited visits to both properties and make unwanted sexual and inappropriate comments to the female tenants. Both properties were in poor repair and the single mother had to buy and install her own stove because the landlord refused to replace the existing one which did not work. The landlord also controls their power supply and recently cut off electricity to the single mother's house which made it difficult for her to get water and to cook, etc. When she complained he again fired his gun across her property.

Our Service was able to advocate for both tenants, taking into account their personal safety and the possibility of financial penalty if they left the premises early. We advocated for the single mother to be housed with the Department of Housing and gave her confidence to assert her rights by learning about the law, and the processes to follow to assist her to leave the property safely.

Both tenants subsequently issued several breach notices to the landlord and they were advised by our Service they could then leave by the giving of two weeks' notice at any time.

Both tenants have now left their rental properties in a way that has protected them from financial damage from the landlord.

18. AUDITOR'S REPORT

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc.
WORKING FOR GOOD

Financial Report

For the Year Ended

30 June 2016

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. A.B.N. 21 409 016 380

Financial Report for the Year Ended 30 June 2016

COMMITTEE'S REPORT

Your committee members submit the financial report of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. for the financial year ended 30 June 2016.

Committee Members

The names of committee members during the financial year were::

Sarah Quilliam (President)	Anita Owens (Treasurer)
Peta Yujnovich (Vice President)	David Bell
Samantha Bolton	Trina Cash
John Cronin (resigned May 2016)	Susan Douglas
Bernadette Farnell	Sarah Webb

Please note **Julian Porter** has been the Services Principal Solicitor since 2007 and **Louise Jeffs** has been the Service Co-ordinator since 2008 and is the Secretary.

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were to provide legal advice, information and education to members of the Sunshine Coast community.

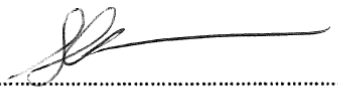
Significant Changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating Result

The result for 2016 amounted to a surplus of $145,077 (2015: surplus $3,013).
There was no income tax.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the members of the committee.



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Sarah Quilliam (President)

Dated: 14/09/16

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. A.B.N. 21 409 016 380

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

Income	**2016**	**2015**
Donations	19,494	16,890
Fundraising Activities & Services	187,764	59,853
State Funding	259,732	252,473
Commonwealth Funding	130,282	17,653
Additional Commonwealth Funding	81,834	110,023
Tennants QLD Inc Funding	230,996	0
Subsidies & Grants	13,627	11,748
Interest earned	3,241	2,532
Total Income	**926,970**	**471,171**
Expenses		
Bank Charges	286	288
Depreciation expense	3,658	5,081
Advertising / Signwriting	6,916	748
Sundry operational costs	2,052	734
Fundraising & Event costs	25,465	1,188
Dues & Subscriptions	9,557	4,846
Conferences	6,860	3,568
Staff training	858	424
Equipment Rental Expense	1,177	1,284
Security & Alarms	0	732
Insurance	3,707	1,708
Accounting & Audit	8,318	6,020
Service Fee - SCLS	46,000	0
Contract Legal Firms	0	19,909
Staff Amenities	527	561
Volunteer recognition	474	355
Recruitment costs	881	0
Superannuation	50,149	28,757
Committee meeting expenses	2,223	726
Wages & Salaries	529,342	307,259
Wages - Telephone Allowance	138	63
Workers' Compensation	921	204
Annual Leave expense	11,865	2,131
Sick Leave expense	11,232	38,203
Long Service Leave expense	9,102	15,016
Postage, Stationery & Printing	9,862	4,039
Rent	2,254	595
Telephone	11,763	6,385
Computer & Equip maintenance	5,069	2,337
Website and Internet	10,677	8,410
Travel & Entertainment	1,998	1,611
Outreach Expenses	8,564	4,978
Total Expenses	**781,893**	**468,158**
Net Surplus / (Deficit)	**145,077**	**3,013**

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc.
Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Statement of Income & Expenditure for the Funding
For the Year Ending 30 June 2016

	calculations	2016	Notes
Income			1
Service delivery funding - Queensland	(a)	259,732	2
Service delivery funding - Commonwealth	(b)	212,116	3
Allowable surplus from previous year	(c)	27,740	4
Approved excess surplus from previous year	(d)	0	5
Fees and Charges	(e)	0	6
Other Income (service generated and other related to the Funding)	(f)	52,479	7
Total Income	(g)	**552,067**	
Expenditure			8
Salaries and Wages	(h)	475,962	9
Other Operating Expenditure	(i)	74,528	10
Total Expenditure	(j=h+i)	**550,490**	
Surplus / (Loss)	(k=g-j)	**$1,577**	
Allowable Surplus	(l=g*15%)	82,810	11
Funding Repayable to the Department (Excess Surplus)	(m=k-l)	0	12

Notes

1	Actual and accrues income related to the Funding
2	Operating funds received from a State Government entity for specified goods or services (Queensland funding)
3	Operating funds received from a State Government entity for specified goods or services (Commonwealth funding)
4	Accrued income related to the Funding
5	Approved accrued income related to the Funding
6	Payments from third parties for the consumption of goods and services initially funded by a State Government entity
7	Other income derived from the funded Services or other sources related to the Funding
8	Expenditure related to the Total Income
9	Salaries and on-costs
10	Remainder of expenditure excluding Salaries and Wages
11	Maximum allowable surplus that may be carried over to the next financial year (up to 15% of the Surplus / Loss)
12	Funding repayable to the Department (excess surplus) (over 15% of the Surplus / Loss)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2016

	2016	2015
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cheque Account Bendigo Bank	179,574	104,042
Term Deposit Bendigo Bank	100,562	44,316
Dep. Bendigo Bank - Staff Entitlements	6,722	0
Business Mastercard	539	0
Petty Cash	23	23
Total Cash at Bank	287,419	148,381
Trade Debtors	79,200	13,140
Total Current Assets	366,619	161,521
Furniture & Fixtures at Cost	64,851	61,403
Furniture & Fixtures Accum Dep	(60,640)	(56,982)
Total Furniture & Fixtures	4,211	4,421
Total Assets	**370,830**	**165,941**
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Trade Creditors	44,006	22,399
GST Payable	7,200	1,195
Provision for Annual Leave	25,896	14,031
Provision for Sick Leave	49,435	38,203
Total Current Liabilities	126,537	75,827
Provision for Long Service Leave	27,548	18,446
Total Liabilities	**154,085**	**94,273**
Net Assets	**216,745**	**71,668**
Members' Funds		
Retained Earnings	71,668	70,818
Prior period adjustment	0	(2,163)
Current Year Surplus/(Deficit)	145,077	3,013
Total Members' Funds	**216,745**	**71,668**

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981(Qld).* The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report.

a. **Income Tax**

Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. is a registered Public Benevolent Institution and endorsed as exempt from Income Tax.

b. **Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE)**

Leasehold improvements and office equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation.

The depreciable amount of all PPE is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

c. **Impairment of Assets**

At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the income statement.

d. **Employee Benefits**

Provision is made for the association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. The benefits include wages & salaries, annual leave, sick leave and long service leave. Employee liabilities are classified as current where management do not have the unconditional right to defer settlement beyond 12 months. Superannuation is paid to employees based on statutory rates. The Associations legal or constructive obligation is limited to obligations to defined contribution funds for all applicable staff. Contributions are recognised as a n expense as they become payable.

e. **Provisions**

Provisions are recognised when the association 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 best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

f. **Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

g. **Revenue and Other Income**

Revenue is measured at the fair value of the consideration received or receivable after taking into account any trade discounts and volume rebates allowed. For this purpose, deferred consideration is not discounted to present values when recognising revenue.

NOTE 1: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Dividend revenue is recognised when the right to receive a dividend has been established.

Grant and donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds, which is generally at the time of receipt.

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

h. **Goods and Services Tax (GST)**

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Tax Office. In these circumstances, the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the assets and liabilities statement are shown inclusive of GST.

i. **Investments**

Investments held are originally recognised at cost, which includes transaction costs. They are subsequently measured at fair value which is equivalent to their market bid price at the end of the reporting period. Movements in fair value are recognised through an equity reserve.

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the committee the financial report as set out above:

1. Presents fairly the financial position of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. as at 30 June 2016 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

President .....

Sarah Quilliam

Dated: 7/09/16.

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF SUNCOAST COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.

Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc., which comprises the Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2016, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, Statement of Profit & Loss for the Funding, a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the statement by members of the committee.

Committee's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The committee of the association is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report, are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The committee's responsibilities also include designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report 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. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the committee's financial reporting obligations under the Associations Incorporation Act. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

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

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the independence requirements of Australian professional ethical pronouncements.

Qualified Auditor's Opinion

As is common to organisations of this type, it is not practicable for the Association to maintain an effective system of internal control over donations received by cash until their initial entry in the accounting records. Therefore we are unable to place sufficient reliance on the internal controls over cash received for donation income as included in the accounts. In our opinion, except for this matter, the financial report of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. presents fairly, in all material respects the financial position of Suncoast Community Legal Service Inc. as at 30 June 2016 and of its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Qld).*

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Allen William Hertel

Registered Company Auditor (No. 5977)

Dated: 25th August 2016