

# 2019-2020 Annual Report



PROVIDING FREE LEGAL SERVICES FOR WOMEN  
LIVING IN RURAL, REGIONAL, REMOTE QUEENSLAND

*noy* women's legal service

“

*The solicitor was very clear and very organised. My life has turned around and I now have goals in life that I would like to fulfil. It is an amazing Service for women. NQWLS has helped me feel more in control of my life and my children's lives and we are safe now and more settled as a family. I have started working again after 8 years, as a support worker. It is a new beginning for us.*

”

We acknowledge the traditional owners of all the land upon which we work and live, stretching north from Sarina to Cape York and out to the Northern Territory border.

We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and culture and pay our respects to their elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded.



We are committed to cultivating inclusive environments for staff, volunteers and our clients.  
We celebrate, value and include people of all backgrounds, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities.  
We are an environmentally conscious organisation.

# Contents

4

PURPOSE, VISION, MISSION & VALUES

5

FROM THE PRESIDENT & THE DIRECTOR

6

THE IMPACT

7

QUALITY, ACCESSIBLE LEGAL SERVICES

12

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS & EVENTS

13

THE PEOPLE

15

THE STORIES

17

THE FEEDBACK

21

THE FINANCES

22

OUR GRATITUDE

North Queensland Women's Legal Service is grateful for the funding provided by the Commonwealth and Queensland State Government and sincerely thanks all community and corporate partners and supporters.

# Purpose, Vision, Mission & Values

## OUR PURPOSE

NQWLS is a not for profit, specialist community legal centre. It works to empower women, to promote safety for women and children and to contribute to societal change that will support a better quality of life for women and their children.

## OUR VISION

Access to justice for the women of rural, regional and remote Queensland.

## OUR MISSION

To provide free, accessible, high quality, holistic legal services.  
To provide education about injustice and inequity experienced by women.  
To engage in collaborative work to create change in policy and the law.

## OUR VALUES

Safety First  
Respect  
Service  
Empowerment  
Leadership / Strength



# A message from the President & Director

The world changed suddenly, quickly and often during the 2019-2020 year and we all grappled with the challenges that just kept rolling in.

This year found the NQWLS clan grieving the loss of three special women, all of whom had long-standing connections with us - as staff and / or as a volunteer. Of course, their enormous loss was also felt across the entire legal profession and across many community networks in North and Far North Queensland. Vale Janice Mayes. Vale Di Turner. Vale Melissa Nielsen.

In February, our beautiful comrade, Jade, was involved in a hit and run by a driver allegedly under the influence of drugs whilst out on an early morning cycle, training with team-mates. In the face of near fatal injuries, there are simply no words to describe how inspirational Jade's courage and recovery has been to all who know her. We are truly grateful that she is now slowly returning to work and re-joining our great NQWLS team.

Next, none of us could have imagined the extent of the changes that were forced upon us all due to the global outbreak of COVID-19. NQWLS moved rapidly in response to the health crisis, shifting to a remote service delivery model, to ensure legal help and advice continued to be available for the women who were able to reach out to us. A solid team of great women and trust in our ability to respond to every challenge got us over each hurdle we had to jump.

But COVID-19 brought more risks than just the virus itself. Incidences of domestic violence soared during lockdown and isolation. The mantra of 'stay home and stay safe' is not true for women whose lives are affected by domestic violence. In fact, the opposite is true. The pandemic of family and domestic violence has been with us for a long time before COVID-19.

Between March and June, many women found it difficult to reach out for help because their children and in some cases the perpetrator were locked down with them. Isolation is a common feature where there is abuse, neglect and violence. Despite this, NQWLS still provided a greater number of services to women than in the year before.

Near the year's end, we were grateful to learn NQWLS would receive a small increase in funding under a new five (5) year Service Agreement. However, the fact remains that we need a massive increase in resources across the community sector if we want to reduce and eliminate violence against women and children.

*The pandemic of family and domestic violence has been with us for a long time before COVID-19.*

In 2019, there were 74 Australian women and 27 Australian children killed due to domestic violence. This is shameful. It motivates the NQWLS management committee, our staff, volunteers and our community partners to do more – and we collectively ask government to do more. Our fight against domestic violence, just like COVID-19, reminds us every single day that we truly are all in this together.

Collaboration, commitment to change and a call for the investment of a lot more resources to end violence against women and children - that is our message. Thank you to each individual and organisation that unites with NQWLS in that work and that call.

Anne Lewis  
Director



Kate Pateman  
President



# The Impact

**13,000**  
services provided  
to women

services up  
year on year by  
**10%**

advices, tasks,  
representations

**3,976**

duty lawyer  
services  
**1,849**

COVID-19  
caused a drop of  
**50%**  
in calls in the  
last quarter

community  
education and law  
reform activities  
**31**

even still  
**+5,000**  
went unanswered  
for lack of  
resources

**85%**  
of women were  
affected by  
domestic  
violence

**20%**  
of women  
identified as  
Aboriginal or Torres  
Strait Islander

**75%**  
of women had  
dependent  
children

**100%**  
of women were  
living in rural,  
regional, remote  
Queensland

**7%**  
of women were  
homeless or at risk  
of homelessness

**5%**  
of women were  
from culturally  
diverse  
backgrounds

**15%**  
of women  
were over the  
age of 50

**14%**  
of women had a  
disability or mental  
health diagnosis

# Quality, Accessible Legal Services

**D**uring the 2019–2020 year, NQWLS provided over 13,000 legal services to women living in rural, regional and remote Queensland. Those services included legal advice, information and referrals, assistance with drafting letters and documents, assistance with negotiating parenting and property arrangements and representation in court.

With the NQWLS service area being as large as it is - the top half of Queensland - we work hard to ensure that legal help is accessible to all women by providing advice and assistance in person from our Townsville and Cairns offices, at our outreach clinics, by telephone (including the 1800 advice line) and through Skype/video conferencing. Our monthly outreach legal advice clinics are hosted by local community support centres and women's services in Townsville, Ayr, Charters Towers, Ingham, Innisfail, Mareeba, Port Douglas, Mossman and Atherton. We have also provided infrastructure to our community partners in Mackay, the Whitsundays, Mt Isa, Ravenshoe, Kuranda and Cooktown to ensure that women in those areas can access our help via Skype.

Like every community service this year, NQWLS faced the restrictions and challenges presented by COVID-19. We responded quickly to the health crisis to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, clients and stakeholders. From late March 2020, all staff began working remotely from home. This meant we needed to re-think and adapt our systems and processes to ensure that the free legal help we provide remained accessible to women in crisis. Not just some, but all services had to be provided via telephone or video conferencing facilities, to comply with health directions and social distancing requirements. NQWLS made the transition to remote service delivery smoothly and was able to continue to provide high quality legal help to vulnerable women without any significant down-time. We found that, having worked across such a large service area from our Townsville and Cairns offices since 1996, we were in many ways 'ready' for a full remote service delivery model to be rolled out. Systems were already in place to provide legal help via telephone and video – we just had to extend them to every aspect of our work.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE DUTY LAWYER SERVICE

**N**QWLS continued to provide a duty lawyer service for unrepresented women appearing in the Domestic Violence Courts in both Cairns and Townsville. Until the Court listing arrangements were varied in the final quarter of the 2019–2020 financial year due to COVID-19 restrictions, NQWLS provided the domestic violence duty lawyer service weekly in Cairns and five (5) days per fortnight in Townsville where a Specialist Domestic Violence Court is established.

The restrictions and social distancing requirements brought about by COVID-19, saw NQWLS successfully provide a telephone-based duty lawyer service in both Courts. This meant women could still access the legal advice they needed for their domestic violence matter and were also able to be represented in Court by the duty lawyer - also appearing by phone.



Women accessing the domestic violence duty lawyer service regularly provide very positive feedback about their experiences with our duty lawyers and speak about how invaluable they found the service. Many women engage with our duty lawyers repeatedly, as their matter progresses through the various stages of the Court proceedings. NQWLS is proud to provide a duty lawyer service which is holistic and safe, with systems in place to ensure that women are not required to 're-tell their story' each time they return to Court, even if they engage with a different lawyer from our Service.

## FAMILY ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT SERVICE (FASS)

NQWLS also continued to assist women through the FASS duty lawyer service which operates in the Federal Circuit Courts in Cairns and Townsville. Through this duty lawyer service, NQWLS provided much needed legal advice, advocacy and representation for unrepresented women in relation to their parenting and property/financial matters, where domestic and family violence is also an issue.

As with the domestic violence duty lawyer service, the FASS duty lawyer service also moved to a telephone model amidst the COVID-19 restrictions, ensuring that vulnerable women were able to continue receiving legal help in relation to their family law matters, which are complex and challenging for unrepresented women.

## VOLUNTEER EVENING ADVICE SERVICE

NQWLS is deeply grateful for the time, work and expertise given by its volunteer lawyers to our Wednesday evening free legal advice service. The work of our volunteers has provided further access and allowed NQWLS to help so many more women than would otherwise be possible. While we paused this service at the Christmas break to review how it was operating and consider options for change, the arrival of COVID-19 has meant that this service has not been able to restart so far in 2020.

## DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGAL SERVICE (DVLS)

DVLS is a vital part of the services provided by NQWLS. It is separately funded under the Women's Safety Package and operates with two (2) lawyers and a client support worker. The DVLS team provide a holistic and specialised service for the most vulnerable and 'in need' women within our community.

DVLS clients receive legal assistance and support in relation to their domestic violence, family law, child safety, Victim Assist and any other matters they may be facing. DVLS is a "wrap-around" service providing legal advice and representation to women, as well as information, support and referrals in relation to their non-legal needs.

# Jennifer's Story

Over a number of years, the DVLS team assisted Jennifer (not her real name) to obtain a Protection Order, to relocate with her children and to obtain final and rare parenting orders in the Federal Circuit Court - which said her former partner would spend NO time with the children (because of the violence).

When we were closing the case, Jennifer said that the DVLS team had helped change her life and the lives of her children for the better, forever.

She told staff she could never have left her former partner permanently

without the free legal help and support she had received from the DVLS team.

Jennifer keeps in touch. She is now a strong advocate for women who have survived domestic violence and speaks to local groups in her new community and helps other women where she can.

She is in a new, healthy and respectful relationship and has recently given birth to a new baby. Jennifer told us her older children are now achieving above average results at their new school and have a new lease of life.

*Jennifer told us her older children are now achieving above average results at their new school and have a new lease of life.*



The DVLS model recognises that women leaving a violent relationship require assistance with all of their legal and non-legal issues in order to navigate what will inevitably be a challenging separation and, most importantly, to come out the other side feeling they have been supported, empowered and are ready to move on with their life.

The DVLS team continue to engage with and strengthen connections with our local stakeholders. We receive regular referrals particularly from our partners in the community sector and other women's services.

The support and assistance provided by the DVLS is invaluable, with clients consistently providing positive feedback and expressing their gratitude for the legal help and support they have received. See *Jennifer's Story* for an example of the life-changing work done by DVLS.

We know that our work does make a difference – one woman, one family at a time.

We are very grateful for the Women's Safety Package funding that has provided this life saving and life changing outcome for Jennifer and her children – and for many other women just like her.

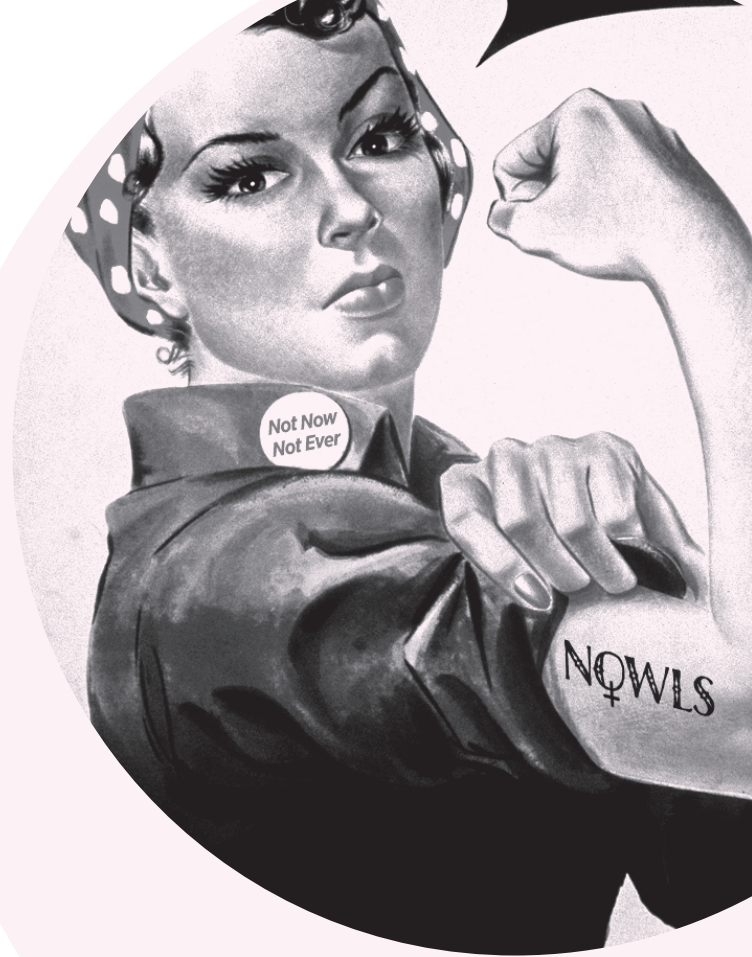
However, we want EVERY woman to be able to access this 'Rolls-Royce' level of free legal help and support. We just need more resources and We Can Do It!

## COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

In pursuit of our mission to empower women, provide education and work to create change in policy and law, NQWLS again delivered many and varied CLE sessions. The first half of the year saw us deliver face to face workshops including Healthy Relationships workshops to high school students, a DV affidavit writing workshop with domestic violence support workers and numerous presentations to community groups about NQWLS services and how to access them.

Webinars were delivered by NQWLS lawyers and guest presenters through Ask Nola, the free membership based online legal resource for community workers. Topics throughout the year included documentation, report writing and attending court, helping your client draft an affidavit for a domestic violence hearing, the Seniors Legal and Support Service and how it can help, TAO's and CAO's in child protection proceedings, and technology facilitated coercive control – insights from survivors.

COVID-19 had a dramatic impact on many of NQWLS clients and we responded quickly producing a number of resources to assist our clients to understand their rights and obligations in such uncertain times. These resources included fact sheets on Stay at Home laws and Family Law, Stay at Home laws and Domestic Violence, and Ending a Tenancy due to DV during COVID-19.



## LAW REFORM & WLSA NETWORK

NQWLS has been a proud and involved member of the Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) network for many years. Throughout the course of this year our representative on the Working Committee, Rachael Ozanne-Pike, attended all meetings and participated in discussions and actions undertaken by the network. WLSA has had an active year with various law reform campaigns and considered submissions to various inquiries. Here is a brief summary:

October 2019 saw the launch of the WLSA's Safety First in Family Law campaign. This campaign outlines five steps to creating a family law system that keeps women and children safe. Rosie Batty helped with the launch and wrote an opinion piece on domestic violence and family law, referring to the WLSA campaign.

At the start of 2020, WLSA were vocal about the family courts mergers, making submissions on this issue with an emphasis on keeping the specialist focus of the Family Court and demanding more training and greater understanding of domestic violence from all professionals, including judicial officers, working in the jurisdiction.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March, WLSA turned its attention to ensuring the States and Territories ironed out issues in hastily made health directions, to ensure that women experiencing domestic violence exemptions were exempt from penalties if they had to flee their residence during lockdown and also sought clarity about exemptions where parenting arrangements / orders were in place. WLSA also gave feedback about the family law courts' emergency COVID-list.

In recent months, WLSA was invited to make submissions to the new Federal Domestic Violence Inquiry. NQWLS submissions were again focused on the Safety First campaign's five step plan, the education and training of those in the jurisdiction, and on adequate funding.

WLSA is an active and highly regarded advocacy group and NQWLS works collaboratively with the other wonderful women of WLSA to fearlessly promote safe

laws, processes and practices for Australian women and their children.

Outside of WLSA, NQWLS also participated in a number of other law reform activities including contributing to submissions made by the Queensland Law Society Domestic Violence Policy Committee on subjects such as concerns regarding domestic violence services and practices in Queensland courts, options for improving the family violence competency of legal practitioners, the Joint Select Committee's inquiry into the Family Law system, review of Queensland's consent laws and mistake of fact, Brisbane City Council's Domestic & Family Violence strategy, the Family and Federal Circuit Court merger, temporary migration and family violence, the inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence, and the review of the Domestic and Family Violence Best Practice Guidelines.





“

*Sometimes the smallest  
step in the right direction  
ends up being the biggest  
step of your life.*

NAEEM CALLAWAY

”

# Community Partnerships & Events

At NQWLS, we love joining with our community partners for the many vibrant and energising events that take place each year – some are regular or annual events, some are new – but they are all important opportunities for us to join forces for common causes. Here are some that we got involved in during 2019-2020.

- Participating in the *Dovetail* and the *Cairns Collective Impact on Domestic & Family Violence* meetings and activities
- *Clinical Legal Studies*, Semester 2, 2019 – joining with James Cook University, Townsville Community Law and the Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women’s Legal Service to provide clinical opportunities for final year law students
- Hosting James Cook University *social work students on placement* and for agency visits
- Participating in both *Townsville’s NQ Legal Assistance Forum* and *Cairns Legal Assistance Forum* meetings and work
- Participating in the *Operational Working Group* for the Townsville Specialist DV Court
- Participating in the *Women’s Legal Services Australia* working committee, network meetings and campaigns
- Participating in the *Community Legal Centres Queensland* management committee meetings and work, as well as the meetings of the Advisory Council with *Community Legal Centres Australia*
- Participating in the work of various committees including *Children and Families Legal Assistance Forum (CAFLAF)* and the *Queensland Law Society’s DV Policy Committee*
- Participating in the *Family Law Pathways Network Steering Committee* and network events
- Participating in the *Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Family Law Pathways Network* meetings
- Participating in the *Townsville District Law Association* and *Far North Queensland Law Association* events and network activities
- Our *Tackle Domestic Violence Campaign* – we thank the *North Queensland Cowboys* and the *JCU Townsville Fire* for their solid support, year after year, for this important annual campaign. Go Cowboys! Go Fire!
- Participating in *NAIDOC* events
- Our *NQWLS Annual Staff Retreat* at Mission Beach – thank you to *Mission Beach Arts Centre* and other local supporters
- Attending the *Global Climate Strike* and joining *Lawyers for Climate Action* in both Townsville and Cairns
- Sadly, participating in the all too frequent *Red Rose Rallies* and the annual *Candlelight Vigils*
- The *KLP Family Law Charity Golf Day* – great annual NQWLS Fundraiser – thank you, *KLP Team Extraordinaire*
- Attending the *CLCQ Forum* and AGM, Cairns
- The *TWTG (Train with The Girls) Boot Camp* fundraiser for NQWLS
- Planning and organizing for the *School Law Conference* – a bi-annual conference with Catholic Education
- Hosting our *International Women’s Day Morning Tea* – with our comrades from the *Queensland Human Rights Commission* and featuring the inaugural performance by “Sisters in Law” aka, the NQWLS Pop Up Girl Band
- Attending the *Line in the Sand*, Townsville and joining with the NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service and other members of Dovetail and the Townsville community
- Attending the *International Women’s Day Brunch* and *NQWLS fundraiser* hosted by Sen. Nita Green



# The People

Despite the challenges of this year, our NQWLS team gave us many reasons to celebrate and be grateful. We appreciate the dedication, expertise, strength, positivity and commitment that every woman brings to the NQWLS workplace.

Amongst the staff team, we celebrated 3 weddings, 4 pregnancies and 2 bundles of joy, safely arrived. So much happiness and so many smiles to share!

This year, we welcomed Jessie Tucker, Jean Morton, Elizabeth Macaulay, Indigo York and Ashleigh Lawrence. Also, Saskia ten Dam joined us as a short-term project worker. We said farewell to Abi Juniper, Nicky Mitchell, Jodie Woodward, Natasha Busby, Sylvia Aia Opu, Jessie Tucker and Sarah Haack.

We are also fortunate to have an amazing team of volunteers – lawyers, law students and others - who are very much part of the NQWLS team. We are missing our great volunteers at present, due to social distancing compliance requirements, but we look forward to the day when we can have them back in the office, because their work and support helps NQWLS help many more women who desperately need free legal assistance.

We are also grateful for the dedication and work done by the NQWLS management committee. The committee are the foundation of NQWLS and provide leadership and good governance, rising to every challenge and ensuring we stay steady and strong amidst all the changing circumstances. We again pay tribute to our invaluable management committee member, Melissa Nielsen. A wonderful woman, taken too soon.

## NQWLS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Kate Pateman (President)  
Natasha Busby (Vice President)  
Melissa Nielsen (Secretary) (Dec'd)  
Jodie Woolcock (Treasurer)  
Nardine Collier  
Ann Carrington  
Sally Watson  
Mandy Ferreira

## NQWLS STAFF

Hayley Grainger  
Leah Muller  
Indigo York  
Abi Juniper  
Zara Spencer-Brown  
Rachael Ozanne-Pike  
Liz Brown  
Ashleigh Lawrence  
Saskia ten Dam  
Jade Connor  
Natasha Busby  
Jessie Tucker  
Jean Morton  
Elizabeth Macaulay  
Sylvia Aia Opu  
Glenda Demopoulos  
Penney Ferguson  
Danielle O'Connor  
Fiona Glenister  
Ashleigh Metcalfe Smith  
Samantha Ievers  
Anne Lewis  
Nicky Mitchell  
Jodie Woodward  
Keuna McInerney  
Sarah Haack

## PLT, CLINICAL LEGAL STUDIES, LEGAL PLACEMENT, SOCIAL WORK PLACEMENT

Cheryl Bonnefin  
Zara Spencer-Brown  
Lauren Esposito  
Tyla Hill  
Jaspreet Kaur  
Thi Nhu Hao Ho  
Keuna McInerney  
Abi Juniper  
Sarah Alsarrange  
Courtney Beveridge  
Grace O'Donnell

## VOLUNTEERS – LAW / BUSINESS STUDENTS

Rakatani Gabi  
Tenille Smith  
Abigail Birmingham  
Nicole Ketan  
Courtney Burgess  
Samantha Mamb  
Bethany Weedon  
Rachael Vaneme  
Kimberley Rodgers-Ford  
Isobelle Hewitt  
Althea Painap  
Riley Milton  
Jelintia Koyaiye  
Kaitlin Lewis  
Harmeet Singh

Justine Kelliher  
Katja Griesbach  
Lauren Esposito  
Elizabeth Sawdon  
Keuna McInerney  
Tyneal Paleso'o  
Carmen Vincent  
Holly White  
Jessica Pollard  
Polly McKinnon  
Grace O'Donnell  
Toni Hackney  
Rachael Wrench  
Sally Urquhart

## VOLUNTEERS – LAWYERS

Claire Sullivan  
Diana Falcomer  
Emma Donald  
Hanna McGovern  
Irina Krynina

Jessica Shuttleworth  
Kate Pateman  
Nikki Dawson  
Mairi Kerfoot  
Bianka Bosnjak

## PRO BONO SUPPORT

Suzanne Smales  
Alex Raeburn  
Rowan Pack  
Shaune Williams

Madonna Hayes  
Kelly Goodwin  
Anne Bertone

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."*

Margaret Mead  
1901 - 1978



# The Stories

## Veronica

### QPS GOT IT WRONG

Veronica first contacted NQWLS through one of our outreach clinics in regional North Queensland. Veronica was extremely upset and told us that the Police had recently come to her home and had told her that she had been violent towards her husband of 25 years and that she was now a Respondent to an Application for a Protection Order filed by the Police. Veronica's first Court date had already passed, and the Police application had been adjourned because of COVID-19.

*We listened to more of Veronica's story and it became clear that what she had been accused of doing was in fact physically impossible for her to do.*

We listened to more of Veronica's story and it became clear that what she had been accused of doing was in fact physically impossible for her to do. Instead, we learnt that her husband had committed multiple acts of domestic violence against Veronica. Veronica was very vulnerable - she was in her 60s, had significant health issues which prevented her from working and required pain management every day.

Veronica was thinking about consenting to a Final Protection Order as she was overwhelmed by the process, upset, and just wanted everything to do with the Police application over and done with. However, when we explained the options to Veronica, she agreed to let

NQWLS prepare submissions to be sent to the Police requesting that they withdraw their application.

NQWLS appeared for Veronica by phone in the local Magistrates Court due to COVID-19 restrictions and asked that Veronica's appearance be excused so that she didn't have to attend Court in person - which would have been very difficult for Veronica due to her health issues.

At the hearing, Police accepted the submissions made by NQWLS on behalf of Veronica and the Police application against her was withdrawn.

Veronica was beside herself with appreciation and cried upon hearing the news.

## Ming

### RECONNECTING WITH EXTENDED FAMILY

Ming came to NQWLS for help with her parenting matter. Her former partner had withheld her two children from having contact with her for six months and had excluded Ming from any decisions relating to the children. Ming had to file for parenting orders and the Court had immediately made interim orders for the children to start spending significant time with their mother again. However, with the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility, the parents had to make joint decisions. This was proving to be impossible!

*However, with the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility, the parents had to make joint decisions. This was proving to be impossible!*



The father was extremely controlling of Ming and the children, doing things like: not allowing the children to speak to Ming in her first language, withholding consent for one child to attend a school excursion to the Aquarium, refusing to agree to haircuts for the children, and making the children change out of their uniforms at school on days Ming was to collect them from school. The father also regularly made derogative comments to the children about their mother and the mother's family, which were often repeated by the children to Ming. The father had also refused to allow Ming to take the children for a holiday to her country of origin, despite Ming having resided for more than a decade in Australia and her father having recently fallen into bad health in her home country.

*The Court was satisfied by Ming's evidence that the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility had been rebutted...*

Over the three years the matter languished in the Federal Circuit Court, Ming engaged with NQWLS for advice and assistance numerous times with the various documents and processes she had to deal with. When the matter was ready to proceed to hearing, NQWLS helped

Ming prepare her trial affidavit. Ming was able to include sufficient evidence to support her seeking sole parental responsibility, that the children live primarily with Ming, and that she and the children were permitted to travel overseas to visit the children's ailing grandfather.

The Court was satisfied by Ming's evidence that the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility had been rebutted and that it was in the best interests of the children for Ming to make the big decisions about them, without being constantly obstructed by the father.

The Court also found that the father had actively undermined Ming as a mother to the children and found it was in the children's interests to spend more time with Ming and have less time to be influenced by the father due to his behavior. The father was also prohibited by the Court from not allowing the children to speak in the mother's first language when Ming had phone contact with them whilst they were in the father's care.

The outcome brought immense relief for Ming and meant that she and the children were able to travel to visit her sick father and the children were able to reconnect with their extended family.



# The Feedback from Our Clients

**NQWLS helped to ease my anxiety about dealing with domestic violence.**

**I feel safer knowing that I can call NQWLS when I have doubts or something new comes up. NQWLS made me feel safe knowing they were there during my domestic violence proceedings.**

**The staff at NQWLS made a huge difference in my life because I had no idea what I was supposed to do in this process. The advice they have offered me on the DV process and family law process has been invaluable and helped me to protect myself and my children**

**My fearfulness is over now. I can now stay in my own home and feel safe. I could not have gone through all of this without the support of NQWLS.**

**I can now focus on a proper separation and move forward safely. Thank you.**

**The solicitor helped me to be strong and stand up and get my daughter's name on my DV order. Now we are both safe.**

**I have a better understanding of what my rights are. I felt very supported every time I was in court.**

**I am sorry it is hard for me to explain because of my English and feeling shamed. All I can say is thank you very much for helping me. Appreciated. Xoxo**

**What a great Service. Your lawyer was swamped on the day, but I couldn't fault anything. She gave me peace of mind.**

I had no knowledge of the legal system or how to navigate my way forward. The assistance I received helped me do that. Absolutely.



I had no idea what I was dealing with or how to deal with it. I don't know what I would have done without the support provided.

I was helped to settle my property matter and learned what would be best and how to do it. NQWLS helped me understand exactly what I would receive and about the legal side of things.



The solicitor opened up my knowledge to the fact that I don't have to put up with being treated this way by my own daughter and that I have options to prevent it from carrying on. Thank you so much. Keep up the great work.



It was a great comfort to have the NQWLS solicitor represent me in court. Took my stress away.



The solicitor took the time to explain things to me and helped me focus on important points. I was able to ask questions and get things clarified. My children and I feel safer in our own home now that my husband has been removed. This free legal service was invaluable to me during my time of need and protection – thank you!



I was distressed, but the solicitor patiently explained it all to me. I could not afford a solicitor at this difficult time in my life and it was a relief and a comfort to receive this fantastic service and support on the 2 occasions I had to go to court. Really helpful and empathetic. Thank you.



The lawyer put me at ease because she had my situation under control and put strategies in place.



NQWLS saved my sanity. Women who have been bashed, poisoned, hurt really bad, like me, need to feel that we are not alone suffering from violent, controlling men. I am still going through the court process. I fear I may yet be murdered in my own home. I must not live in fear as a prisoner in my own home.



I was so nervous and scared and couldn't take a lot in but my lawyer was knowledgeable and confident. Now I have had time to settle down, I realise how helpful everyone was. I still have to go back to court again, but I am hopeful I will one day be able to live a stable life.



The solicitor clearly explained my options which helped me put my mind at ease. I had choices.



My lawyer was great and very understanding. She has helped me to move forward. There should be more lawyers just like her.



NQWLS helped me move further with my case and I was able to understand what was being discussed and it made it stress-free for me.



I appreciate the ease and support that NQWLS provided for me.



Your Service is above average. Thank you. I feel like I have support now and I don't feel alone and my visit to NQWLS was very welcoming. If I need advice I will not hesitate to call and ask. I am extremely happy with the help that I received.



It took nearly a year, but my life has turned around. NQWLS helped me receive a small property settlement even though my ex had offered me NIL through his lawyers. I wanted you all to know that I have also saved a bit since then and have been able to buy a small place to call home. I have a new puppy too now, which has helped me feel better because my ex kept my old dog and would not allow me to see her. I just want to share this good news with NQWLS and to let you know that your help made everything work out in the end. Thank you!



I do not need to live in fear in my own home now. I don't have to answer the phone or talk to my abuser now so they can no longer threaten to kill me.





I cried when we came out of court and I had to hug my solicitor. She had prepared me to go into the court room and was just amazing. She represented me in the court and knowing she was there for me is beyond words. I am grateful to you forever. Thank you.

I got help to get a Temporary Protection Order and feel safer now in my home and surroundings. Thank you so, so much.

The difference for me is knowing that there is help for me in a Domestic Violence Protection Order if I need one and I don't need to be scared in the future and I can deal with things.

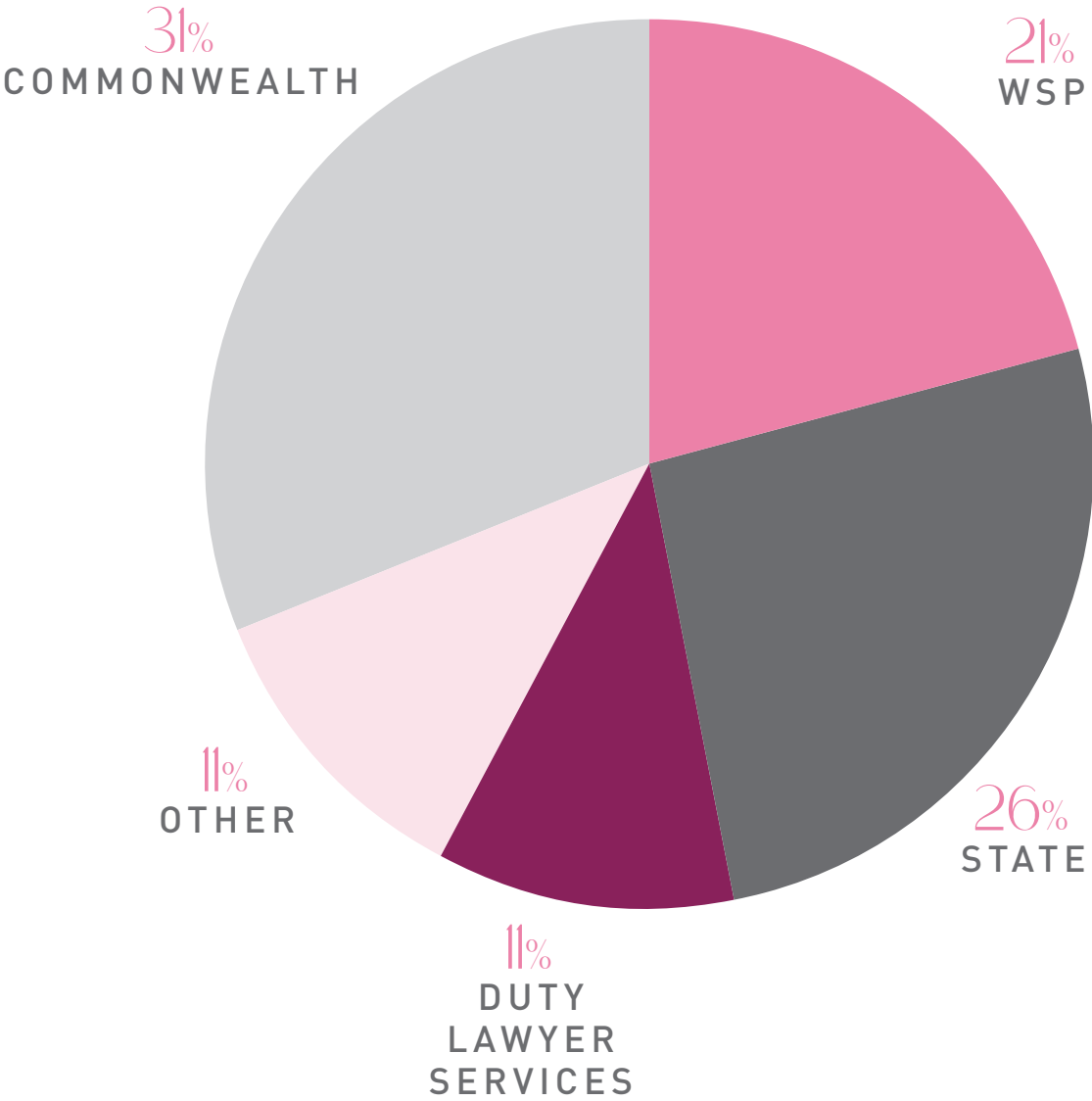
Without assistance from NQWLS I would not have known which choices I had. The support I received was more than adequate. The support was amazing and the women are very good at knowing just how to help.

Thank you for helping and understanding. Having someone to talk on my behalf made it much easier for me to go into the court.





# The Finances



TOTAL INCOME	\$2,121,184
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	\$1,837,480
NETT SURPLUS	\$283,704

# Our Gratitude

Department of Justice & Attorney General Queensland	Townsville Bookkeeping Service & Cindy O'Shea	BT Lawyers
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	Rod Parker Accountants	Ardette's Cleaning Service
Legal Aid Queensland	Far North Queensland Law Association	NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service
Community Legal Centres Queensland	Women Lawyers Association of Queensland	Townsville Women's Centre
Community Legal Centres Australia	Townsville District Law Association	Sera's Women's Shelter
Cairns RLAF & North Queensland Legal Assistance Forum	James Cook University Schools of Law and Social Work	Cairns Regional DV Service
Family Law Pathways Network	University of Queensland Pro bono Centre	Cairns Women's Centre
Women's Legal Service Australia Network	Management Committee members & Staff	Ruth's Women's Shelter
Colin Biggers & Paisley Foundation	Volunteer solicitors, students, placements and other volunteers	North Queensland Toyota Cowboys
McCullough Robertson	KLP Family Law	JCU Townsville Fire
Miller Harris		Catholic Education
		Dovetail
		Cairns Collective Impact on DV
		Tony and Sharyn Denyer

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERS, INCLUDING:

Women's Centre FNQ	Prospect Community Services	Mt Isa Neighbourhood Centre
Mareeba Community Centre	Burdekin Community Association	Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre
Community Support Centre Innisfail	Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre	Whitsunday Crisis & Counselling Service
Mossman Community Centre	Townsville Drop-in Centre	Cooktown Community Centre
Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre	Mackay Women's Centre	Ravenshoe Community Centre



*nq*  
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legal service**

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