



nay
women's
legal service

ANNUAL REPORT

2017/2018



Cairns staff receiving a Certificate of Appreciation from Rights In Action (Disability Advocacy Service) for Advocacy for Justice and Human Rights for Exceptional legal representation for women experiencing domestic violence.

NQWLS VISION MISSION & VALUES

Vision

Access to justice for all women living in North and Far North Queensland.

Mission

NQWLS seeks to advocate for and empower women by providing free, accessible and high quality legal advice and assistance. NQWLS also works holistically with the broader community by providing education to address injustice and inequity experienced by women.

Values

Integrity, Service, Respect, Empowerment, Innovation

“ONE OF THE MOST
EXTRAORDINARY
OPPORTUNITIES WE
HAVE IN LIFE IS THE
CHANCE TO HELP
OTHERS”

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ABOUT NQWLS

North Queensland Women's Legal Service (NQWLS) is a specialist community legal service providing free legal help and assistance to women. Operating since 1996 NQWLS provides free and confidential legal advice, information, education, referral and representation to women primarily in the areas of domestic and family violence, family law (parenting and property), child protection, Victim Assist, discrimination and sexual assault. NQWLS has a service area that covers the top half of Queensland, from Sarina in the south, to the Cape and Torres Strait Islands in the north and west out to the Northern Territory border.

NQWLS has offices in both Cairns and Townsville. A flexible service delivery model increases access to justice for women who live in more, rural and remote communities. Legal help is available through a variety of options including:

- » Face to face and telephone appointments
- » Free call 1800 telephone advice service
- » Volunteer evening advice service
- » Monthly face to face legal advice clinics in Ayr, Charters Towers, Ingham, Atherton, Mareeba, Innisfail, Mossman and Port Douglas
- » Monthly face to face advice clinics at the Townsville women's centre and domestic violence service
- » Skype appointments from "hot spots" in Mackay, the Whitsundays, Mt Isa, Ravenshoe, Kuranda and Cooktown

- » Telephone advice service for women in the Townsville Correctional Centre
- » Duty lawyer services at the Cairns and Townsville Domestic Violence Courts and Federal Circuit Courts
- » Complex casework, including court representation and social work services as part of the Domestic Violence Legal Service

NQWLS also has a well-established community legal education program through the AskNola website that provides free online webinars to community workers to help them identify legal issues that their client's may be facing and then provide information, referral and support to them. NQWLS also regularly delivers face to face community legal education sessions to schools and other community organisations.

NQWLS is informed by a feminist framework that recognises the rights of women as central and contributes to policy and law reform discussions, primarily focused on domestic and family violence, family law, and other issues that affect women to ensure that the law does not unfairly impact them.



“OPERATING SINCE 1996
NQWLS PROVIDES FREE
AND CONFIDENTIAL LEGAL
EDUCATION, INFORMATION,
ADVICE, REFERRAL
AND REPRESENTATION
TO WOMEN”

Townsville
Staff

NQWLS PEOPLE

People are the heart and soul of NQWLS. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the tremendous contribution that the entire team have made to increasing access to justice and thereby improving the lives of 1000's of vulnerable women and children. We thank you for your tireless dedication, passion and commitment.

Management Committee

Natasha Busby (President)

Kate Pateman (Vice President)

Renae Stocks (Secretary)

Jodie Woolcock (Treasurer)

Ann Carrington

Nardine Collier

Madonna Galeano

Melissa Nielsen

Kacey Sinardi

Sally Watson

Staff

Cairns

Hayley Grainger

Rebecca Grouios

Abi Juniper

Moira McGovern

Leah Muller

Rachael Ozanne-Pike

Nadia Whebell

Townsville

Sylvia Aia Opu

Jade Connor

Leonie Crowe

Glenda Demopoulos

Robyn Gee

Samantha Kelley

Anne Lewis

Toni Miller

Sharell O'Brien

Danielle O'Connor

Debbie Taylor

Jodie Woodward

Tania Young

Volunteer Solicitors

Sarah Belford

Bianka Bosnjak

Nardine Collier

Patricia Cope

Nikki Dawson

Jodi Dingwall

Emma Donald

Natalie Elms

Diana Falcomer

Menik Gunasekera

Amalie Grima

Julie Hodge

Mairi Kerfoot

Tamlyn Leahy

Kirsten Lesina

Julie Mason

Michelle Mason

Janice Mayes

Ashleigh Metcalfe

Helen Oliver

Kate Pateman
Lettice Patterson
Elena Pelbart
Rayarna Ritchie

Volunteers

Sylvia Aia Opu
Natasha Diakanaw
Jade Dibben
Penney Ferguson
Melissa Jonsson
Abi Juniper
Vatiseva Kacikilagi
Vanessa Kavanamur
Boboleia Kom
Kaitlin Lewis
Elaine Maree
Hannah McNeale
Toni Millar
Grace O'Donnell

Students

PLT

Caitlyn Bowthorpe
Nareeta Davis

Placement

Casia Betros

Clinical Legal Studies

Amelia Doolan

Jess Shuttleworth
Bonnie Stevenson
Claire Sullivan
Diane Turner

Jade O'Dowd-Barrett
Rachael Owen
Tina Pavitt
Corrine Penny
Tenille Smith
Zara Spencer-Bown
Sally Urquhart
Kylie Walmsley
Tessa Webster
Nadia Whebell
Morgan Williams
Susan Willie
Jacquelyn Zeller

Katherine Weston
Solitaire Zahnleiter

Isabella Copetti

THE YEAR THAT WAS

2017/2018 was another huge year for NQWLS with the Service continuing to expand and grow. The year also brought changes to the staff and volunteer team.

Staff Changes

At the end of 2017 we farewelled Debbie Taylor and Moira McGovern from our administration team and welcomed Abi Juniper and Sylvia Aia Opu. Debbie and Moira left big shoes to fill however both Abi and Sylvia have been up to the challenge and have settled in well and become valued members of the staff team.

We also welcomed Nadia Whebell as the Cairns Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Intake Worker, a role that is vital to the smooth operation of the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer service each week. In Townsville Toni Millar joined us as Intake Worker after we said goodbye to Robyn Gee who had fulfilled this role for a number of years.

The end of 2017 also saw Client Support Worker Tania Young leave to undertake a legal traineeship with another community legal centre and in a first for NQWLS, we welcomed social worker Leonie Crowe to the team.

HAVING A SOCIAL WORKER AS PART OF NQWLS HAS INCREASED THE ABILITY OF NQWLS TO PROVIDE MORE HOLISTIC SUPPORT TO WOMEN BY ADDRESSING THEIR LEGAL AND NON-LEGAL NEEDS.

Legal Services

The year saw demand for NQWLS services increase dramatically with over 12,500 services delivered by the staff and volunteer team. Unfortunately though there were still many more women that we were unable to help. Those that we were able to receive legal assistance at the Cairns and Townsville Offices through face to face, Skype and telephone appointments. Telephone appointments were delivered during the day by the staff solicitors or at night by our wonderful volunteer solicitors who donated their time as part of the Evening Advice Service. For those women

who reside further afield NQWLS solicitors travelled monthly to our outreach locations, Atherton, Mareeba, Innisfail, Mossman, Port Douglas, Ayr, Ingham and Charters Towers to deliver face to face legal advice clinics. Other more rural and remote women received advice via our Skype hotspots situated at Cooktown, Kuranda, Ravenshoe, Mt Isa, Mackay and the Whitsundays. The free call 1800 advice line continued to operate Monday through Thursday from 9.00am until 1.00pm and allowed women throughout our entire service areas to ring and speak directly to a solicitor.

NQWLS solicitors delivered Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer services to women involved in domestic violence matters at both the Cairns and Townsville Courts. The service provides vital advice, support and representation to women at a time when many are feeling overwhelmed by the Court process and extremely vulnerable due to having to face the perpetrator of violence against them in Court. NQWLS also provided the Family Advocacy and Support Service to women who were attending the Cairns and Townsville Federal Circuit Court for family law proceedings. The solicitors assisted self represented women who had experienced or were experiencing domestic and family violence, with legal advice, help with drafting documents, court representation and referrals to support services. Again, such a service is central to increasing women's access to and supporting them through the often traumatic family law court system.

Community Legal Education

Community legal education (CLE) is an important part of the work of community legal centres. Knowledge is power, therefore by providing information and education to the community on their rights, the law and the legal system we are increasing their ability to access and understand the legal system. Throughout 2017/2018 NQWLS broadcast a number of webinars to community workers, legal professionals and students on a wide variety of topics through our Ask Nola website. The webinars covered a variety of topics

including changes to the domestic violence laws, domestic violence order breaches, undertakings, grandparents and family law, the role of separate representatives, family law interim hearings, and travelling overseas with children. We were also fortunate enough to have a number of guest presenters who delivered webinars on changes to the Victim Assist scheme, writing Victim Impact Statements and elder abuse. Ask Nola is a free membership based online legal resource providing not only monthly webinars but also fact sheets, legal information, resources and a referral database.

Aside from Ask Nola, NQWLS presented a number of in person CLE sessions to various community organisations and continued to deliver the Healthy Relationships sessions as part of the Love Bites programs to schools through our ongoing collaborative partnership with Catholic Education as well as a number of local State High Schools. We were also again invited to present a feminist perspective on the intersection between the domestic violence, child protection and family law systems and their impact upon women to 4th year Social Work students at James Cook University.

Law Reform

Like community legal education, law reform is central to the work of community legal centres. NQWLS engaged in a number of law reform activities and policy debates throughout 2017/2018 to address systemic issues that impact upon and perpetrate injustices for women. These activities included submissions to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of the Family Law System, the Australian College of Midwives Draft Position Statement on Domestic Violence, and improving the delivery of respectful relationships and sex education relevant to the use of technology in QLD State Schools.

Our Principal Solicitor Hayley, was part of a Community Legal Centre Queensland delegation that visited Canberra to educate politicians about the important work that organisations such as NQWLS do by providing legal assistance to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our community. Hayley

sits on a number of committees including the Queensland Law Society Domestic Violence Committee, the Children and Families Legal Assistance Forum steering committee and is Treasurer of Community Legal Centre Queensland, all of which actively contribute to law and policy reform.

Domestic Violence Legal Service

During the past year the Domestic Violence Legal Service (DVLS) continued to assist some of the most vulnerable and at risk women in our community. Operating since April 2016 the DVLS is a holistic, wrap around complex casework service that provides legal and non legal support to address all of a woman's needs, not just her legal needs. Demand for the service remains high with the two solicitors working hard to provide legal advice and assistance as well as representation in court to women in a wide range of legal matters, including domestic and family violence, family law, child protection, Victim Assist, tenancy, credit and debt.

2018 saw the DVLS team evolve to include a social worker for the first time in NQWLS history. All DVLS clients are offered the Social Work Service, however it is up to the individual woman as to whether or not she chooses to engage with the service.

The Social Worker provides emotional support to women as they work through their legal issues with the lawyer, as well as practical support to help address the multiple and often complex practical issues facing many women. This can include assistance with safety planning, accessing housing, applying for Centrelink, dealing with the Child Support Agency, obtaining Emergency Relief payments as well as engaging with counselling and health services.

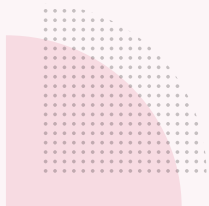
The Social Worker also assists the DVLS lawyers to understand the broader issues and needs of the women for whom they are providing legal advice and representation.

The addition of a Social Worker to the DVLS team has further improved the ability of the service to secure positive, life changing outcomes for women who have or are experiencing domestic and family violence.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Community legal centres by their very nature and name are part of the community and NQWLS was again very much a part of the local communities throughout our service area in 2017/2018. NQWLS coordinated the annual “Tackle Domestic Violence” campaign with our partners the NQ Cowboys Rugby League Club and JCU Fire Basketball Team. We also hosted a free morning tea in partnership with the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland to celebrate International Women’s Day, and held our annual movie fundraiser night – this year Mamma Mia 2. The NQWLS team also attended and participated in a number of other community events including:

- » Participation in the Domestic and Family Violence Operational Working Group for the Townsville Specialist Court
- » Participation in the Townsville NQLAF and Cairns RLAF meetings
- » Participation in Dovetail and the Cairns Collective Impact on Domestic & Family Violence
- » Participation in Family Law Pathways Network & events
- » Participation in Red Rose Rallies & the annual Candlelight Vigil to honour those killed by domestic and family violence
- » Attendance at the Federal Circuit Court Reconciliation Morning Tea
- » Participation in the Townsville District Law Association and Far North Qld Law Association events
- » Participation in Hinchinbrook Community Safer Families Fun Day and other Domestic Violence Awareness activities
- » Participation in NAIDOC day events
- » Participation in Women’s Legal Services Australia meetings
- » Participation in the Justice Project by the Law Council
- » Attendance at the Send Hope Not Flowers fundraising lunch to provide resources and medical help for pregnant women in Papua New Guinea
- » Participation in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Law Pathways Network meetings
- » Participation in the KLP Golf Day
- » Attendance at International Womens Day Events
- » Participation in various Domestic Violence stakeholder meetings



Townsville Staff participating in the Tackle Domestic Violence campaign





THE BIG PICTURE



Total clients 2413

Total Problem Types 301



Vulnerability Indicators

Financially disadvantaged 100%

Family / Domestic Violence 98%

Homelessness or at risk 7%

Outer regional or remote 92%

Aboriginal or Torres

Strait Islander women 16%

Women with a disability 12%



Services Delivered

Total services delivered show an increase up 50% from the previous year.

Information / Referrals 4,078

Advices, Tasks, Rep'n, other casework 6,646

Duty Lawyer Services 1,926

CLE or Law Reform Activities 36

TOTAL 12,686



1800 Legal Advice Line

Demand for access to the 1800 Legal Advice Line also **increased by around 50%**.

During 2017-18, NQWLS was only able to answer 1 call in 10 due to limited resources.

NQWLS IN ACTION

Protecting Mum and the Kids

Mary and her children had been exposed to physical and emotional abuse for 15 years by Mary's alcoholic husband, Tom. One of Mary's older children had been forced to leave the house at only 13 years of age because the level of abuse he received was so intense. The other four younger children remaining at home had not fared much better. When Tom put his hands around the youngest child's neck and lifted him off the ground, just prior to Christmas, Mary finally found the courage to take the children and flee the family home. This left Mary and the children homeless and couch surfing, many miles from their hometown. Mary came to see NQWLS who helped Mary file an urgent protection order application, seeking an ouster condition to remove Tom from the house so that Mary and the children could return to their home. NQWLS was then able to assist Mary at the Domestic Violence Court at the first mention of the application and appeared in Mary's matter. The ouster was granted, along with an extensive temporary protection order that protected Mary and her children from further abuse. Mary and her children were able to return to their home, just in time for the first day of school. As the matter was transferred to a court closer to Mary's hometown, the NQWLS solicitor contacted the DV Liaison Officer at the local police station and put him in touch with Mary for further assistance and to 'flag' Mary's house. This was of great comfort to Mary, who lives on a rural property and needs quick attendance by police should any situations arise in the future. Mary said she and the kids felt safer now than at any time before.

Safe and Settled Family

Brittany had fled South Australia to North Queensland at the recommendation of the Police. She was escorted with the children by Police to the local airport and John followed, continuing to create fear and havoc. Brittany came to North Queensland because she had close family here and it was the only place she felt safe. She was petrified that John would find her and the children.

Brittany had a domestic violence order from South Australia but for some reason the Queensland Police Service ('QPS') were not recognising the Order. John continued to breach the Order and the QPS continued to tell Brittany that there was nothing they could do. Brittany suffered with mental health issues, had physical impairments and she had three (3) children under eight (8) years old. John was their Father. She was feeling completely overwhelmed as John continued to threaten that he would come and take the children. He was taking to social media and making threats and accusations against Brittany. She was terrified that John would follow through with his threats as he had done so many things to hurt her and the children in the past. John had committed significant acts of domestic violence against Brittany of which the children had also experienced and been exposed to. This included John holding Brittany against her will, strangling her on various occasions until she was unconscious and physically smacking her in the head to the point where she also lost consciousness. The list of things that John had done to her and the children was endless. John had spent time in custody for these offence but had been released on parole.

Brittany was initially referred to NQWLS through one of our Outreach clinics at the Women's services in North Queensland. She had not had a chance to apply for Legal Aid

as she was overwhelmed and petrified of what John would do if he found her and the children. She was concerned that she would have to wait a long time for Legal Aid to be approved and John's behaviour was escalating.

NQWLS assisted Brittany with filing an urgent Application in the Domestic Violence Court to have the Order made in South Australia recognised in North Queensland and to add additional conditions to ensure she and the children were protected. NQWLS attended Court on every occasion with Brittany and Brittany also had the support of the Family Violence Support Worker to debrief and have an emotional hand to hold through this particularly stressful time. The Court eventually made a Final Order recognising the South Australian Order and adding all the additional conditions sought for a period of five (5) years. NQWLS assisted Brittany to report the breaches of the Order to the QPS.

NQWLS also assisted Brittany to put forward a proposal for John to spend time with the children. This proposal prioritised the children's safety but enabled them to have a relationship with their Father whilst ensuring that John could not find out where they were located. This also reduced the risk of John filing an Application in the Federal Circuit Court of Australia to seek that Brittany and the children be returned to South Australia as Brittany was extremely concerned about John doing this due to his threats.

Brittany was extremely grateful for the assistance from NQWLS. She said that she finally felt safe and that she and her children can finally begin their lives again close to the support of her family and friends. She recommenced study and is considering returning to work on a part-time basis. Brittany told the NQWLS lawyer that she had changed her and her children's lives and that she would be forever grateful. She said that you can't underestimate what it feels like to finally feel safe.



Moving Forward

Dorothy approached NQWLS seeking help with making a complaint of sexual assault against the Reverend at her local Church. Dorothy lived in a small Far North Queensland community. She had an intellectual disability and was particularly vulnerable. Dorothy had reported the assault to the Police, however she withdrew her statement as one of the Reverend's family members worked at the local Police station and she did not feel comfortable continuing with her complaint.

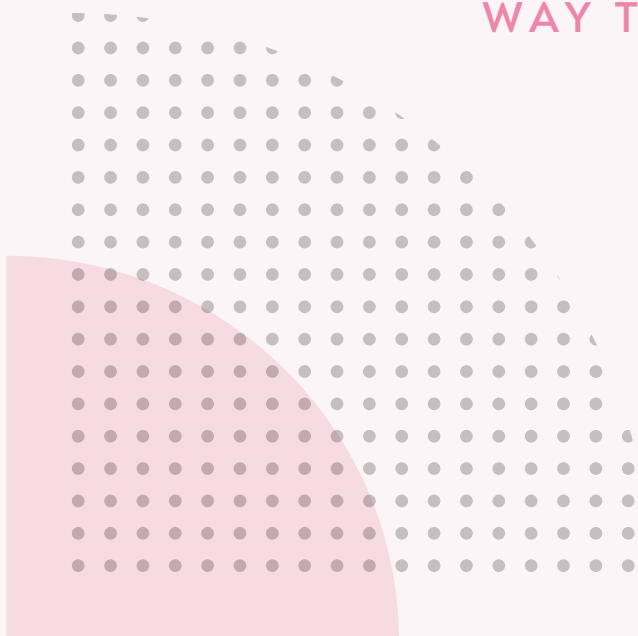
NQWLS helped Dorothy write to the area's Bishop setting out her allegations. NQWLS represented Dorothy and provided her with support and advice throughout the lengthy investigative process. The solicitor explained each step of the process to Dorothy and attended every interview with the Church investigator to ensure that Dorothy

understood what was happening and that her allegations were clearly understood. NQWLS also made sure that Dorothy was getting the counseling and support she required along the way to recover from the assault. Finally, after 2 ½ years the Church Professional Standards Board determined that the Reverend had behaved in a sexually inappropriate manner towards her and recommended a number of actions be undertaken to address his behaviour and ensure that it didn't happen again.

Although Dorothy was somewhat disappointed in the outcome, as the Reverend did not lose his position in the Church, she was very happy that the Church had believed her allegations and extremely grateful to NQWLS without whom she could not have continued through such a long, traumatic investigation. The result has provided Dorothy with some closure and she is now trying to move forward with her life.



“DOROTHY WAS GETTING THE
COUNSELING AND SUPPORT
SHE REQUIRED ALONG THE
WAY TO RECOVER”



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND THANKS

Community legal centres are part of the community and NQWLS would like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals and organisations who have worked with us over the past year to deliver legal services to some of the most disadvantaged members of our community. Although we cannot thank you all personally please know that your support is recognised and greatly appreciated.

We would like to thank our community partners at each outreach and Skype location for working with us to deliver legal assistance to women who reside in communities where there are a few, if any legal services. We extend our appreciation and gratitude to the:

- » Women's Centre Tablelands
- » Mareeba Community Centre
- » Community Support Centre Innisfail
- » Mossman Community Centre
- » Port Douglas Neighbourhood Centre
- » Burdekin Community Association
- » Prospect Community Services
- » Hinchinbrook Community Support Centre
- » Cooktown Community Centre
- » Kuranda Neighbourhood Centre
- » Ravenshoe Community Centre
- » Mt Isa Neighbourhood Centre
- » Mackay Women's Centre
- » Whitsunday Crisis & Counselling Service
- » Townsville Women's Centre
- » NQ Domestic Violence Resource Service

We extend our thanks and appreciation to Colin Biggers & Paisley for their ongoing commitment to the North Queensland Access to Justice Project by providing pro bono advice and assistance to NQWLS clients in a range of matters, particularly bankruptcy and property.

We thank Babette Doherty and Peter Ferguson from Victim Assist Queensland and Bill Mitchell from Townsville Community Legal Service for presenting webinars as part of our Ask Nola community legal education program.

We thank and acknowledge the invaluable support provided to not only NQWLS, but all community legal centres, by the peak organisations NACLC, CLCQ and WLSA.

We acknowledge and thank the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and the Queensland Attorney General's Department for the funding provided to NQWLS.

We also acknowledge Legal Aid Queensland for funding and coordinating the DV and FASS Duty Lawyer Services and thank our service delivery partners: Legal Aid Qld, Cairns Community Legal Centre, Townsville Community Legal Service and a number of private practitioners.

We would like to thank the local businesses and individuals who supported our Annual Fundraiser Movie night. In Cairns these were: Bluewater Bar & Grill, Cairns Dive Centre, Cairns Harbour Cruises, Cairns Pies & Cakes, Cazaly's, Charlotte's Photography, Coles, Curry Dlite, Event Cinemas, Hair Boutique, Helen Maher, Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, North Cairns Tigers Netball and Football Club, Panti Burgess Photography, Pier Bar, Reef Hotel Casino, Salt House, Sushi Izu, Trinity Beach Bar & Grill and Woolworths, and in Townsville: Balcony Restaurant, Bluebell Trading, Dan Murphy's, Gecko Interiors, Her Top Shop, Miss Sushi and Sandwich Express.

We thank and acknowledge the James Cook University Schools of Law and Social Work for their ongoing support of NQWLS and look forward to continuing our collaborative partnership and working with staff and students into 2019 and beyond.

We are grateful for pro bono work also done by Susanne Smales and Justin Gregory of Counsel and local legal firm Anderson Fredericks Turner.

KLP Family Law have been outstanding in their support for NQWLS. We thank the KLP team for organizing the inaugural KLP Golf Day Fundraiser. The KLP women also made a kind donation of radio advertising which the staff won in a competition, nominating NQWLS as their charity of choice.

We thank and acknowledge Women's Legal Service Queensland, our Brisbane sisters, for the opportunity to run collaborative CLE workshops for the communities of Moranbah and Mackay.

We thank Uniting Care Queensland for their invitation to again provide a workshop for their annual Grandparents Retreat on Magnetic Island.

We thank the Brothers Rugby Club Townsville for organizing another fabulous Ladies Luncheon, with funds raised supporting NQWLS work in the community.

A big thank you to Pacifica Accountants who very generously donated \$1000 to NQWLS which enabled us to purchase some new computer equipment and to BDO for donating toys, activities and books to help keep children entertained whilst in our waiting area, as well as kitchen items and a \$100 gift voucher.

We are very grateful to all those who have contributed to NQWLS in many different ways by volunteering their time, becoming a member, making monthly donations, attending our fundraiser movie nights, buying raffle tickets or attending one of our community events. Your contribution has helped improve the lives of vulnerable women living in North and Far North Queensland – and for that we thank you!



Cairns staff receiving donations from BDO

OUR CLIENTS TELL HOW IT WAS FOR THEM

“I am deeply grateful for your help. Everyone at the service was kind and reassuring and went above and beyond anything I expected.”

“For someone who has had no dealings with the courts, it’s very confusing and complicated. So having this advice is very helpful. It reduced the stress a lot.”

“I feel safer knowing I have the support of my lawyer. She put my mind at ease when I was very nervous.”

“Everything was explained really well. Even questions I felt were silly. I was reassured and felt heard. The solicitor did a great job in presenting my information to the judge. I went home feeling safe.”

“The ladies at NQWLS were absolutely amazing throughout my entire legal process. I felt very protected and supported when I went to court. What impressed me was the integrity of the organization and especially my solicitor. The honesty and knowledge shown was incredible and for this reason all negotiations went smoothly. I was believed at a time when so much self-doubt was creeping in due to the abuse I have suffered over years. NQWLS believed in me and made me feel worthwhile. They helped me pick myself up and survive this ordeal.”

“I wish NQWLS the very best and I know many women, like me, will benefit from their help and be able to put their best foot forward and hold their heads high as they start a new life.”

“My solicitor helped me to be calm and collected – rather than a mess.”

“Women would be lost without the assistance of people like my NQWLS solicitor. She was kind, professional, amazing and showed me empathy. I am very appreciative of all of the assistance provided to me.”

“My solicitor made sure I understood her advice, even when she had to explain it again and again.”

“The entire team at NQWLS were excellent and worked tirelessly to help me.”

“I couldn’t have done it without my solicitor. I honestly wouldn’t have made it through without NQWLS. They are overall amazing and I feel so much more safe and secure now.”

“NQDVRS and NQWLS worked together in a way that has really helped me.

Especially when I went to court for my protection order. The solicitor's ability to do her job in court was second-to-none. I felt a sense of comfort and safety, knowing my solicitor was with me. She spent time actually getting to know me and my situation and we were able to get a very good outcome. Thank you."

"It is frenetic and confusing for someone anxious and overwhelmed already when they have to go to court. But I got clear advice and knew what to expect."

"I cannot thank the solicitor and NQWLS enough for the support they have given me. They have lifted me up from a place of despair and I am now more grounded and ready to face what is in front of me."

"There were questions I was afraid to ask, but the solicitor explained everything. She prepared me well with honest truths regarding the court process. I arrived terrified, alone and unsupported. I left feeling more confident, informed and supported through the process. I was treated with respect for which I am truly grateful. I hope the young hard-working lawyers at NQWLS get the recognition they deserve."

"Getting my Protection Order has empowered me to stand up and ENOUGH in relation to the domestic abuse I have been subjected to. If I had not received the legal assistance from NQWLS, it is possible I may have left the court as I felt vulnerable and afraid of further violence. My solicitor made all the difference."

"I would like to say thanks to NQWLS for the great help and support and the safety now from my protection order."

"I had never been in a situation like this and I had no idea what to do. All the people I spoke to at NQWLS were so knowledgeable and helpful and I would not have had the same outcome without their assistance."

"I feel less vulnerable now and I know about the supports that can help me."

"NQWLS made a difference for me. I feel safe now."

"I say thank you to the solicitor I like her human and professional way!"

"Thank you NQWLS for putting up with me. It's been a long week, with broken sleep. You are all awesome and it means a lot to me how much you look out for me and my daughter and I am very grateful for all that you have done and listening to me when nobody else would."

"I felt like I had the best support possible for my matter"

“I was able to get my son back, so I am extremely happy.”

“My solicitor was able to narrow things down for me, to help me understand the situation. She explained things clearly and I am grateful for her help.”

“I feel more empowered now. I don't know if I would have been able to get out of the violent relationship situation if it hadn't been for my solicitor.”

“My solicitor took a lot of weight off my shoulders, especially that I did not have to represent myself in court and in helping me be excused from appearing at the next court date due to my circumstances.”

“My solicitor had an amazing grasp of the situation. I was difficult for me to talk at times due to the stress of being at the Court. The solicitor made a massive difference. Thanks to her support, I had clear direction. The fact that she represented me in court meant a great deal and I am so grateful to have had this help at the most stressful time.”

“I was connected with other women's services and resources within our community, who offered me excellent help. NQWLS gave me legal advice and help to get a protection order to stop the physical violence my partner was doing to me.”

“I want to express my gratitude for your help. After speaking to you all I felt so much better about what was to come and from the bottom of my heart, I thank you. I am so relieved and grateful for the positive outcome – made entirely possible by my NQWLS solicitor.”

“NQWLS is an amazing service and I appreciate every moment of time that has been devoted to my matter. I believe my solicitor is exceptional and has been honest and very professional in helping women like myself, or those in even more difficult circumstances.”

“NQWLS made a major difference to my life situation as I would not have had the confidence to bring forward the truth, but I was reassured that what I was doing was in the best interests of my children. I could not afford a private solicitor and would not have had the time, the communication skills or professionalism I have been privileged to have, from the solicitors and receptionist at NQWLS.”

“How can I ever thank you and your wonderful staff for all you have done for me. I am so grateful to you all for your support, patience and help, which without it, I don't believe I would have got this far.”

“Thanks for help me understand (I am from overseas) so no easy. Thanks for the support and for the good vibes is nice doesn't feel alone. Thanks heaps.”

“NQWLS needs more solicitors. Staff are overloaded with people needing help.”

“I had to leave unexpectedly without time to explain after the consultation. I have major depression due to DV and I had given it all I had. I went home and walked and I thought about your advice. So I didn't give up. My prayers were answered more or less because I have help now. Thank you to the police, the judge and especially to NQWLS for getting me there.”

“I am relieved to have NQWLS assistance. I did not know what to do and I am in a foreign country. I feel a lot stronger facing this problem now and feeling positive moving forward. I cannot thank you enough for all of your help and efforts.”

“The legal assistance I received helped me to understand the processes that I would have to go through in my matter. They were explained to me in a way that was easy for me to understand and made me realise I could actually cope with the situation I am in now.”

“Keep up the fight, for my children's sake.”

“I have been having a very hard time coming to terms with my situation, particularly moving forward. Without my solicitor, I would not have been able to take those important steps. My solicitor helped me by explaining every step of the way, but not once did she make me feel ashamed. She had my back. I feel more empowered now. I don't know if I would have been able to get out of the situation with NQWLS help.”

“Thanks for everything you have done so far. You guys are amazing and I'll never forget the help and support you have given me and bub xoxo”

“The solicitor was very clear in the discussions of the matter at hand to meet my needs. I appreciate how she supported me with compassion and kindness”

“Big thanks for the solicitor's kind help with great patience. I really can't thank your organisation enough. “

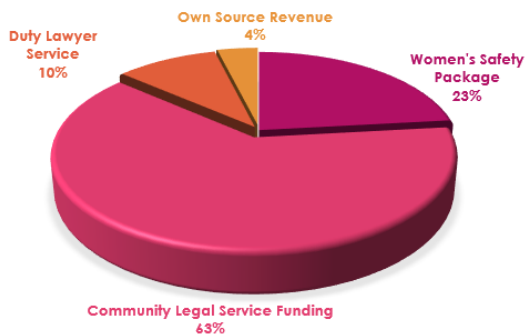
“Without the NQWLS team I would never be where I am today. I got my requested settlement against many odds and legally. I am in a very healthy confident place right now as well as physically safe and mentally at peace.”

2018 FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Annual Performance

Total revenue for the year ended 30 June 2018 was **\$1,505,685**

Our revenue sources:



Our Expenditure:

- Employee Expenses (\$1.15M)
- Premises Costs (\$137K)
- Communication (\$49K)
- Travel (\$33K)
- Postage, Printing & Stationery (\$19K)
- Other (\$115K)

ANNUAL POSITION

At 30 June 2018 our total member's funds amounted to **\$715,031**

Our Assets:

Cash & cash equivalents	\$1,477K
Other assets	\$ 3K
Plant & equipment	\$ 67K
TOTAL	\$1 547K

Our Liabilities:

Unexpended grants	\$179K
Employee Entitlements	\$232K
Unspent project funds	\$367K
Other payables	\$ 53K
TOTAL	\$830K

KEY TAKEAWAYS

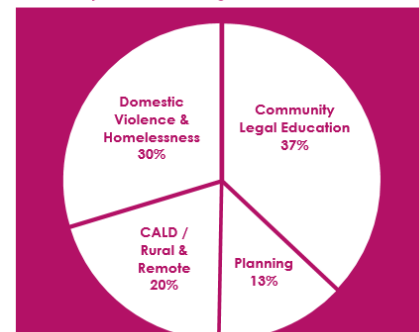
Revenue ↑ against budget by **\$51K**

Expenditure ↓ against budget by **\$172K**

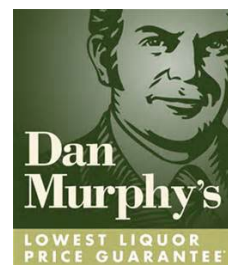
Our **Sustainability** reserve is **\$194k**

Access to Justice for all women

Unspent Project Funds:



The audited financial statement is available by request.



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

NQWLS acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities as the Traditional Custodians of the land we work on and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise that their sovereignty was never ceded.

INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES; EMBRACING DIVERSITY

NQWLS is 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.



nq
women's
legal service