

**FROM THE CHAIRPERSON & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

**Sarah Van Gent & Jennie Gray**  
Chair & CEO

Women's Legal Service WA has experienced another year of remarkable growth. During this period, we expanded our services to cover more diverse areas of law and introduced additional social work support. Our office footprint also grew along with our staffing, enabling us to continue delivering specialised services tailored to address the unique socio-legal needs of women, with a holistic approach. Sadly, this growth has become increasingly necessary as rates of violence against women continue to rise.

Key collaborations with partner organisations have played a significant role in achieving this. Sustaining and growing independent, specialist women's services through strategic alliances is vital to address the unique needs of women and advancing gender equity. These alliances ensure that women receive the right legal support at the right time and are critical to the broader community efforts to keep women and their children safe.

We remain deeply grateful to our expert and dedicated team, whose passion for achieving better justice outcomes for women drives our success. This includes our pro bono partners, secondees, students, and volunteers, whose contributions have strengthened our services. Acknowledging the potential



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Join in our conversations with other aligned services, groups, researchers and policy makers:  
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To keep up to date with our Service, you can follow us on **LinkedIn** at:  
[au.linkedin.com/company/womens-legal-service-wa](https://au.linkedin.com/company/womens-legal-service-wa)

**DONATE NOW**

We are a not for profit community organisation that gratefully accepts donations.  
 Donations of \$2.00 or more are tax deductible and a receipt is provided on request.  
 Donations can be made by cash, cheque or money order or via our QR code on the side.



For a comprehensive summary of WLSWA's annual performance, this document should be read in conjunction with the full WLSWA Annual Report 2023/24 available on our website.

Women's Legal Service WA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar Nation. We recognise that sovereignty of this land was never ceded and the experiences of colonisation and loss continue to affect the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and communities today.

**About us**

WLSWA is a specialist gender-specific community legal centre that has been providing trauma-informed services to women across Western Australia since 1997. Our primary focus is on supporting women who live with financial disadvantage and who are experiencing family, domestic, and sexual violence. Many of the women we work with have a complexity of other unmet needs and vulnerabilities that create significant barriers to accessing justice. By offering specialised socio-legal services, WLSWA ensures that women can access a comprehensive service tailored to their unique needs in the context of their entire lives.

In addition to direct legal services, WLSWA engages in strategic activities aimed at ensuring the needs and rights of women are adequately acknowledged, represented, upheld, and met. We strive to promote a legal system that is safe, supportive, non-discriminatory, and responsive to the needs of all women within the WA community.

Our service and strategic areas of practice include:

- ← Child Protection and Care
- ← Family, Domestic and Sexual Matters
- ← Violence
- ← Family Law
- ← Criminal Injuries Compensation Claims
- ← Employment Law
- ← Financial Counselling
- ← Social Work
- ← Community Legal Education
- ← Sector Capacity Building
- ← Policy Development
- ← Human Rights Advocacy
- ← Law Reform Activities



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND INSIGHTS



## COMMUNITY EDUCATION & EVENTS

As a specialist community legal centre, WLSWA is committed to enhancing sector capability through community legal education and resource development. Education is a vital early intervention strategy that can also inform and empower women about their legal rights and obligations. In 2023/24, this included seminars designed for our partners in the sector and presentations to students at tertiary institutions. It also included conference keynotes and panel participation such as the Family Safety Summit, the National Indigenous Justice Forum and the Legislative Roadmap – Criminalising Coercive Control in Australia, and special events organised with key stakeholders, such as 16 Days in WA, International Women's Day, Financial Abuse Roundtable, and annual Candlelight Vigil.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO REFORM

The sum of Women's Legal Service WA's work provides a strategic view about the way women experience legal systems and beyond. Our insights and perspectives are increasingly sought from media and we continued to be invited into many strategic conversations about law and social reforms, at both State and Federal levels. This included joined-up campaigning with our peers in the sector, and in particular the Women's Legal Service Australia. We have contributed to reforms in the following areas, amongst others:

- Australian Law Reform Commission's Justice Responses to Sexual Violence
- Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services
- Senate inquiry into Missing and Murdered First Nations Women and Children
- Non-payment of Child Support as a Form of Economic Abuse
- National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence
- WA Firearms Bill 2024
- United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

## Policy Partnerships & Networks

WLSWA is networked with many stakeholder services around WA and maintain these relationships as well as establish new partnership pathways. In addition to WLS Australia, key policy partnerships and networks include:

- Community Legal WA
- Economic Abuse Reference Group
- FDV Collective Action Group
- FDV Legal Worker's Network
- Advisory Group for FDV CaLD
- First Nations Advisory Group
- Law Access Stakeholder Group
- National Women's Safety Alliance
- Pilbara FDV Network
- Protection and Care Advocacy Network
- Stronger Together Implementation Group
- Victims of Crime Project Group

## 2023-2024 WLSWA ACHIEVEMENTS



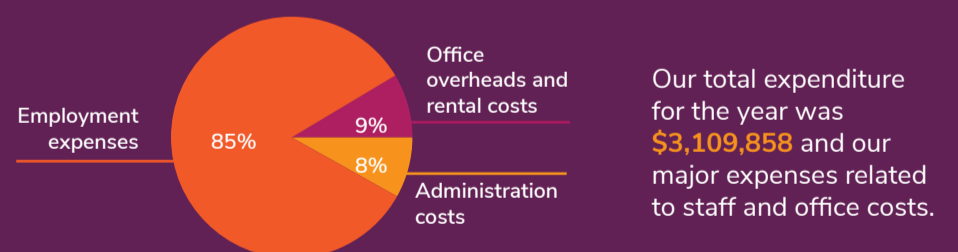
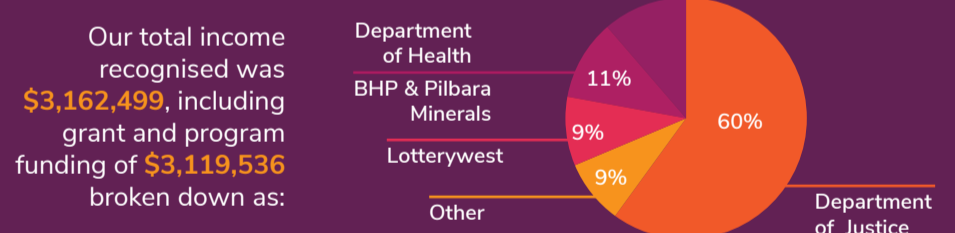
*'I felt supported nearly at every moment.'*

*'I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for all the help and support you provided me during my divorce process. You patiently addressed all my questions and concerns, ensuring understood each step and felt supported at every moment. Today I have finally received official order from the court. This couldn't have happened without your support and guidance. I am genuinely grateful for everything you have done for me.'*

## 2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE FINANCIAL POSITION

### Annual Performance

For the year ending 30 June 2024 we recognised a profit of **\$52,641**



The audited financial statements are available on our website or on request.

*'I feel more knowledgeable and less confused.'*

*'Thank you so much for helping me put things into perspective. I feel less scattered and more prepared for the upcoming court hearing. Out of all the legal advice I've been given, yours was the most helpful. I now know what I need to focus on, and it has relieved me of a lot of anxiety. I used to stress over the whole story, what to say, how to word it and where to start. Now I feel more knowledgeable on what I need to provide for my case without going around in circles or being confused.'*

### SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OUR KEY PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

In particular, Attorney-General's Department, BHP, Department of Communities, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, Department of Health WA, Department of Justice, Lotterywest, Pilbara Minerals and our generous regular donors.