

86% of clients agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend our service to others and **100%** of clients agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome and safe in our service



\$159,221 in debts waived



\$667,779 in criminal injuries compensation awarded



10 formalised sector partnership agreements



2990 legal information services provided



30 networks that we belong to



44 contributions to law reform and social policy



55 community legal education activities



75% of clients' legal matters completed



1300 clients supported



KEY HIGHLIGHTS AND INSIGHTS



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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

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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 2024/25 available on our website.

Women's Legal Service WA
 Justice for women

SUMMARY
 Annual Report
24-25

Acknowledgement

Women's Legal Service WA acknowledges the Traditional Owners 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 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 and seamless supports tailored to their unique needs.

In addition to direct service delivery, WLSWA engaged in strategic activities aimed at ensuring that the needs and rights of women are acknowledged, represented and upheld.

Our areas of practice and work in 2024-25 included:

- ← Financial counselling
- ← Working women
- ← Sexual assault and abuse
- ← Criminal injuries compensation
- ← Family Law
- ← Family and domestic violence
- ← Child Protection
- ← Social work
- ← Community legal education
- ← Resource development
- ← Human rights advocacy
- ← Social policy and law reform



ANNUAL REPORT OVERVIEW | 2024-25

Presented by Chairperson Sarah Van Gent and CEO Jennie Gray

This year has again been marked by service excellence, strategic influence, and growth, as WLSWA continued to support women who experience barriers to justice, and advocate for a legal system that is safe, non-discriminatory and responsive to the needs of all women across the state.

As always, this would not have been possible without our supporters and partner's ongoing generosity and collaboration, and our dedicated Board and team members. Collectively we have made our accomplishments possible. This shared commitment to improving justice outcomes for women in Western Australia is both humbling and inspiring.

To measure the progress we have made in these 12 months, we tracked our performance against the **five pillars in our Strategic Plan**.

PILLAR 1: PEOPLE

Our teams are empowered and thrive in an innovative, growing and supportive environment. Their diversity and expertise are matched with our work. Our clients feel welcomed and experience a deep respect and response for the stories they bring.

- WLSWA continued to grow our services to meet women's complex socio-legal needs, often in partnership with other providers.
- We undertook a snapshot of women turned away due to capacity limits and ineligibility. This was almost double the previous year, and which is equivalent of more than 3,000 women requesting a service per annum that we could not assist.
- Despite the recruitment challenges experienced in the sector, WLSWA concluded this reporting period with a full complement of staff.
- As part of our trauma informed approach, we implemented regular Reflective Practice Groups and self-care processes to support staff wellbeing.
- The team completed the Micro-credentialed Notre Dame University course, Coercive Control and the Law.
- Capacity at WLSWA continued to be strengthened through the generous pro bono support of private law firms.

PILLAR 2: PLACE

We deliver services from inclusive and safe spaces, prioritising accessibility and a purposeful place-based presence.

- Outreach teams connected with existing and built new relationships with the local services in various regions around Western Australia.
- The opportunities of being co-located with other specialist community legal centres in the 'Hay St Hub' are continued to be leveraged.
- We were deeply honoured to display the extraordinary art collection of Dr Judyth Watson, bequeathed to the Working Women's Centre WA.
- Only 12 months into an expanded office space, we re-arranged office and seating configuration and furniture to accommodate additional team members.
- We continue to receive heartfelt feedback that the office feels welcoming and safe.

PILLAR 3: PARTNERSHIPS

We build and maintain relevant and robust relationships with sector, government, corporate and philanthropic organisations and understand the purpose and priorities of these.

- Through our various Health Justice Partnerships, WLSWA continued to collaborate with gender-specific services. In addition to Goldfields and Luma Women's Health, new collaborations were made with Geraldton's Desert Blue Connect and Karratha Women's Refuge.
- The pro-active involvement of the WLS Australia in national funding negotiations led to increased and quarantined funding for women's legal services in the five-year National Access to Justice Agreement.
- New service pathways were established with local organisations such as Dress for Success and Brigid Justice.
- WLSWA collaborated with others to organise and deliver key community and sector events that promoted the rights of women, including 16 Days and International Women's Day 2025.



PILLAR 4: POSITIONING

We are well regarded and respected leaders in both complex service delivery and as agents for change. We have a clear identity and a value proposition that is widely known.

- WLSWA continued to be invited into many strategic conversations about law and policy reform, at both state and federal levels. This included the Inspector-General of Taxation Ombudsman's and Office for Women's respective reviews of weaponisation of government systems.
- Our proposals were evident in the Family Law Amendment Bill 2024; Australian Law Reform Commission's Justice Responses to Sexual Violence; and Parliamentary Joint Committee on Corporations and Financial Services Financial abuse: an insidious form of domestic violence.
- In WA we joined the Restraining Order Amendment Bill Working Group and prepared submissions for the Firearms and Evidence Bills, both 2024.
- Elevated media presence reflected ongoing concern about violence against women.

PILLAR 5: PRACTICES

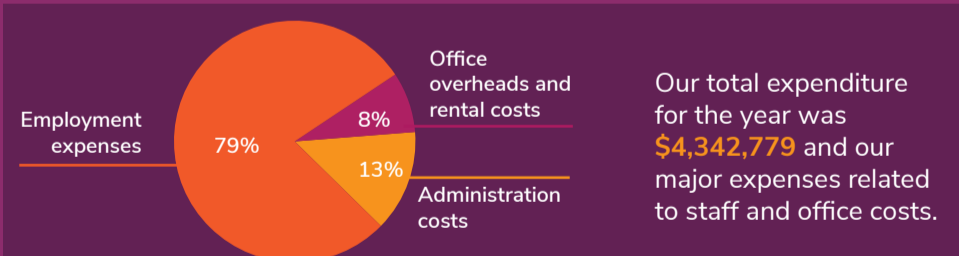
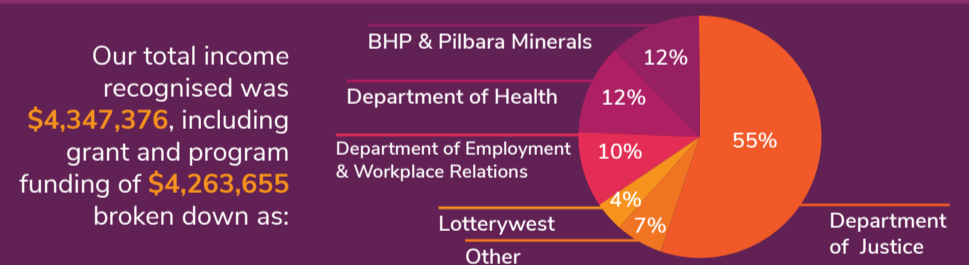
Our values are evident across our areas of practice. We continually innovate and adapt to enhance the effectiveness of our practices.

- As a specialist community legal centre, our commitment to enhancing sector capability through community legal education and resource development was especially apparent through the presenting and sharing of our Risk Screening Approach framework and tools for CLCs.
- Our conference presentations included the Family Safety Summit; The Hatchery Ending Coercive Control & Family Violence; Wesnet Technology Safety Summit; and Family Pathways Network.
- Participation in national podcasts included Let's Talk Health Justice and the Law Report, and in the state, Noongar Radio's Breaking the Silence and Legal Aid's Law Talk WA.
- Accreditation was achieved without any identified areas for improvement.
- An Engagement Committee was convened and begun exploring fundraising, branding, and investment strategies to support future growth.
- Independent project evaluations confirmed the effectiveness and value of these in improving outcomes for women.
- Client feedback was especially compelling and reinforced the importance of ongoing support.

2024 FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND ANNUAL PERFORMANCE FINANCIAL POSITION

Annual Performance

For the year ending 30 June 2024 we recognised a profit of **\$4,597**



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.