

Annual Report 2023-24

Human

---

Rights

---

Law

---

Centre.

---



This report covers work undertaken by the Human Rights Law Centre between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

We acknowledge the lands on which we work and live, including the lands of the Wurundjeri, Bunurong, Gadigal, Ngunnawal, Darug and Wadawurrung people. We pay our respect to Elders of those lands, both past and present. We recognise that this land always was and always will be Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land because sovereignty has never been ceded. We acknowledge the role of the colonial legal system in establishing, entrenching, and continuing the oppression and injustice experienced by First Nations peoples and that we have a responsibility to work in solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to undo this.

**WARNING:** This document contains images and names of people who have passed away.

# Contents Page

A message from our Chief Executive Officer and Chair .....	4
Who we are & how we work .....	6
Our tools.....	7
Our equitable briefing policy.....	8
Our commitment to anti-racism.....	9
First Nations Justice .....	10
Dignity for people in prison.....	22
Migration Justice .....	28
Human Rights Acts .....	36
Corporate Accountability.....	42
Democratic Freedoms.....	48
Climate Justice .....	60
Reproductive Rights.....	66
Strengthening our organisation.....	70
Supporter Story: Jennie Stuart, Humanists Victoria.....	72
Our Team.....	74
Our Board.....	76
Our Finances.....	78
Our Partners.....	80
Our Supporters .....	82

Caitlin Reiger  
presenting to a  
university class.



## A message from our Chief Executive Officer and Chair

The past financial year has seen critical threats to human rights in Australia and around the world.

In Australia, the Voice to Parliament was rejected, anti-immigrant rhetoric escalated, we continue to see preventable deaths in custody, and the Disability Royal Commission revealed systemic abuse and human rights violations of people with disability. We continue to see the unequal impacts of COVID-19, and are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis which underscores existing inequalities and the need to ensure basic health and housing standards so that all Australians can enjoy a safe and dignified life.

Globally, war and humanitarian crises continue to have far-reaching consequences. The devastating war in Israel-Palestine is continuing to cause irreparable damage which will take generations to recover and divide communities in Australia. The rise of authoritarian governments reinforces the need to protect existing rights protections alongside improving systems to challenge injustice and oppression everywhere. The Human Rights Law Centre's purpose and mission could not be more important.

The promise contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 75 years ago last December, continues to be an aspiration rather than reality. Some question the point of human rights altogether as a result. When trust in human rights and our institutions are under threat, it is essential that we stand up for the shared values that underpin a more just future – freedom from oppression, dignity, equality and respect. These are the principles that make the human rights movement a powerful force in the fight to achieve justice and equity, and provide a counterpoint to the politics of fear and division.

Tackling abuses of power, poverty, racism and exclusion cannot be done in isolation. We need to work in partnership to make Australia a fairer place for all. We deeply appreciate the chance to fight for justice alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, civil society partners, pro bono lawyers, donors, philanthropists, supporters and, most importantly, with the people and communities working each day to advance our shared human rights.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kiely'.

Ben Kiely,  
Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Reiger'.

Caitlin Reiger  
CEO

**2023-24 revealed what can be achieved when we work together for a more just future.**

- Alongside our partners, our expertise and tenacious advocacy secured new, world-leading visa protections for migrant workers and a High Court judgement that indefinite immigration detention is now illegal.
- Our advocacy was critical to establishing Australia's first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner.
- With 110 campaign partners and overwhelming public support, an Australian Human Rights Act is within reach following unambiguous support from a Parliamentary inquiry into Australia's human rights framework.
- We continued to support communities in Bougainville in their landmark human rights complaint against mining giant Rio Tinto.
- Over 100 whistleblowers received legal support as they courageously spoke up against wrongdoing.

This past financial year, we have taken stock of the Human Rights Law Centre's unique role in achieving change. We advanced essential work to recognise our own power and privilege, embedding anti-racism into our organisation. We brought these reflections into our strategic planning process which will result in a new plan launched at the end of 2024.

Our Board has been refreshed after several directors reached term limits or took up new roles. We are deeply grateful to the time and efforts of our departing directors, Andrew Carriline, Chris Sidoti, Jamie Gardiner and Jessica Kendall. We welcomed Rawan Arraf, Damian Griffiths, Shanta Martin and Chris Povey to the Board.

The Human Rights Law Centre could not achieve all it does without the generous contributions of our many supporters. Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to all of you. Together we look forward to even greater impact as we launch our new three year strategy shortly.

Thank you for all that you do.

# Who we are & how we work

---

## Our purpose

**Fearless human rights action for a fairer future for all.**

## Our vision

People and communities live with dignity and have the power to challenge injustice, and human rights are at the core of institutions and laws.

## How we work

We work on human rights issues across Australia, and human rights issues overseas that relate to the actions of Australian governments and corporations.

In undertaking our work, we help people and communities understand their rights and take action to defend those rights and the rights of others. We work alongside people and communities affected by human rights violations and place their voices and interests at the heart of our work. We recognise that our goals can only be achieved by working collaboratively. That is why strong, respectful partnerships are central to all our work.

We partner with other not-for-profit organisations to advance shared goals and achieve collective impact. We partner with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and organisations, working alongside them to address systemic injustices facing communities, guided by partnership principles which support self-determination.

We partner with law firms and barristers whose professional commitment to human rights, access to justice and the rule of law brings significant expert pro bono resources to support our work.

We build communities of action on the issues we work on. We connect people and communities whose human rights are at risk with our staff, donors, philanthropic funders, not-for-profit and pro bono partners and with other people and communities who are committed to defending rights. We are part of the community legal centre sector and a member of the Australian Council of Social Services, the Australian Corporate Accountability Network, the International Network of Civil Liberty Organisations, the Whistleblowing International Network, and other human rights networks.

Human Rights Law Centre staff members Keren Adams and Lauren Zanetti in discussion. Jack Mclean taking notes.



## Our tools

### Legal action

We take strategic legal action to secure redress for people and communities in need, to ensure accountability, to establish precedents that protect human rights, and to prompt law and policy change.

### Policy solutions

We conduct analysis, consultation and research to develop policy solutions to change laws and policies to advance human rights.

### Advocacy

We advocate with decision makers, in the media and through United Nations accountability mechanisms, to secure law and policy reforms to advance human rights and to defeat policy proposals that would undermine human rights.

### Partnership

We work alongside people and communities affected by human rights violations and place their voices and interests at the heart of our work.

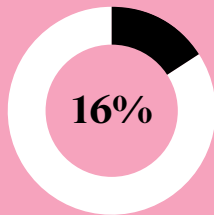
## Our equitable briefing policy

55

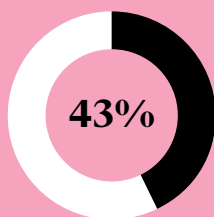
briefs offered to barristers

44

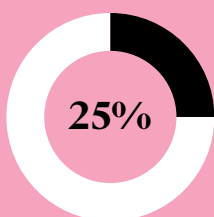
briefs accepted by counsel



briefs accepted by barristers of colour



briefs accepted by women



briefs accepted by senior counsel

### Human Rights Law Centre publishes latest equitable briefing data

In 2022, the Human Rights Law Centre adopted an [equitable briefing policy](#) to guide and improve our briefing of barristers.

The legal profession does not currently reflect the community that it serves, and as a human rights organisation we have a responsibility to help address this. Working with counsel who have a diversity of perspectives, experiences and backgrounds is good for our clients and good for the profession. The policy was developed in consultation with a range of stakeholders across the profession.

Consistently with the principles of transparency and accountability which underpin the policy, we are pleased to publish our briefing data for the second full financial year of the policy's operation.

We have set targets to offer more briefs to barristers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, people of colour or who have a disability, and barristers who are women or gender diverse. Additionally, we have pledged to increase the number of briefs accepted by diverse counsel in comparison to the prior year's briefing data. The policy also sets out a range of other initiatives to ensure the Human Rights Law Centre is contributing to fostering greater diversity within the legal profession.

In FY2023-24, we offered 55 briefs to barristers. 12 of these briefs were to barristers who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or people of colour (22 per cent), exceeding our target of 15 per cent. 11 briefs were offered to people of colour and one was offered to an Aboriginal barrister. No briefs were offered to barristers who disclose being a person with a disability.

27 of the barristers we offered briefs to were women, representing 49 per cent of total briefs offered (just below our target of 50 per cent). 15 of these briefs were offered to senior counsel, and of these five were women – being 33 per cent of senior counsel briefs, short of our target of 40 per cent.

Our equitable briefing policy requires us to seek to improve on our prior financial year's data in relation to accepted briefs.

In FY2023-24, 44 briefs were accepted by counsel. Of these, seven briefs were accepted by barristers of colour (16 per cent - a three percentage point increase on the prior financial year). 19 briefs were accepted by women barristers (43 per cent - a seven percentage point improvement). 11 briefs were accepted by senior counsel but only one was a woman silk.

In summary, we met and exceeded some of our equitable briefing targets, but fell short in some critical areas – particularly in relation to briefs with senior counsel who are women.

The Human Rights Law Centre is committed to equitable briefing and will continue to monitor, report on and strive to improve our compliance. The mixed outcomes over the past two financial years underscores the importance of a continued investment in equitable briefing practices.

In the coming financial year, we will investigate barriers to equitable briefing and ways to address them with a renewed focus on working across the community legal sector to increase representation.



Human Rights Law Centre staff  
Madeleine Howle, David Mejia-  
Canales and Alice Drury.



## Our commitment to anti-racism

Systemic racism describes the power imbalances that are embedded in institutions and systems, especially where institutions carry unequal and unjust historical legacies. In Australia, systemic racism is reflected in the ongoing process and history of colonisation, and is reinforced and continued by systems and institutions that privilege whiteness and impede self-determination by First Nations people. These include the legal frameworks and institutions within which the Human Rights Law Centre works.

The Human Rights Law Centre (Centre) is committed to advancing anti-racism, justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workplace systems and structures, as well as in the legal, policy and advocacy work that we do. As an organisation established to promote and protect human rights, the Centre actively works to identify, understand, and challenge systemic oppression and exclusion on the basis of race, indigeneity, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability, among others. The Centre recognises that the realisation of human rights cannot be achieved without dismantling systemic racism and discrimination and addressing the ongoing impacts of colonisation. The Centre is also committed in its own human rights work to removing barriers to full participation of staff and the communities we work with and bringing an intersectional lens to all aspects of our work.

In 2023, we began undertaking work to become a more intentionally anti-racist organisation. We are deeply grateful to the generosity of staff of colour and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, both past and present, for raising their voices and dedicating their time and expertise to this process. We also thank Nicole Cassar of Cultural Infusion Services and Kind Enterprises for their expertise.

In April 2024, we published our Anti-Racism Statement – a document that outlines principles to guide this work and commitment to strengthening the organisation's approach to anti-racism. The Human Rights Law Centre began developing an Anti-Racism Plan to ensure that we live the values that inform our work, including a commitment to human rights principles, centring lived experience in our work, and building it into our workplace systems and organisational structure. This work has informed our new strategy and will continue to guide the further evolution of our organisation.

We must provide a culturally safe environment for staff and the communities we work with, which actively challenges the power structures of racism and colonialism. We are committed to using our position and work to challenge racial biases inherent in Australia's legal system.

# First Nations Justice

---

## **Our vision**

A fair legal system that is free from racial injustice and that upholds the principles of dignity, equality and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' right to self-determination.



From left to right:  
Monique Hurley, Associate  
Legal Director, Nick Espie,  
Special Counsel, and  
Tash Khan, Content  
Producer in Alice Springs,  
February 2024.

## How we work

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people know the solutions to the injustices their communities face – injustices borne of colonisation, ongoing racism and generations of oppressive laws and policies. We strive to work in ways that uphold Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ right to self-determination and support the movement to end systemic racism in the legal system.

We work in solidarity with Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, peak bodies and the Change the Record coalition. Our partnership principles guide how we support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples’ right to self-determination.



# Our focus

1

## **Diverting Aboriginal children away from the legal system**

We advocate for a fair and compassionate youth legal system that ensures Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are not locked up and instead, can reach their full potential, supported by their families and in their communities.

2

## **Working with partners to end Aboriginal deaths in custody**

We work to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services and Aboriginal-led organisations to end Aboriginal deaths in custody and provide support to families and communities throughout coronial inquest processes.

3

## **Advocating for economic justice**

We work to end the federal government's oppressive targeting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people through the social security system and to advocate for a fair social safety net so that all people can live a dignified life.

4

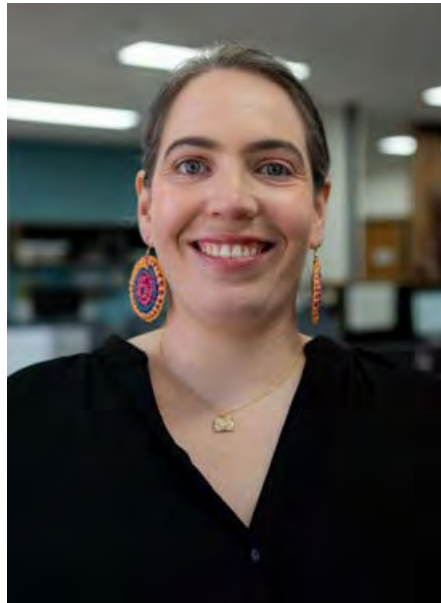
## **Removing racial injustice from the criminal legal system**

We work to end the mass-imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and challenge the lack of police accountability.

## Introducing Maggie Munn

In May 2024, the Human Rights Law Centre welcomed Maggie Munn as its new Director of First Nations Justice.

Maggie is a Gunggari person from south-west Queensland, and a passionate and experienced advocate for First Nations justice. Maggie has previously worked as the National Director of the Change the Record coalition and the Lead Campaigner for Indigenous Rights at Amnesty International.



● **“Joining the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Rights team at the Human Rights Law Centre has long been an ambition of mine because of the work the team have done with mob and communities in pursuit of justice. I am immensely proud and excited to lead the team as we work with local Aboriginal legal services, communities and families on matters of economic justice, equity, self-determination, human rights and social justice.”**

– Maggie Munn, Director

Family and supporters of Kumanjayi Walker gather outside near the Coronial Inquest hearings.



## Justice for Kumanjayi Walker

● **“Across this country, over 550 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have died in custody in the three decades since the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Yet governments continue to sit on their hands and fail to act. We stand behind Kumanjayi Walker’s loved ones, the Yuendumu community and NAAJA in their calls for truth and accountability. Aboriginal communities have always had the answers - they must be listened to, and governments must act on community calls for change.”**

– Nick Espie, Arrernte man and Special Counsel

In 2022, the Human Rights Law Centre began supporting the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) in its intervention in the coronial inquest into the police-shooting death of Warlpiri and Luritja teenager Kumanjayi Walker. Kumanjayi Walker was killed after being shot three times at close range by former police officer Constable Zachary Rolfe in November 2019, in circumstances where all medical services had been withdrawn from the Yuendumu Community. The coronial inquest into Kumanjayi Walker’s death began in September 2022 and is still ongoing.

In February 2024, we helped NAAJA prepare for and participate in the long-awaited cross examination of Zachary Rolfe, who repeatedly sought to avoid giving evidence. We sent Nick Espie and Monique Hurley to work closely with NAAJA in Alice Springs, which resulted in a highly focussed cross examination strategy highlighting direct and systemic racism within NT Police and demonstrated the need for greater police accountability in the Northern Territory.

This effective strategy revealed damning evidence from Zachary Rolfe, including widespread use of racist language and revelations that members of an elite NT Police unit awarded racist, mock certificates to each other. The inquest is expected to conclude in late 2024.

Throughout this period, we also supported the calls for change from Kumanjayi Walker’s family and community by providing media and communications assistance to the Justice for Walker campaign. Our Content Producer Tash Khan remained onsite in Alice Springs to assist the family’s advocacy, providing them with invaluable social media support.

As the inquest approaches its final stages, the Human Rights Law Centre is assisting NAAJA to draft its closing submissions with a focus on findings and recommendations that will help deliver long overdue and systemic change in the Northern Territory including:

- an end to discriminatory policing and excessive use of force by police;
- independent and robust police accountability mechanisms;
- proper resourcing for self-determined solutions including community-led alternatives to police and community-controlled health services.

The Coroner’s findings are expected to be delivered by early 2025.

## CASE STUDY

### Justice for Aunty Tanya Day and repeal of public intoxication laws in Victoria

Following extensive advocacy by the family of proud Yorta Yorta woman Aunty Tanya Day, in November 2023, the Victorian Government finally decriminalised public drunkenness, a commitment made at the outset of the coronial inquest into their mum's death and recommended by the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody over 30 years ago.

This reform was a longstanding priority for the Human Rights Law Centre. Aunty Tanya was arrested for being drunk in a public place after falling asleep on a train and died after hitting her head in a police cell in 2017. The Coroner found that the checks conducted on Aunty Tanya while she was in the police cell were inadequate and that police failed to take proper care for her health and welfare.

Early reports show that the complete decriminalisation of public intoxication is helping thousands of people identified as intoxicated in a public place avoid arrest and the risk of dying in custody. Instead, they are being supported to safely go home or attend sobering-up centres, in line with their rights to health, family and freedom from arbitrary arrest.

We continue to work with the Day family, as a member of the Public Intoxication Reform Evaluation Advisory Group, to ensure the justice evaluation of the public intoxication reforms accurately analyses Victoria Police actions in the new public health response. As a member of Victoria Police's Human Rights Advisory Group, the Human Rights Law Centre is well placed to continue the focus on this vital reform.



● **“Our mother would still be here today if the government repealed the laws criminalising public drunkenness as first recommended over 30 years ago in the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. We are glad the government is finally listening and is implementing these changes.**

**“As our mother’s case and all the other similar cases show, police cells are dangerous places for intoxicated people. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people this is especially so, where systemic racism and bias held by individuals means that our people are more likely to die when detained in police cells.”**

– The Day family



● **“Pipelining children into youth prisons does not make the community safer. Safety is ensuring that every child has a secure home, is engaged at school, is connected with family and our community. Safety is supporting the services needed to help children avoid contact with, and the harms caused by, the criminal legal system in the first place.”**

– Monique Hurley, Associate Legal Director

## Raising the age of criminal responsibility to keep children out of prisons

Across Australia, children as young as 10 can be charged by police and locked up in prison. Australia’s very low age of criminal responsibility is at odds with expert advice on childhood development and is out of step with most other countries. It is also contrary to Australia’s legal obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Due to the ongoing impacts of colonisation, inequality and systemic racism in our laws and policies, data confirms that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children continue to be over-represented in youth prisons in every Australian state and territory.

The Human Rights Law Centre continues to play a key role in the Raise the Age campaign on a national and local level. The campaign continues to call for all states and territories to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 to improve life outcomes for children. As a result of this work, multiple states and territories have committed to raising the age.

In January this year, the South Australian Government proposed raising the age of criminal responsibility to just 12 and embarked on a consultation process.

We made a submission to this process – endorsed by the South Australia Council of Social Services and Change the Record – and have developed a complementary public advocacy and government relations strategy to support this work with a view to securing a commitment to raising the age to at least 14 years old.

Since the Victorian Government backflipped on its commitment to raise the age to 14 by 2027, and decided it would only raise the age to 12 in 2024, we have been working alongside partners to brief key decision makers and push the Victorian Government to raise the age to at least 14 in law, with no exceptions, in this term of government.

The Tasmanian Government announced in December 2023 that it plans to become the first Australian jurisdiction to raise the age to 14, with no exceptions, by 2029. We will continue engaging with the recently re-elected government to confirm this commitment and keep it accountable to becoming the first Australian jurisdiction to meet the minimum standards set by the United Nations and recommendations by medical and child development experts.

Alongside this, to support our ongoing work to raise the age, we are also embarking on a lived experience story telling project to elevate the voices of young people who have had contact with the criminal legal system to show to the broader public why no child belongs behind bars.

While we achieved some progress, there is still considerable work to do. The Raise the Age campaign continues to advocate for all governments to raise the age to at least 14 years old.





## Launching our Lived Experience Project

To support our ongoing work to raise the age of criminal responsibility, we launched a lived experience story telling project to elevate the voices of young people who have had contact with the criminal legal system to show to the broader public why no child belongs behind bars.

Children in contact with the justice system continue to be dehumanised and painted as ‘criminals’ in the media. This narrative causes further harm, and it is critical we hear directly from the voices of people who have had experience of being a young person in contact with the criminal legal system. Evidence shows that the majority of children in contact with the legal system have faced enormous challenges including family violence, living in the out-of-home care system and homelessness. That is why the Human Rights Law Centre launched a lived experience storytelling project. The project will platform the voices and experiences of children and young people who were subjected to contact with police and courts, imprisonment and diversion, to show why no child belongs behind bars in a police or prison cell.

● **“Children should grow up in our schoolyards and communities, never locked up behind bars. This project will support and empower children to reclaim their stories. Prison can have life-long consequences on a child’s life. It is time to shine the spotlight on and give power back to children and young people who have had so much taken away from growing up in prison.”**

– Thomas Feng, Engagement Director

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the family of Veronica Nelson address the media to challenge unjust bail laws.



## Challenging unjust bail laws

Between 2016 and 2019, the Victorian Government made knee-jerk changes to Victoria's bail laws largely in response to a violent act committed by one man. These changes dramatically increased the number of people being pipelined into prison, with women experiencing poverty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women impacted most. More women are being denied bail, not because they pose a risk to the community, but because they themselves are at risk – of family violence, homelessness, economic disadvantage and mental illness.

For years, we advocated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations and other partners for the Victorian Government to address the problem. On 25 March 2024, long overdue changes came into effect, including the repeal of two bail offences and the introduction of additional court considerations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people applying for bail.

While these changes are a step in the right direction, they fall far short of reforms called for by the family of Veronica Marie Nelson, a proud Gunditjmara, Dja Dja Wurrung, Wiradjuri and Yorta Yorta woman who died in custody after being pushed into prison by the unfair bail laws.

In addition to this, the Allan Government walked back from its commitment to change youth bail laws that are needlessly locking children behind bars in pre-trial detention. Harmful reverse-onus bail provisions have led to an increase in the number of children caged in youth prisons. A staggering 80 per cent of children detained in youth prisons are locked away waiting in pre-trial detention. Due to government failure to address discriminatory laws like the state's youth bail laws, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are remanded in pre-trial detention at unacceptably high rates.

The Human Rights Law Centre advocated for the Allan Government to stick to their promise to make the state's youth bail laws fairer and resource the community programs that support children to avoid being criminalised in the first place.

From left to right: Laura Elliott (DLA Piper), Uncle Dennis, Josephine Langbien (Human Rights Law Centre), Alex Walters (Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service).



## Challenging unfair access to the age pension for Aboriginal People

Every person deserves to retire with dignity. Because of the gap in life expectancy, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are being denied equal access to the age pension, preventing them from accessing fundamental support later in life. Aboriginal men have a life expectancy 8.8 years lower than non-Indigenous men, while for Aboriginal women the gap is 8.1 years.

This gap is driven by the ongoing impacts of colonisation and systemic racism, and the failure of governments to meet Closing the Gap targets. Data released in November last year showed the gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and non-Indigenous people is widening, rather than closing.

Last year, proud Wakka Wakka man Uncle Dennis brought a legal challenge against the Australian Government with support from the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and the Human Rights Law Centre. Together, we called for fair and equal access to the age pension for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Despite recognising the ongoing gap in life expectancy, the Federal Court did not accept that Australia's racial discrimination laws should give Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people earlier access to the age pension. In March 2024, the High Court declined to hear an appeal from the Federal Court's decision.

This case and Uncle Dennis's powerful advocacy shone a light on the ongoing impacts of colonisation and discrimination that are still contributing to the widening gap in life expectancy between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

We are deeply honoured to have supported Uncle Dennis' case and worked together with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. We will continue supporting the calls of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People for fair access to the age pension and real action from the Australian Government to achieve equal life expectancy.

## CASE STUDY

### Uncle Dennis' story

Dennis is a proud Wakka Wakka man who grew up and worked on a mission in Queensland. His wages were stolen by the Queensland Government. These days Dennis works in community radio and as a cultural guide, but like many people, he does not have the assets and wealth now required to meet the costs of living in retirement.



Uncle Dennis standing in front of the Federal Circuit Court.

● **“More than a decade ago, Australian governments promised to “Close the Gap”, but we are not making much progress. They are all talk and no action. If it were the other way around, and white people were dying too young, they would have fixed this already.**

**This case was asking the Australian Government to work together with us, to give our people the same chance in life as everyone else. The pension is an important part of caring for and looking after our people when they cannot work anymore.**

**I took this legal action because I wanted to stand up for my people. I am disappointed that the court will not hear our case, but we will keep fighting because truth and accountability are important.”**

– Proud Wakka Wakka man Uncle Dennis

Apryl Day-Watson speaks at Invasion Day rally calling for truth and accountability.



## Calling for police accountability

The status quo of police investigating themselves and dodging accountability for their actions must end. This year, we continued advocating for police accountability across Australia. In Victoria, we continue to work alongside the Police Accountability Project and partners to call for independent oversight of Victoria Police in the form of a best practice Police Ombudsman. We connected the lawyers leading a class action claim against Victoria Police with expert evidence through the International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations, of which the Human Rights Law Centre became a member of in 2019.

In the Northern Territory, we continue to work with NAAJA to advocate for independent oversight of NT Police, through the coronial inquest into the death of Kumanjayi Walker and through supporting NAAJA to draft submissions to review processes in the Northern Territory including the recent NT Police Review.

# Dignity for people in prison

---

## **Our vision**

An Australia where governments are working towards closing, rather than opening, prisons; where all people behind bars are treated with dignity; and where governments and private operators are held accountable for human rights abuse in prisons.



A 12-minute phone call in prison costs \$7, which is more than a day's labour for people in prison.



# Our focus

1

## Ending cruel and degrading practices in prisons

Abuse thrives behind prison walls and we advocate to end particularly cruel and degrading practices, including routine strip searching and the use of spit hoods and restraint chairs.

2

## Ensuring oversight and transparency of places of detention

We call for greater oversight and transparency to prevent abuse behind prison walls. This includes advocating for the effective implementation of the United Nations' anti-torture treaties, including the protocol which requires independent inspections and monitoring of places of detention to be implemented across Australia.



● **“Disconnection from family can have profound, damaging, and long-lasting impacts on people’s lives. That is particularly acute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are already over criminalised in the prison system due to a combination of structural racism, discriminatory policing, and the ongoing impacts of colonisation.”**

- Monique Hurley, Associate Legal Director

Staying connected to families is crucial for rehabilitation.



## Advocating for fair access to phone calls for people in prison

The cost of \$7 phone calls should not keep families apart. However, due to the expanding privatisation of Victoria’s prison system, it can cost more than a day’s work for a person behind bars to make a short phone call to family or friends. Exorbitant phone fees mean that mothers and fathers cannot afford to call their children, and siblings and friends cannot maintain crucial social connections. \$7 may not seem like much, but Victorian prisoners earn only between \$3.95 to \$8.95 a day. Their income also needs to go towards canteen purchases such as snacks and toiletries.

In 2024, together with partners, we used direct advocacy and the media to highlight the damaging impact high-cost phone calls are having on people in Victorian prisons.

We engaged with both the Yoorrook Justice Commission and the Cultural Review of the Adult Custodial Corrections System in Victoria on this important issue facing people in prison and their families. Both processes resulted in strong recommendations for prison phone calls to be made free. We worked alongside the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Flat Out to deliver media advocacy and direct engagement with decision makers to call on the Victorian Government to action these recommendations and make phone calls in prisons free.

Now, the Corrections Minister, Enver Erdogan, has committed to investigating the prohibitive cost of prison phone calls.

Sign at Invasion Day rally.



## Calling for an end to cruel treatment in places of detention

People behind bars should be treated with dignity and not subjected to cruel and dangerous practices. Yet across Australia, people in prisons and police custody continue to experience harm from practices that are banned in many other countries.

Strip searching is a degrading practice that is frequently and routinely carried out in Australian prisons, despite the availability of non-invasive alternatives such as body scanning technology. Routine strip searching is distressing and dehumanising for any person, but can be especially retraumatising for women and children in prisons who are overwhelmingly victim-survivors of physical and sexual abuse. Across Australia, children as young as 10 are being routinely strip searched by prison guards.

In collaboration with a pro bono law firm, we continue working to hold governments to account for the rampant rates at which people in prison are subjected to routine strip searching. In 2024, we continued to collect data from all states and territories to compare the rates at which men, women and children are being strip searched to advocate for change.

Throughout 2024, we also continued to advocate for a nationwide ban on the dangerous use of spit hoods and restraint chairs in places of detention. Our advocacy with partners helped inform the 2022 banning of spit hoods in Queensland and NT Police watch houses, and the ACT Government's 2023 announcement that spit hoods would no longer be used on adults and children in police custody. In 2024, we built on this progress by successfully advocating for provisions in the *Youth Justice Act 2024* (Vic) that ban the use of spit hoods on children in Victorian custodial settings.

## Calling out Queensland's race to the bottom on youth justice



In 2024, reports of horrendous conditions for children in Queensland's youth justice system became an almost a daily occurrence. Discriminatory and unfair laws pipelined many children into police watch houses, where they were left to languish in solitary confinement. Detention in police watch houses deprives children of access to healthcare, education, food, natural light, sleep, hygiene and social interaction.

In a joint submission to the Queensland Government's Youth Justice Reform Select Committee, the Human Rights Law Centre and Change the Record called on the Miles Government to end the cruelty. Together, we called for the government to end the detention of children in inhumane police watch house cells; raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14, with no exceptions; and abolish reverse onus bail laws that unnecessarily trap children in police and prison cells.

Our submission called on the Queensland Government to support young people by building up community-led, evidence-based healthcare, housing and education.

● **“The Queensland Government has a dangerous and prolonged track record for overriding its own Human Rights Act and violating children rights on a level that is unprecedented in Australia.**

**“Right now, children, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children with disability, are being subjected to human rights abuses in the form of solitary confinement and being deprived of the healthcare, housing and education they need to live a healthy childhood.”**

– Maggie Munn, Director

## Ensuring greater transparency and oversight of prisons

In 2017, Australia ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Degrading and Inhuman Treatment (OPCAT), which requires every state and territory to designate a 'National Preventive Mechanism' to carry out inspections and oversight of police and prison cells (as well as other places of detention) to protect against human rights abuses and systemic failings.

Despite having five years and multiple deadlines, including the latest deadline in January 2023, Australia has failed to meet its obligations to implement anti-torture oversight mechanisms for people behind bars in every state and territory. January 2024 marked one year since the Victorian, New South Wales and Queensland governments failed to meet Australia's OPCAT obligations, and the Human Rights Law Centre marked this anniversary with a joint letter and media advocacy condemning the failure of those governments to protect people in prison from mistreatment.

# Migration Justice

---

## **Our vision**

An Australia where all people who cross national borders have a right to dignity, safety and a pathway to making Australia a permanent home.



Rally outside State Library Victoria against Labor's proposed deportation bill. Credit: Matt Hrkac.

## How we work

We use a strategic combination of legal action, policy solutions and advocacy to address the harm being caused by the Australian Government's migration and refugee policies and to change those policies. We work in close partnership with the communities we represent and with other organisations working in the refugee and migrant rights and services sector.

# Our focus

1

## Securing freedom from prolonged and indefinite immigration detention in Australia

Until recently, the Australian Government had the power to hold people in detention for the rest of their lives, simply because they did not have a visa. Through strategic court action and uncompromising public advocacy, we are fighting to dismantle this cruel system and ensure people subjected to indefinite detention can rebuild their lives in the community.

2

## Protecting the rights of temporary migrants

Over one million of Australia's workers are temporary migrants. Workplace exploitation of temporary migrants is endemic, but most suffer in silence. We work to ensure that everyone who arrives in Australia enjoys the same essential rights, including dignity and fair treatment at work.

3

## Bringing families back together

Families belong together. Yet the Australian Government is deliberately separating thousands of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia from their families overseas. Working closely in consultation with people directly impacted, we are addressing this injustice using a combination of strategic legal action, public campaigning, advocacy, and policy reform work.

4

## Safety for people subjected to offshore detention

Australia's inhumane offshore detention regime has destroyed thousands of lives and caused unthinkable suffering. Hundreds of people remain in limbo without any pathway to permanent safety. We continue to fight to end this harmful policy and we will not stop until every single person can rebuild their lives in freedom and safety.



## Ending indefinite detention

For two decades, our laws allowed people to be locked up for the rest of their lives, simply because they did not have a visa. Indefinite immigration detention disproportionately affected refugees and stateless people, who could not safely leave Australia. This included our client, Ned Kelly Emeralds, who was detained for over a decade while seeking asylum through the broken ‘fast track’ refugee assessment system.

The Human Rights Law Centre has played a key role in the fight against indefinite immigration detention. In November 2023, with the University of New South Wales’ Kaldor Centre, we appeared as amici curiae – or friends of the Court – in the High Court case of *NZYQ*, which finally ruled indefinite detention to be unlawful and unconstitutional. This ruling secured the freedom of hundreds of people who had been trapped in brutal detention centres for years on end. But many people remained locked up because their countries of origin refuse to accept the forced return of their citizens.

In April 2024, the High Court heard a further challenge to the immigration detention regime in the case of *ASF17*, to consider whether people who refuse to voluntarily return to their countries of origin can continue to be detained. Our client, Ned Kelly Emeralds, intervened in the proceeding to protect his liberty.

While the High Court ruled that the government is not required to release a person who has the ability to consent to his own deportation but refuses to do so, the Court made clear that for people like Ned, who cannot consent to removal for medical, mental health or other reasons, a lack of cooperation will not justify indefinite detention. Today, Ned is rebuilding his life with his friends and supporters in the Australian community.

Outside of court, we have fought against the extraordinary restrictions and penalties inflicted on people leaving indefinite detention. This has included compulsory electronic monitoring and nightly curfews, imposed on all people leaving indefinite detention – regardless of their age, health or background. We have assisted multiple clients to have these conditions removed – including parents who have been prevented from caring for their children, and elderly clients whose healthcare has been impeded by strict curfew requirements.

These extraordinary conditions profoundly interfere with personal freedom and dignity, and risk further segregating and stigmatising the migrants and refugees who have been released. The Human Rights Law Centre continues to work with those affected to ensure that their rights are respected and upheld, and that they can rebuild their lives in the community.

## CASE STUDY

### Ned's story

Ned fled Iran and arrived in Australia by boat in 2013 and was detained for over a decade, navigating the defective “fast track” asylum process. In November 2023, the High Court ruled that it was unlawful and unconstitutional for the Australian Government to detain people who could not be removed from Australia for the reasonably foreseeable future. Shortly afterwards, the Federal Court ordered Ned's release, finding that he was too unwell to voluntarily assist with his own removal.

Ned started to build a life from scratch, building a dedicated network of friends across the country. He had just found a house and a job when he faced the prospect of being thrown back into detention. Our Migration Justice team supported Ned to intervene in the *ASF17* case and defend his liberty. Now, after a decade in detention, Ned is continuing to rebuild his life.



Above: Ned Kelly Emeralds and Sanmati Verma standing in front of the High Court of Australia.

● **“My case shows the unacceptable powers that Ministers have over the hopes, dreams and possibilities for our lives – if the Minister wants it, you can be locked up for a decade, sent to Nauru or given a permanent visa. But everyone deserves an equal chance to make a life in freedom.”**

– Ned Kelly Emeralds

## Securing world-first protections for migrant workers

Everyone who arrives in Australia – irrespective of visa status – deserves the same rights to basic healthcare, secure housing and dignity at work. Yet for decades, our migration laws have ensured that certain temporary migrants are treated like second-class citizens, by withholding basic rights and protections available to others.

Strict visa conditions and migration laws have forced temporary migrants into unsafe and underpaid work, endangering their health, their lives and their family's future. That means a person's ability to take action against an exploitative boss, is dependant on their visa or citizenship status. This was the case for our client, Inderjit Kaur, who had two years of full-time wages stolen by two of her employers.



## CASE STUDY

### Inderjit's story

Inderjit Kaur is a chef who lives and works in country Victoria. Inderjit had her wages stolen by not one but two predatory bosses. Despite taking courageous court action against her employer, Inderjit's visa was jeopardised, leaving her family in limbo now nearly ten years later. Inderjit's two children, both born in Australia, have now become Australian citizens - but she and her husband might be forced out of the country at any time due to a lack of visa security for temporary migrants.

● **“I had my wages stolen by two employers, because they knew my visa could be cancelled if I stood up to them, and they took advantage of that. Because I had no security with my visa, I could not take action until it was too late. I never got back any of the money that was stolen from me and my visa is now uncertain. This should not have happened to my family, and it should not happen to migrants who are coming to Australia now.”**

– Inderjit Kaur, a temporary visa holder and advocate

Over the past two years, the Human Rights Law Centre has led a coalition of 40 unions, civil society, faith-based and migrant rights groups to champion world-leading protections for migrant workers. In mid-2024, the Albanese Government listened and introduced groundbreaking reforms to protect the rights of migrant workers, including:

- A world-first **Workplace Justice visa**, allowing migrant workers to stay in Australia with permission to work, while they hold employers to account for labour violations and modern slavery.
- A new **guarantee against visa cancellation**, which ensures that a migrant worker's visa will not be cancelled if they come forward to hold exploitative employers to account.

This framework was first proposed in our 2023 [Breaking the Silence](#) report, endorsed by over 40 organisations including unions, legal centres, churches and migrant rights groups.

Both protections are available to workers who pursue claims through unions and community lawyers, not just those who report to government enforcement agencies. The measures will provide the most robust protections for the rights of migrant workers of any country in the world, advancing significantly on models that exist in New Zealand and Canada. They will provide a robust level of protection for the nearly 2 million temporary migrants in Australia today and ensure that all workers - no matter their nationality or visa status - will be treated equally at work.



Inderjit Kaur, migrant worker advocate who stood up for her rights against two employers stealing her wages. Credit: ABC.

● **“I was detained on Manus Island for six years, and then detained for another two years in Melbourne, after I was transferred to Australia for medical treatment.**

**I was locked in a hotel with other refugees during the COVID lockdowns. We were kept in our rooms, with windows that did not open, and not allowed outdoors. Finally, in 2020, I was released. I moved into a house with my loving partner Jennell. I started to make wines and work on my art.**

**I started to rebuild my life from scratch. If this law is passed, the Minister could give me a direction to leave Australia and put me in jail for five years if I refused. I left my land and my family once - I think that is enough. I will not stop fighting for my right to stay in my home, and in my community.”**

– Farhad Bandesh, advocate

From left to right: Associate Legal Director Laura John, Piumetharshika Kaneshan from Refugee WAVE, and Legal Director Sanmati Verma.



## Fighting Labor’s Deportation and Travel Ban Bill

In April 2024, in response to the High Court case of *ASF17*, the Albanese Government tried to rush through dangerous new laws that would criminalise and punish people because of their visa status. Under the proposed *Migration Amendment (Removal and Other Measures) Bill 2024*, people could be thrown in jail for five years for not assisting with their own deportation – no matter how long they have been in Australia, or whether they have family here. People who have fled persecution could be stripped of their refugee status and returned to harm. People who have been failed by the broken ‘fast track’ system, and people previously subjected to offshore detention, could also be forcibly deported. The legislation would also enable the Minister to impose Trump-style travel bans by preventing visa applications from people from ‘removal concern countries’.

We are working with refugees and partners including the Migrant Workers Centre, Democracy in Colour and Refugee Women’s Action for Visa Equality to try and put a stop to these dangerous and discriminatory reforms. We delivered

expert evidence to a Parliamentary Inquiry, calling for these harmful and racist laws to be scrapped. The Inquiry received hundreds of submissions from community members and groups, legal and human rights organisations and even former Department of Immigration officials – all of which opposed the Bill.

In May 2024, our Migration Justice team travelled to Canberra to stand with advocates Farhad Bandesh and Piumetharshika Kaneshan as they spoke out against the Bill, and told Senators what it would mean for them and their families. In a significant win for the community, Labor was forced to delay the Bill after it failed to secure sufficient support in the Senate.

Together with those directly affected by these laws, the Human Rights Law Centre will continue meeting directly with politicians to make sure they hear the message loud and clear – the Australian community will not accept the endless punishment and criminalisation of migrants and refugees.

● **“Families belong together. But for too long, successive Australian governments have used family separation as a tool to deter people from seeking safety in Australia.**

**The delays and endless barriers in the broken family migration system have cost thousands of families years of their lives. People who have lived in Australia for over a decade are still separated from their loved ones, and are missing out on seeing their children grow up.**

**While this government has taken steps in the right direction, it is not yet enough. If the government is serious about finally allowing families to reunite, it must address the root causes of family visa delays and provide realistic pathways for people from refugee backgrounds to bring their family members to Australia.”**

– Josephine Langbien - Associate Legal Director

Abdullah's family was reunited after four years.



## Bringing families back together

Endless delays in Australia’s intentionally cruel family migration system are keeping thousands of people separated from their loved ones for years on end. Last year, we launched the Family Reunion project, to help people understand their legal rights and take action to challenge extreme delays in the processing of family visa applications. We held a series of public information sessions and assisted many people to apply for copies of their visa application records from the Department of Home Affairs. This year, with the support of a team of pro bono lawyers, we reviewed those records and provided legal advice about the delays people were experiencing. We assisted a number of clients to take steps towards litigation, some of whom had been waiting more than five years to be reunited with their partners and children. As a result of this work, over 30 people finally received visas, and are now living with their families in Australia.

As the backlog of family visa applications previously affected by punitive Coalition policies continues to decrease, the standard processing times for family visa applications has reduced substantially, from 96 months in September 2023 to 26 months in July 2024. Positive changes to the *Migration Regulations 1994* (Cth) adjusted the age limits for some children who had been waiting so long for their visas that they had become ineligible because of their age. But despite these developments, there are still close to 1,000 family visa applications lodged over five years ago which remain undecided. For that reason, we are continuing our work on the Family Reunion project, with a new outreach service underway to connect with the community in Melbourne’s south-eastern suburbs.

# Human Rights Acts

---

## Our vision

An Australia where everyone, no matter who they are or where they are, understands their rights, has them properly protected in our laws and has the power to take action to ensure they are upheld.



Campaign Manager  
Daney Faddoul  
speaking at a Human  
Rights Act supporter  
event in Melbourne.



# Our focus

1

## **Growing support for an Australian Human Rights Act**

We increase public understanding of human rights and grow support for protecting our rights in law. We develop and use campaigning and communications tools and advocacy to achieve this goal.

2

## **Supporting state and territory human rights acts**

We support local efforts to strengthen existing Human Rights Acts and Charters in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, and to secure them in states and territories that do not yet have them.



Caitlin Reiger, CEO speaking at the Australian Human Rights Commission Free & Equal Conference.

## Building support for a national Human Rights Act

● **“An Australian Human Rights Act will ensure that the values we share – fairness, respect, freedom and justice – are at the heart of all government decisions, laws and policies. The Australian community and parliamentary inquiry have called for an Australian Human Rights Act, now it is time for the Albanese Government to act and create a fairer future for every person.”**

– Caitlin Reiger, CEO

Everyone in our community should be able to enjoy their rights, like a quality education for every child, health care for every person that needs it, and a safe, secure and healthy place to call home. However, there have been Royal Commissions into Aged Care, Disability, and Robodebt showing that is not the reality. That is why Australia should join every other liberal Western democracy by having enforceable human rights standards in our laws, and in the process fully implement the obligations under international law such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights that we have long ago accepted.

In May 2024, we took a massive step towards stronger human rights foundations in our legal framework after the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry recommended legislating an Australian Human Rights Act. The announcement confirmed what we have been saying for over a decade – an Australian Human Rights Act will improve government decisions and ensure people can take action when their rights are breached. This is huge progress towards building a human rights centred legal framework that benefits all.

We played a key role in securing this important step forward by:

- engaging directly with decision makers to influence them to support an Australian Human Rights Act;
- producing high quality submissions to the Parliamentary inquiry;
- developing research on why we need an Australian Human Rights Act, including 101 examples of how Human Rights Acts and Charters in Victoria, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) benefit people;
- building a campaign coalition that is now 110 organisations across civil society; and
- holding public events, digital marketing, producing factsheets and other resources all explaining what an Australian Human Rights Act is and why it is needed.

Supporters holding campaign materials for an Australian Human Rights Act.



## Growing support for an Australian Human Rights Act with new resources and events

● **“Australians greatly value education, but we often take our access to education for granted. Although the right to education is held equally by all people, some groups face additional barriers that prevent their enjoyment of the right on an equal basis. An enforceable right to education through a national Human Rights Act is the missing link and will make a huge difference for children across the country to enjoy their right to education.”**

– Arif Hussein, Senior Lawyer

Our campaign for an Australian Human Rights Act has also produced several new resources and events as part of building support across a broad range of people in Australia.

Everyone should be able to access quality education, regardless of their bank balance or postcode. Despite a long history of commitment to both human rights and education, Australia does not recognise an enforceable right to education in federal law. Not only is this inconsistent with Australia’s obligations under international human rights law, it also has real consequences for people whose right to education is infringed upon.

In February 2024, the Human Rights Law Centre and the University of Newcastle’s Centre for Law and Social Justice released *The Right to Education in Australia*. The report highlights that where the right to education exists at the state and territory level, it has improved education. The report calls for a national Human Rights Act to help redress the obstacles faced by people, especially children with disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people, in accessing education.

To launch the report, Human Rights Law Centre co-hosted a digital forum discussing barriers to the right to education in Australia and how a national Human Rights Act could make a real difference. The event featured speakers Arif Hussein, Senior Lawyer, Human Rights Law Centre; Professor Penelope Mathew, ACT Human Rights Commission President; Sue Tape, Children and Young People with Disability Australia, Inclusive Education Project Co-ordinator; and Claire Dudgeon, University of Newcastle School of Law, and the report’s lead author.

In June 2024, Caitlin Reiger, CEO and Daney Faddoul, Campaign Manager spoke to 500+ people across civil society about an Australian Human Rights Act, and how it benefits everyone across the community at the Free and Equal conference, organised by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Looking ahead, the campaign will continue to produce factsheets, reports and webinars on the right to housing, the right to a healthy environment and how an Australian Human Rights Act benefits people in Australia.



● **“It is vitally important that the right to a healthy environment is treated the same as other rights in the Human Rights Act. This includes ensuring that people can take action in the courts when their rights are breached, and that all aspects of the right apply to decision-makers immediately rather than parking some elements of it to become a reality later.”**

– Adrienne Walters, Associate Legal Director

## Strengthening the ACT’s Human Rights Act

At a time when climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss are threatening the health and livelihoods of many communities, there is a pressing need to find new ways to protect the precious ecosystems on which human life depends. In December 2023, we called on the ACT Government to strengthen the *Human Rights Act 2004* (ACT), including adding the right to a healthy environment to the Act and ensure it is treated the same as other rights in its Human Rights Act. In a submission to the ACT Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety’s inquiry into the proposed new law, we called for:

- the right to a healthy environment to be fully enforceable through the courts so that people can access justice if the right is breached;
- all aspects of the right to a healthy environment to be immediately applicable to decision-makers; and
- proactive engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the ACT.

● **“Everyone benefits when human rights are at the heart of our laws. A South Australian Human Rights Act would see better protection of human rights for all people in the state, and provide people a tool to take effective action when their rights are breached. A Human Rights Act would prevent people from being unjustly evicted from public housing; it would ensure everyone can access medical treatment; and every child can get a good education.”**

– Daney Faddoul, Campaign Manager

## Calling for a Human Rights Act in South Australia

In March 2024, the Human Rights Law Centre called on the South Australian Parliament to join Victoria, Queensland and the ACT, to legislate a South Australian Human Rights Act, which would benefit the lives of every person in South Australia.

In a submission to the South Australian Parliament’s Social Development Committee, the Human Rights Law Centre recommended the South Australian Government introduce an enforceable Human Rights Act that proactively promotes and protects human rights, including: civil and political rights; economic, social and

cultural rights; and the right to a healthy environment. In June, the Centre appeared before the Committee to provide additional evidence to the inquiry.

Last year, South Australia’s Parliament rushed through reactive legislation which undermined people’s right to protest. A South Australian Human Rights Act would require the South Australian Parliament to consider the human rights implications of its laws and policies, and provide people with a powerful tool to challenge injustice and prevent human rights violations.

# Corporate Accountability

---

## Our vision

There is no business in abuse. Australian companies respect human rights wherever they operate and are held accountable if they fail to do so.



Workers in agriculture are at higher risk of being trapped in modern slavery.



# Our focus

1

## **Strengthening Australia's approach to holding companies to account**

We work with partners and decision makers to improve Australia's laws, policies and practices for ensuring businesses comply with international human rights standards, wherever they operate.

2

## **Improving pathways to justice for people and communities**

We support communities and individuals harmed by Australian corporate activities overseas to obtain justice and remedy by assisting them to take legal action in Australia.

3

## **Ending modern slavery in the supply chains of Australian businesses**

We advocate for legal reforms to prevent Australian companies from profiting from forced labour in their supply chains and ensure they uphold workers' rights.

Keren Adams, Legal Director and Theonila Roka Matbob, lead complainant and elected representative for communities around former Panguna mine look over the abandoned mine site.



## Supporting communities in Bougainville to hold Rio Tinto to account

● **“We are always worrying that the food we eat, the water we drink and the air we breathe is not safe. We live with levees collapsing and mine waste flooding our lands and communities. Work to address the impacts identified by the environmental and human rights assessment cannot come soon enough.**

**“We really need the company to commit to funding solutions and working with our communities long-term.”**

– Theonila Roka Matbob, lead complainant and Member of Parliament for the area where the mine is located

For the past four years, the Human Rights Law Centre has been working with communities in Bougainville to seek justice for the environmental devastation left by Rio Tinto’s Panguna mine. Local people are suffering from the devastating impacts of the mine including villages being flooded with mine waste and crumbling mine infrastructure putting lives at risk. Together, we are calling for action so people can live safely on their land again.

Panguna was formerly one of the world’s largest copper and gold mines. During its operation, over a billion tonnes of mine waste tailings were released directly into the Jaba and Kawerong rivers. In 1989, an uprising by local people against this environmental destruction and inequities in the distribution of the mine’s profits forced the mine to stop operating and triggered a brutal decade-long civil war.

No clean-up has ever taken place. That is why we are supporting communities to call on Rio Tinto to take responsibility for its legacy and commit to long-term solutions. In 2021, in response to a human rights complaint brought by 156 local community members, represented by the Human Rights Law Centre, Rio Tinto agreed to fund an independent human rights and environmental impact assessment of the mine. However, Rio Tinto has still not made any commitment to funding solutions beyond the impact assessment.

During 2024, we worked with communities and other key stakeholders like the Autonomous Bougainville Government to oversee the impact assessment, which is being undertaken by independent environmental consulting firm Tetra Tech Coffey. Phase one of the assessment has now concluded and will be publicly released in late 2024. In preparation for the report’s release, we progressed discussions with the company and its shareholders regarding next steps beyond the report and the need for Rio Tinto to commit to clean-up and long-term remediation.



● **“Every person should be able to work in freedom and dignity, without threats of violence, coercion or abuse. We urge the government to strengthen the powers and resourcing of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner so that the office can drive real change in corporate practices, support workers and help ensure no Australian company profits from forced labour.”**

– Lauren Zanetti, Senior Lawyer

## Strengthening Australia’s modern slavery laws and oversight

Every person should be able to work in freedom and dignity, without threats of violence, coercion and abuse. Yet in Australia today, up to 41,000 people are estimated to be living and working in conditions of modern slavery and forced labour. Australian supermarkets, clothing brands and seafood companies have been also linked to overseas factories and suppliers using forced or child labour.

For the past three years, we have been working to expose this problem and push for stronger modern slavery laws. Our team led a successful campaign by civil society to strengthen Australia’s framework for addressing modern slavery in corporate supply chains. We have exposed weaknesses in Australia’s laws through sustained advocacy, media engagement and two major collaborative research reports, *Paper Promises* and *Broken Promises*.

We have also developed strong proposals for policy and law reform, including draft legislative amendments. This resulted in an independent Review in 2023 which made 30 recommendations to strengthen Australia’s modern slavery laws.

In May 2024, we had a major win, when the Albanese Government passed legislation to establish Australia’s first independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner. It is also anticipated that the government will introduce a number of measures to strengthen Australia’s *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth), including penalties for non-compliance by companies.

In 2024, we continued to advocate for the Albanese Government to introduce mandatory human rights due diligence obligations for companies to identify and address modern slavery risks in their supply chains. We also called for the introduction of an import ban on goods produced with forced labour. These changes, if enacted, would be a major victory for workers in the supply chains of Australian companies.



● **“Australia needs a strong corporate human rights watchdog to ensure that, wherever they operate, Australian companies respect human rights and the environment. The AusNCP is one of the few forums where communities and individuals harmed by the actions of Australian business can raise complaints about companies’ activities without going to court.**

**It’s crucial that the AusNCP has the powers and resourcing it needs to do its job of thoroughly investigating complaints brought to it and effectively mediating disputes between communities and companies.”**

– Keren Adams, Legal Director

## Advocating for a stronger corporate human rights watchdog

In October 2023, the Human Rights Law Centre called on the Australian Government to strengthen the powers of Australia’s principal corporate human rights watchdog, the Australian National Contact Point for Responsible Business Conduct (AusNCP). In a submission to a public consultation, the Human Rights Law Centre called for:

- additional powers and resourcing for the AusNCP’s independent examiners to investigate complaints of corporate misconduct;
- sanctions for companies found to have breached their responsibilities, such as the withdrawal of trade support and exclusion from public procurement processes; and
- greater accessibility for impacted individuals and communities to bring complaints and meaningfully engage in dispute resolution.

Housed within the Department of Treasury, the AusNCP investigates complaints and mediates disputes regarding alleged misconduct by Australian multinational enterprises. Past complaints to the AusNCP have related to alleged illegal land grabs financed by Australian banks, lack of free, prior and informed consent around mine approvals and abuses by Australian private contractors in detention centres on Manus Island and Nauru.

# Democratic Freedoms

---

## **Our vision**

A strong participatory democracy in which parliaments are representative, governments are held to account, and where the wellbeing of people and the planet is at the heart of every government decision.





Kieran Pender, Associate Legal Director and Jade Tyrell (seconded from Johnson Winter Slattery), stand in front of the Supreme Court of Adelaide in August 2023 for Richard Boyle's appeal.



# Our focus

1

## Empowering Australia's whistleblowers

People who blow the whistle on wrongdoing are crucial to our democracy. However, right now, whistleblowers in Australia are actively discouraged from speaking out. To address this, we established the Whistleblower Project to provide expert legal support to people who want to speak out on injustice and human rights abuses. We are also working to secure stronger legal protections for whistleblowers who speak out in the public interest.

2

## Strengthening protest rights

Our ability to come together and protest is crucial to achieving positive social change. Yet in recent years we have seen a worrying proliferation of anti-protest laws which often expressly target or disproportionately impact environmental defenders and people advocating for action on climate change. We use legal action and advocacy to fight back against undemocratic anti-protest laws and excessive police responses.

3

## Taking on disinformation and hate speech online

Digital disinformation is used to create division and to polarise our communities for political or financial gain. We are developing solutions to this complex issue, including legal reforms to prevent its spread and penalties for politicians who deliberately mislead the public.

4

## Ensuring integrity in Australia's political system

Our politicians should serve the people they represent and work for the common good. We advocate for the key political integrity reforms needed to restore balance in our democracy and stop powerful industries from securing political outcomes that put their interests ahead of everyone else's.



● **“The right to protest is a cornerstone of a robust civil society that holds the powerful to account. As we enter the era of climate crisis, the multibillion-dollar fossil fuel industry is determined to silence everyday people who are deeply worried about their future. Governments must not give in to their demands for profit at the expense of our planet, and our right to speak up.**

**“When governments erode our protest rights, they erode our democracy. This declaration provides governments with solutions in law-making to create a democracy where protest rights are protected.”**

– David Mejia-Canales, Senior Lawyer

## Defending protest rights

Our right to protest is fundamental to our democracy – it comes from our fundamental human rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of expression. Protest has been crucial to achieving many historic human rights wins, from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s right to vote, to the eight-hour workday and marriage equality.

Yet our right to protest is under threat. In recent years, multiple states and territories have introduced a wave of anti-democratic protest laws designed to silence people who speak out. Our right to protest is fundamental to our democracy, it is how we hold the powerful to account and speak up about what is important to us.

That is why we have worked hard on a new report to highlight the wave of anti-democratic, draconian, anti-protest laws across Australia. Over the past two decades, multiple governments have introduced laws to criminalise protest at the behest of powerful corporate interests. These laws are disproportionately impacting environment and climate defenders advocating for action on climate change.

In November 2023, we released our *Declaration of Our Right to Protest*. The Declaration calls for governments across Australia to adhere to international standards and human rights law to protect protest rights. The Declaration has been endorsed by 120 civil society organisations including the Australian Council of Social Services, Greenpeace Australia and Amnesty International. The Declaration outlines the minimum protections required to prevent our right to peacefully protest from being eroded. It can also be used as a tool to measure any new anti-protest law against.

## CASE STUDY



### The Whistleblower Project

By exposing wrongdoing and ensuring accountability, whistleblowers make Australia a better place. But with failing laws and insufficient support, the cost of courage is high for many truth-tellers. Potential whistleblowers are staying silent and we all suffer as a result.

To address this, the Human Rights Law Centre launched the Whistleblower Project – Australia’s first dedicated legal service to protect and empower whistleblowers. After more than two years of planning and development, we formally launched the Project in August 2023. We were humbled to have the Honourable

Tony Fitzgerald AC KC deliver a keynote address at a launch event in Sydney – Mr Fitzgerald led the landmark inquiry into corruption in Queensland in the 1980s, which led to Australia’s first-ever whistleblowing law, and has been a staunch advocate for transparency and integrity throughout his distinguished career.

Our clients so far have exposed grave human rights abuses, government corruption and corporate misdeeds. Their whistleblowing has sparked front pages and Four Corners investigations; most importantly, it has also led to accountability, justice and change.

● **“The launch of the Human Rights Law Centre’s Whistleblower Project is a landmark moment for whistleblower protections in Australia. While there is so much that Australians know thanks to the courage of individual whistleblowers, we need to be concerned about what we do not know – and what stories may never be told - because people are too afraid and unsupported in speaking up.”**

– Caitlin Reiger, CEO, Human Rights Law Centre

## Our first year of impact

200 

Over 200 people have approached us for support.

70 

We have helped over 70 whistleblowers, providing legal advice on their rights in exposing wrongdoing.

25 

We represented about 25 whistleblowers, assisting them in making or escalating their disclosures or vindicating their rights.

\$

We secured hundreds of thousands of dollars in settlements for whistleblowers who have suffered retaliation for speaking up.



We intervened in a landmark test case on the scope of whistleblower protections.



And we have helped dozens of clients safely and lawfully speak to regulators, the media, MPs and Senators, and parliamentary committees to expose wrongdoing.



Kieran Pender, Associate Legal Director and Regina Featherstone, Senior Lawyer who work on the Human Rights Law Centre's Whistleblower Project.

## How our service works

### 1. Helping people speak up

Some whistleblowers contact us before they speak up, wanting help navigating the process and minimising risk. We help whistleblowers make lawful disclosures to their employers or to regulators.

### 2. Supporting escalations

Sometimes, our clients have already spoken up internally and nothing has been done. We help whistleblowers escalate their concerns in line with the law – to regulators or, where appropriate, journalists, civil society or politicians. We work with partner organisations to ensure maximum impact for public disclosures, to ensure the wrongdoing is addressed and the whistleblower does not suffer.

### 3. Navigating legal action

Unfortunately, too often whistleblowers do face reprisal for doing the right thing – despite clear legal protections and prohibitions on retaliation. We help whistleblowers vindicate their legal rights, including through litigation.



Regina Featherstone, Senior Lawyer speaks to crowd in Hobart on environmental whistleblowing.

## Impact highlights

### Exposing human rights abuse in detention facilities

We advised two whistleblowers on their interactions with journalists from the ABC for an episode of Four Corners, 'Trapped'. Our clients blew the whistle on the indefinite detention and almost-constant solitary confinement of 'Adrian', who has an intellectual disability and chromosomal disorder, at the Forensic Disability Service in Brisbane. Adrian has been confined to his room at the facility for over a decade, under 24/7 surveillance and with extremely limited human interaction.

Adrian's plight was highlighted with alarm by a Queensland Ombudsman report in 2019, yet he remained in permanent seclusion – prompting our clients to speak up. In response to the ABC's reporting, informed by our clients' whistleblowing, Queensland Advocacy for Inclusion said: *"Queensland's treatment of people with disability under forensic orders is inhumane and does not comply with the law or international human rights standards."* A recent follow-up report by the Queensland Ombudsman indicated that Adrian was no longer detained at the facility.

Launch of the Whistleblower Project in Melbourne, featuring panel of Nick Feik, Senator David Pocock, Alysha Rose, Nick McKenzie and Prof Sue-Anne Hunter.



## Supporting climate whistleblowers

We deserve a future where communities are safe from climate related threats. In the face of climate catastrophe, it is essential that people can speak out against government inaction and corporate wrongdoing, including fossil fuel companies who are putting their profits above the future of our planet.

Our weak laws and ineffective legal protections are silencing whistleblowers who speak out against fossil fuel companies that are polluting our environment and threatening our future. Whistleblowers often suffer serious consequences, such as losing their job or even jail time, for having the courage to tell the truth. Despite these risks, there are brave whistleblowers who stand up and fight for truth and accountability. In 2024, we supported doctors and scientists in speaking up against a proposed petrochemical hub at Middle Arm in Darwin that, if developed, could pump over a billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere over a 25-year period.

We supported our clients to safely give evidence to the Senate Inquiry into this dangerous proposal. During the period, we also developed a practical guide to support whistleblowers who raise concerns about climate and environmental wrongdoing.

● **“It is a risk for all of us to come out here and speak out against this project, but it is also an obligation on all of us as doctors, nurses and health professionals – to speak out and inform the public when there is a risk to public health. We feel that that is more important than our employment”.**

– Human Rights Law Centre client



## Fixing whistleblowing laws and fighting the unjust prosecutions of whistleblowers

● **“Whistleblowers should be protected, not punished. Australia’s whistleblower protection laws are in urgent need of comprehensive, robust reform. Before the last election the Albanese Government promised to fix federal public sector whistleblowing laws – it must honour that commitment before the end of the current parliamentary term.**

**The government should also commit to establishing a whistleblower protection authority, to oversee and enforce whistleblowing laws and support whistleblowers.”**

– Kieran Pender, Associate Legal Director

Whistleblowers make Australia a better place, ensuring accountability and justice by exposing government wrongdoing and corporate misdeeds. They are vital to our democracy. This is why the Human Rights Law Centre has been consistently campaigning against the high-profile mistreatment and even prosecution of whistleblowers. We have also been vocal proponents of new laws to better protect whistleblowers, and the establishment of a whistleblower protection authority.

Over the past decade, four whistleblowers have been prosecuted under draconian federal secrecy laws. We have stood with all of them, because at the Whistleblower Project we see firsthand the chilling effect of these cases. Unfortunately, the past year came with several bitter blows for transparency advocates.

Former military lawyer David McBride leaked documents to the ABC, which led to the Afghan Files reporting - which provided credible evidence of war crimes committed by Australian forces in Afghanistan. Richard Boyle spoke up about unethical debt recovery practices at the tax office. Boyle blew the whistle internally at first, then to oversight agencies, and then to the media as a last resort. His whistleblowing has been vindicated by several independent reviews.

But in May 2024, McBride was given a sentence of five years and eight months, with a non-parole period of two years and three months. He is currently imprisoned in Canberra. A month later, the South Australian Court of Appeal rejected an appeal brought by tax office whistleblower Boyle. In 2023, the trial judge found that Boyle was not protected by federal whistleblower protection laws, because the charges against him relate not to his actual whistleblowing but preparatory conduct – steps he took while preparing to blow the whistle. This ruling adopted a narrow approach to the scope of the protections.

Our Whistleblower Project intervened in the appeal, as a friend of the court, to argue that such an approach would undermine the purpose of whistleblowing laws and have a chilling effect on the exposure of wrongdoing in Australia. This was a landmark case with implications for every future Australian whistleblower. In June 2024, the Court dismissed the appeal. Boyle is now seeking leave to appeal this decision to the High Court.

Both outcomes lay bare how our weak laws are failing whistleblowers. Over the past year, we have made over a dozen submissions to law reform processes relating to secrecy laws and whistleblower protections. We have seen some promising initial steps – in June 2023 the first phase of federal public sector whistleblower protection reform was enacted, followed by improvements for tax whistleblowers in May 2024. But much work remains for the federal government. In February 2024, we co-published with Transparency International Australia and Griffith University our draft design principles for the establishment of a federal whistleblower protection authority.

Our team will continue to support whistleblowers and call on the Albanese Government to live up to their promise of comprehensive law reform and better support for whistleblowers.



● **“Technology should bring our communities together, not divide us for profit. Yet the lax, self-regulation of big tech platforms is allowing them to wreak havoc on our democracy. Self-regulation and co-regulation have failed in other industries. Big tech is no different.”**

**“We urge the Albanese Government to appoint an independent, well-resourced regulator of big tech platforms so they operate transparently and are held accountable for any damaging impacts on people, society, or our democratic processes that their products may cause.”**

– David Mejia-Canales, Senior Lawyer

## Combatting misinformation and disinformation on social media

In Australia, as we are seeing across the globe, disinformation disseminated on social media is being used as a powerful weapon by far-right groups to gain public support for regressive movements that want to wind back human rights.

Disinformation targets people’s fears and anxieties to recruit them to extremist ideologies, and polarises our communities for political or financial gain. Once unleashed, it travels seamlessly across social media, between newspapers, talkback radio and messaging apps.

Disinformation was used in the recent referendum to sow confusion and undermine support for the Voice to Parliament. During the campaign, racism and fearmongering was rife on social media platforms, and amplified on television, radio and newspapers by traditional media.

For several years, the Human Rights Law Centre has been engaging directly with politicians on the need to introduce legislation to halt the proliferation of misinformation online. In late 2023, the Albanese Government began consulting widely on an exposure draft of a bill to take its first step towards curbing misinformation and disinformation on social media. The *Combating Misinformation and Disinformation Bill* would empower the Australian Communications and Media Authority to oversee the degree to which social media companies comply with their own codes of conduct and, where they fail, enforce them.

In addition to our ongoing direct advocacy, our team made a submission that provided broad recommendations to strengthen regulation to stop social media companies profiting from spreading harmful content and have human rights principles to protect and empower users. We also conducted [media advocacy](#) to shine a light on the urgent need for reform.

David Mejia-Canales, Senior Lawyer speaks to Parliament on protecting protest rights.



## Stamping out corporate and fossil fuel influence in politics

Big corporations should not be able to manipulate our politicians for financial gain at the expense of the people. Australia has drastically weak regulation when it comes to curbing the influence of corporate interests over our federal politicians.

In the year of the last federal election, ‘dark money’ (donations with no disclosed source) reached a record breaking \$119m. Between the major parties, 40 per cent of the money they received was hidden in this way.

● **“Australians are fed up with the status quo. Prime Minister Albanese must close the loopholes which mean that politicians prioritise the people with the biggest bank balance, instead of those with the best ideas. We need a level playing field.**

**“It is time to stop the influence of big money on Australia’s democracy and to put the voices of ordinary Australians first.”**

– Alice Drury, Acting Legal Director

To address corporate influence in our political system, we work in partnership with other civil society organisations on the #OurDemocracy campaign. During 2024, we advocated directly with politicians and in the media to build support for our key goals:

- ending the cycle of cash for access, so harmful industries cannot give big donations to politicians in exchange for secret meetings and political favours; and
- leveling the playing field in our election debates, so voters hear from those with the best ideas, not just those with the biggest bank balance.

We worked in deep partnership with civil society partners, unions and politicians across Parliament to ensure Australia introduces laws to end corporate influence over government decision-making, while ensuring any law reform does not silence important advocacy during elections.

# Climate justice

---

## **Our vision**

Australian laws and policies address the impacts of the climate crisis and put the wellbeing of people and the planet at the heart of government decisions.



Global March for the Climate, Sydney. Credit: Greenpeace Australia.



# Our focus

1

## **Climate and human rights action through strategic litigation**

We work in partnership with affected communities to develop legal claims to protect human rights and drive climate action.

2

## **Climate action through advocacy & policy solutions**

Our advocacy aims to help re-frame the climate crisis within public debate as a human rights crisis. We shine a spotlight on the people and communities who will be impacted most and outline the actions urgently needed from Australian governments and companies to address these impacts on people now and into the future.

School Strike for Climate, Sydney.  
Credit: Greenpeace Australia.



## Calling on the Australian Government to protect future generations

Australian children deserve a better future, a future where the climate crisis is not propelling the world towards destruction. Intergenerational equity should be at the heart of the Australian Government's decisions around climate. This is why the Human Rights Law Centre gave evidence at a Senate Inquiry into the *Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill 2023 (Cth)* and conducted media advocacy calling for its introduction.

If legislated, the Bill would hold the government to account for the future that our children inherit. It would positively accelerate the Australian Government's action to tackle climate change by requiring decision-makers to prioritise future generations' wellbeing when considering new projects which would result in substantial greenhouse gas emissions.

Australian children are already experiencing the devastating impacts of climate change. From catastrophic floods and bushfires to unprecedented heat waves, the economic, social and health impacts of the climate crisis will continue to worsen without real action. The most vulnerable children in our communities, including First Nations children, children with disability or those who live in remote or insecure housing, will be hit hardest. Despite this, fossil fuel projects continue to be waved through at an alarming rate.

A house at Drive-in Camp, Tennant Creek. Many people live in makeshift houses like this - without running water or electricity - while they sit on the 8-10 year public housing waitlist.



## Investigating strategies to advance climate-safe housing

Extreme heat events, fuelled by the climate crisis, already kill more Australians than all other natural disasters combined. As global temperatures rise, the availability of energy efficient housing with affordable, clean sources of power will be critical both to supporting a just transition and ensuring that people and communities can protect themselves from the impacts of extreme heat.

The impacts of extreme heat are particularly stark in remote Aboriginal communities living in public housing in the Northern Territory where high temperatures are endemic for most of the year. Poor quality and inappropriately built social housing, compounded by decades of government neglect and discriminatory energy policies, have left many communities now facing a climate-fuelled housing crisis.

The serious implications of extreme heat and inadequate housing on the health and wellbeing of remote Aboriginal communities has been well-documented by Aboriginal organisations, communities, academics and health professionals. Organisations like Wilya Janta in Tennant Creek are showing the way with community-led solutions, including culturally and environmentally appropriate social housing co-designed with communities and powered by community-owned solar projects. But institutional, legal, and political roadblocks are standing in the way.

In 2024, we began consulting with Aboriginal and housing advocacy organisations in the Northern Territory and impacted communities to begin scoping a new project. This project will identify ways we could pressure governments to uphold human rights by providing climate-safe housing for those who need it most.





Keren Adams, Legal Director and Jack McLean, Senior Lawyer in the Climate Justice team.

## Advocating for the right to a healthy environment

All human rights ultimately depend on a healthy environment. As the source of our food, water, and air, it holds the key to our survival and wellbeing. Yet Australian law currently offers inadequate and piecemeal protection of our environment in the face of the existential threat posed by the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Internationally, there is growing recognition of the right to a safe, healthy, and sustainable environment as a fundamental human right. Over 160 countries have already implemented laws to protect the rights of their citizens to a healthy environment, providing essential guarantees regarding access to clean air, water, and soil.

Enshrining the right to a healthy environment in Australia – particularly as part of broader, enforceable human rights legislation – would be a significant enabler of a faster, fairer, and more inclusive transition to net zero emissions. It would put the environment and peoples’ health and well-being now and into the future at the heart of government decision making and give communities a direct means of challenging harmful government decisions.

● **“Our human rights depend on a safe and healthy environment. As the source of our food, water, and air, a healthy environment holds the key to our survival and wellbeing.**

**“Governments across Australia should be doing everything they can, in collaboration with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, to protect human rights in the face of the extraordinary threats posed by the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and rampant pollution.”**

– Jack McLean, Senior Lawyer

The Human Rights Law Centre has been working with civil society partners to advocate for the right to a healthy environment to be embedded in Australian law at both a federal and state level.

In 2024, we successfully advocated for the inclusion of a right to a healthy environment in the ACT’s Human Rights Act, the first jurisdiction in Australia to establish this right. This sets an important precedent that we can now build on in other Australian jurisdictions. In 2024, we co-ordinated advocacy efforts to have this right included in a proposed Australian Human Rights Act and in human rights legislation in South Australia.

# Reproductive Rights

---

## **Our vision**

Australian laws and policies promote the right of every person to decide what happens to their body.



Adrienne Walters, Associate Legal Director (middle) stand with Katie Robertson (left) and Emily Howie (right) in front of the Federal Circuit Court after a win for reproductive rights on safe access zones for abortions.

## Our focus

1

### Removing legal barriers to abortion access

Everyone has the right to decide what happens to their body. Through collaborative campaigning and skilled political advocacy, we are working to ensure that abortion is decriminalised and that abortion laws support best-practice healthcare in every state and territory.

2

### Ensuring people can access reproductive healthcare safely

No one should be intimidated and abused by strangers on the way to see their doctor. We work with partners across legal, community and health sectors to secure and defend safe access zone laws to protect people from being harassed outside reproductive health clinics.

● **“This moment is also a historic win for reproductive rights nationally – abortion by doctors is now decriminalised across all Australian states and territories. This landmark achievement is a testament to the tireless determination of generations of women, community advocates and dedicated health professionals across the country.**

**“There remains much to be done to ensure that every person can access abortion care regardless of where they live or how much money they have. But it is a huge relief to know that abortion will be treated as healthcare in laws across the country, with the focus rightly being on the health, dignity and autonomy of patients.”**

– Adrienne Walters, Associate Legal Director

## Decriminalising abortion Australia-wide

The Human Rights Law Centre has a proud track record of impact fighting for abortion to be treated as healthcare and wiped from the criminal laws of every state and territory around Australia. In March 2024, this goal was realised when Western Australia's new health-focused abortion laws came into effect.

Abortion by doctors is now decriminalised and replaced by health-focused laws Australia wide. This moment was achieved through generations of protest and advocacy from organisations and courageous individuals around Australia. Western Australia's new laws remove unnecessary and paternalistic legal barriers to timely care, such as mandatory counselling and needing multiple doctors' approval. The new laws also require doctors who object to abortion to respect their patient's right to healthcare and will help improve access to care in regional areas by supporting nurse-led care.



Rally for reproductive rights.

## Reflecting on our role going forward

Every person should have the power to decide what is right for their body and their future. No one should ever be forced to carry a pregnancy they do not want. When we deny access to abortion, women and all people who experience pregnancy are stripped of their agency and their health put at risk. This is why access to abortion is an essential right.

Around the world and here in Australia, reproductive freedom is constantly under threat and barriers to abortion continue to prevent people from accessing the care they need. The Human Rights Law Centre is proud of the role we have played in decriminalising abortion and preventing people from being harassed outside clinics through safe access zone laws.

As we prepare to launch our new three-year plan, there are active efforts to wind back these achievements. We are considering how best to support efforts to defend these freedoms from further attack and ensure equity of access to basic reproductive health care as a fundamental human right.

# Strengthening our organisation

## A new strategy for a stronger future

As human rights threats continue to escalate and demand for our work grows across a wide range of issues, a clear and cohesive strategy is critical to ensure we remain aligned and effective. Our previous strategic plan, developed pre-pandemic, was ready for a review to ensure we are well-equipped to respond to the changes in the world around us since 2019. With an expanded national presence and deepened areas of impact, a new CEO and a refreshed Board of Directors, we saw an opportunity to regroup to renew our shared vision for the organisation's next chapter.

Our 2025-2027 strategic plan will be launched in late 2024. It features a refreshed purpose and re-articulated vision, accompanied by key objectives for the next three years including:

1. Human rights-based reforms to Australian laws and policies which reduce inequality experienced by marginalised groups of people, with a focus on racial and socio-economic injustice.
2. Deeper trusted partnerships with people and communities to increase our impact of community-driven advocacy for human rights reforms.
3. Better sustainability and agility to respond to emerging or escalating human rights problems.

## Embedding anti-racism

This year, we progressed work to address the legacies and ongoing implications of systemic racism in our work and sector, including developing and conducting anti-racism training with our staff and board and beginning to trial an anti-racism tool to apply to our work. This work builds on our partnership principles with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, and our Equitable Briefing Policy, and previous reconciliation action plan.

We thank the generous contributions from staff, current and former, who shared their experiences of racism, as well as Kind Enterprises, a consultancy and training organisation that specialises in embedding anti-racism into workplaces in Australia.

## Speaking up against disregard for human rights

The latest and most brutal wave of violence in Gaza, especially since Hamas' violent attacks in October 2023 and Israel's disproportionate response, continues to shock people around the world and revealed the limits of the post-war international legal order to uphold its promises of human rights and humanitarian protections. The conflict has affected many communities in Australia, including Jewish, Palestinian and Arab communities. Islamophobia and antisemitism has risen significantly. Large numbers of people continue to publicly protest.

The Human Rights Law Centre was founded with a mission to advance human rights protections in Australia and overseas where there is a connection to Australia. This involves upholding international human rights legal frameworks. We also promote the importance of international justice mechanisms, as the vital backstop when national action fails. This includes the International Criminal Court, to which Australia is a founding state party, and the International Court of Justice as the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, particularly where binding legal orders pertain to a State with which Australia has a close and significant relationship.

We have publicly advocated in relation to the impact of the situation on our current areas of work to protect democratic freedoms and the rights of people seeking protection in Australia. In April 2024, together with other members in the International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations (INCLEO), we expressed grave concern about civil liberties infringements separate to the violence in Gaza, occurring across different national contexts including Australia.

As the crisis in Gaza escalated and it became clear that serious and widespread violations of international law are taking place, including the plausible risk of genocide against Palestinians, the implications for Australia's own legal obligations also grew. We wrote to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus, Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Defence Minister Richard Marles to urge the Australian Government to do everything in its power to avoid facilitating further violations, including by cutting any weapons exports or military ties with the government of Israel. In view of the ongoing and escalating nature of the conflict and impact on civilians, the Human Rights Law Centre continues to advocate for a complete and permanent ceasefire and full accountability for those responsible for international crimes.

The Human Rights Law Centre also continues to call for ensuring people evacuating Gaza to safety in Australia have access to humanitarian visas, and that all Australian jurisdictions should uphold and protect the right of people to gather and peacefully protest, whether in public, at universities or elsewhere.

**Especially at a time of deep polarisation in our public and political discourse, we recognise and respect the diversity of views among our supporters. We remain guided by our commitment to international human rights law and principles at the heart of our purpose and mission.**

## Supporter Story: Jennie Stuart, Humanists Victoria

Jennie Stuart has always been interested in building a more just society, but working as a General Practitioner at the West Heidelberg Community Centre in the 1970s was a transformative experience. West Heidelberg was built on the old Olympic village site from the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. In the following decades, many economically disadvantaged people moved to the area. It was during this time that Jennie developed a sense of the holistic nature of health conditions – that the conditions her patients were presenting with were deeply linked with their access to safe housing, an income, their family relationships, and contact with the criminal legal system. It opened her eyes to the many issues that people from low socio-economic backgrounds faced.

The West Heidelberg Community Centre was part of the community health movement, where doctors, social workers, unions, community legal centres, and policy specialists would work together to try and find better ways to support people's health and wellbeing. It was a way of combining efforts and expertise to find solutions and help make a difference.

**“For the community going to see the doctor was often a gateway to the problem that they might want to articulate. They were getting headaches or abdominal pain, but it was evident that what was going on in the family, contact with the police, or difficulties with The Housing Commission, were a significant part of the problem. The headache was only the tip of the iceberg.**

**We would ask the community nurse to drop in, or the social worker to get involved, or the Legal Centre. We came together and worked out how we could help advocate for our patients. Community members supported each other and were deeply involved. And there were community groups. A bingo group, a market group, a garden group, and a community op shop - there were all sorts of ways in which the community was connected.”**



Jennie worked at the centre for a decade. During that time, she was appointed to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal. Jennie wove her advocacy and holistic approach to health into her practice as GP until her retirement six years ago.

Jennie and her husband became involved with the Humanist movement in 1990s when they moved to Balwyn and encountered regular meetings at their local library. It was a lecture by political scientist Dennis Altman that captured her attention and made her want to find out more about the philosophy.

Established in 1961, Humanists Victoria is part of an international movement which strives towards a world in which all individuals can attain their full potential. The philosophy can be traced all the way back to ancient Greece. It has evolved over centuries to become an ethos that supports people using our power of reason and our natural feeling of compassion to help create a better world in which each of us can reach our full potential.

**“When I first got involved with humanism, the church had much greater sway about bioethical issues. We made many submissions about bioethical issues, stem cell research, abortion reform, sexuality issues and voluntary assisted dying. The church took a strong moral stance about most of those, and we felt it was very important for a more tolerant and inclusive position to be heard.”**

Humanists Victoria sees advancing social justice as an important part of the work of upholding the inherent dignity of all human beings. After several members of the association left bequests, it was decided to partner with Australian Communities Foundation to leverage the foundation's philanthropic expertise and find ways to make a positive impact.

This is where they encountered the work of the Human Rights Law Centre and were introduced to the campaign for a national Human Rights Act. Humanists Victoria has supported that campaign with grants to help develop resources to promote the campaign in the community. Jennie sees the work of the Centre as having a natural alignment with the ethos of Humanism and the changes that Humanists Victoria would like to see in our society.

In her lifetime, Jennie would love to see a bolder agenda for change in Australia, such as a stronger focus on peace-building in foreign policy including conflict resolution, tackling disinformation and holding the instigators to account, recognition and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and much greater action on the climate crisis.

Jennie is proud to continue her work with Humanists Victoria advocating for social change, including a just housing system, treaty in Victoria, and calling for secular practices in Victorian Parliament to reflect the state's diversity.



# Our Team

## Our Staff



**Keren Adams**  
Legal Director



**Justin Baré**  
Director, People and  
Operations



**Michelle Bennett**  
Director, Engagement  
(to April 2024)



**Scott Cosgriff**  
Senior Lawyer  
(to January 2024)



**Freya Dinshaw**  
Associate Legal  
Director



**Alice Drury**  
Acting Legal  
Director



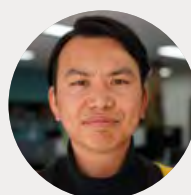
**Nick Espie**  
Special Counsel



**Daney Faddoul**  
Campaign Manager



**Regina Featherstone**  
Senior Lawyer



**Thomas Feng**  
Media and  
Communications  
Manager



**Anna Fordyce**  
Operations  
Coordinator



**Madeleine Howle**  
Anne Kantor Fellow  
(The Australia  
Institute)



**Monique Hurley**  
Associate Legal  
Director



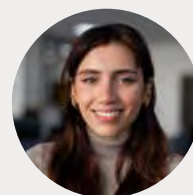
**Arif Hussein**  
Senior Lawyer



**Nikki Jamett**  
Administration and  
Accounts Assistant



**Laura John**  
Associate Legal  
Director



**Tash Khan**  
Content Producer



**Josephine Langbien**  
Associate Legal  
Director



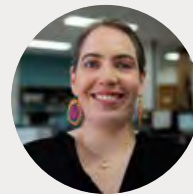
**Jack McLean**  
Senior Lawyer



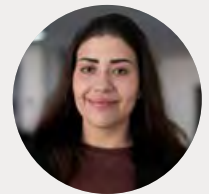
**Sohini Mehta**  
Senior Lawyer



**David Mejia-Canales**  
Senior Lawyer



**Maggie Munn**  
Director, First  
Nations Justice



**Danielle Nicolaidis**  
Executive Assistant



**Kieran Pender**  
Associate Legal  
Director



**Amala  
Ramarathinam**  
Senior Lawyer



**Caitlin Reiger**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



**Rachel Richmond**  
Development  
Manager



**Kate Steele**  
Philanthropy Officer



**Rachel Swain**  
Senior Lawyer



**Nicole Tooby**  
Government  
Relations Manager



**Sanmati Verma**  
Legal Director



**Adrienne Walters**  
Associate Legal  
Director



**Daniel Webb**  
Legal Director (to  
July 2023)



**Lauren Zanetti**  
Senior Lawyer

# Our Board



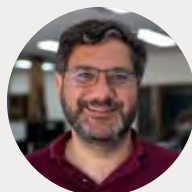
**Rawan Arraf**



**Andrew Carriline**  
(to February 2024)



**Jamie Gardiner**  
**OAM**  
(to November 2024)



**Tim Goodwin**  
Deputy Chair



**Damian Griffis**



**Jessica Kendall**  
(to October 2024)



**Ben Kiely**  
Chair



**Shanta Martin**



**Chris Povey**



**Chris Sidoti**  
(to October 2023)



**Evelyn Tadros**



**Emma Webster**

---

**Secondees**

**Lauren Connolly**  
Johnson Winter  
Slattery

**Joel Harriss**  
Norton Rose  
Fulbright

**Benjamin Koh**  
Shine Lawyers

**Renee Magee**  
Wotton + Kearney

**Olivia Roney**  
Johnson Winter  
Slattery

**Peter Turner**  
MinterEllison

**Jade Tyrrell**  
Johnson Winter  
Slattery

**Samantha  
Varghese**  
MinterEllison

**Molly Welsh**  
MinterEllison

**Masooma Saberi**  
Norton Rose  
Fulbright

---

**Waiwa  
Mudena  
cadets**

**Jasmine  
Bradshaw**  
(to July 2023)

**Rita Tomlins**  
(to October 2023)

# Our Finances

This is an extract of our audited financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2024. For a full version visit [www.hrlc.org.au](http://www.hrlc.org.au)

	2024 \$	2023 \$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Grants	4,357,244	2,605,314
Donation	541,731	634,087
Interest income	168,310	100,984
Other income – including legal costs recovered	74,494	16,680
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>5,141,779</b>	<b>3,357,065</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Operational and administrative expenses	(1,127,248)	(718,301)
Employee benefits expense	(3,463,329)	(2,857,454)
Occupancy expenses	(54,964)	(71,914)
<b>Finance costs</b>	<b>(22,688)</b>	<b>(15,269)</b>
Surplus/(deficit) before income tax expense for the year	473,550	(305,873)
Other comprehensive income for the year	-	-
<b>Total comprehensive income/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>473,550</b>	<b>(305,873)</b>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,749,447	3,282,907

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Trade and other receivables	223,905	198,261
<b>Total current assets</b>	<b>3,973,352</b>	<b>3,481,168</b>
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	32,371	30,405
Intangible assets	310,237	398,877
<b>Total non-current assets</b>	<b>342,608</b>	<b>429,282</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,315,960</b>	<b>3,910,450</b>
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	190,650	185,996
Provisions	340,964	270,220
Contract liabilities	2,811	69,473
Lease Liability	85,679	77,313
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>620,104</b>	<b>603,002</b>
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	31,062	30,525
Lease Liability	249,776	335,455
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>280,838</b>	<b>365,980</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>900,942</b>	<b>968,982</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>3,415,018</b>	<b>2,941,468</b>
Equity		
Accumulated surplus/(deficit)	3,415,018	2,941,468
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>3,415,018</b>	<b>2,941,468</b>

# Our partners

The Human Rights Law Centre is deeply grateful to work in partnership with many people and organisations working to achieve change. Thank you to all the NGOs, charities, unions, academic partners and individuals we worked with in 2023-24 to call for reforms for a more just society. In particular, we would like to thank:

## First Nations Justice

Change the Record

Dhadjowa Foundation

Flatout Inc.

Formerly Incarcerated Justice Advocates (FIGJAM) Collective

Justice for Walker campaign

National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS)

Northern Aboriginal Australian Justice Agency (NAAJA)

Smart Justice for Young People

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

## Corporate Accountability

Australian Corporate Accountability Network

Australian Council of Trade Unions

Australian Human Rights Institute

Be Slavery Free

Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

Coalition Against Forced Labour in Trade

Global Initiative for Corporate Accountability

## Climate Justice

Anjali Sharma

Australian Conservation Foundation

Environmental Defenders Office

GetUp

The Whitlam Institute

Wilya Junta (Standing Strong) Housing Collaboration



## Democratic Freedoms

Alliance for Journalists' Freedoms	Monash University
Australian Centre for International Justice	NSW Council of Civil Liberties
Australian Conservation Foundation	Redfern Legal Centre
Australian Democracy Network	Reset Australia
Australian Muslim Advocacy Network	The Australia Institute
Centre for Australian Progress	Trans Justice Project
Digital Rights Watch	Transparency International Australia
Environment Centre Northern Territory	UTS Centre for Media Transition
Griffith University	UTS Human Technology Institute
Knitting Nannas	Whistleblower Justice Fund

## Human Rights Foundations

Australian Council of Social Services	Equality Rights Alliance
ACT Council of Social Services	Federation of Ethnic Communities Council Australia
ACT Human Rights Commission	GetUp
Amnesty International Australia	Homelessness Australia
Australian Conservation Foundation	Melbourne City Mission
Australian Human Rights Commission	Save The Children/54 Reasons
Australian Services Union	Settlement Services International
Children and Young People with Disability Australia	Uniting Church of Australia
Civil Liberties Australia	University of Newcastle Centre for Law and Social Justice
Council on the Ageing Australia	UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion
Digital Rights Watch	UTS Students' Association
Environmental Defenders Office	Whitlam Institute at Western Sydney University
Equality Australia	

## Migration Justice

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre	Refugee Women Advocates for Visa Equality (Refugee WAVE)
Australian Council of Trade Unions	Tamil Refugee Council
Hazara Legal Network	United Workers Union
Immigration Advice and Rights Centre	UNSW's Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law
Migrant Justice Institute	WestJustice
Migrant Workers Centre	
Redfern Legal Centre	
Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS)	

## Organisation-wide

International Network of Civil Liberties Organisations	Community Legal Centres NSW
Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria	Australian Council of Social Services

# Our supporters

## Pro Bono Supporters

Pro bono support from leading law firms and barristers is crucial to the Human Rights Law Centre's model and impact. Law firms we worked with over the 2023/24 financial year provided over **10,461** hours of pro bono legal work to support our work, including undertaking legal action, research, writing human rights case summaries and seconding lawyers to us. The value of this work was **\$4,675,081**. Many barristers across the country provided substantial additional pro bono support. The volume and quality of pro bono work done in partnership with us is a testament to the extraordinary professional commitment of Australian lawyers and barristers to human rights, the rule of law and access to justice. We are incredibly grateful for this support and thank everyone who worked alongside us on a pro bono basis.

## Firms

Allen & Overy	Equity Generation Lawyers	K&L Gates	McCabes Lawyers	Russell Kennedy
Allens	Gilbert + Tobin	Lander & Rogers	MinterEllison	Slater and Gordon
Banki Haddock Flora	Hall & Wilcox	Maddocks	Moray & Agnew	Wotton + Kearney
Clayton Utz	Holding Redlich	Marque Lawyers	Norton Rose Fulbright	XD Law
Clifford Chance	Johnson Winter Slattery	Maurice Blackburn	Phi Finney McDonald	
DLA Piper				

---

## Counsel

Luisa Alampi	Winsome Hall	Holly Lim	Ben Mostafa	Shawn Rajanayagam
Matthew Albert	Michelle Hamlyn	William Lye KC	Julian Murphy	Aditi Rao
Nicholas Baum	Peter Hanks KC	Shanta Martin	Brittany Myers	Hannah Ryan
Phillip Boulten SC	Perry Herzfeld SC	Stephen McDonald SC*	Emrys Nekvapil SC	Madeleine Salinger
Tom Brennan SC	Joshua Jones	Rebecca McEwen	Nicholas Owens SC	Tom Wood
Katharine Brown	Kalia Laycock-Walsh	Liam Meagher	Chris Parkin	Naomi Wootton
Gemma Cafarella	Craig Lenehan SC	Ian Metz	Justin Pen	*before they were appointed to their current positions
Kate Eastman SC	Matthew Lewis SC	Dr Michelle Sharpe	Alistair Pound SC*	
Stephanie Erian			Minh-Quan Nguyen	

---

## Other support

Thank you to the many other individuals and organisations who have provided pro bono and in-kind support for our work over the year. We are so grateful for all the support we receive that helps us to achieve our mission of advancing human rights in Australia. Rely provide the technology that powers the Whistleblower Project's intake platform. Hawker Britton has provided pro bono government relations advisory services, while Naomi Halpern from Delphi Training and Consulting has provided pro bono mental health and well-being training.

## Donors

## Donations and grant payments that we received from generous supporters between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024.

### \$50,000+

Anonymous donors	Foundation for International Law for the Environment (FILE)	Mannifera (ACF sub fund)	Paul Ramsay Foundation	Susan McKinnon Foundation
ACME Foundation	Harris Morrison Fund	McKinnon Family Foundation	Planet Wheeler Foundation	Victorian Legal Services Board & Commissioner
B B & A Miller Foundation		New Venture Fund (Sage)	Snow Foundation	
The Corella Fund			The Sunrise Project	
Forge Fund		Oak Foundation		

### \$10,000–49,000

Allens	Krystyna Campbell-Pretty	Story Street Fund (ACF sub fund)	The Kimberley Foundation	Susan Varga
Australian Democracy Network	Evans5 Fund	Sunning Hill Fund (ACF sub fund)	Trawalla Foundation	Virgin Unite Australia
Bellwether Foundation	Peter Hanks	The Antipodean Family Foundation	Tripple	Jon Webster
	Humanists Victoria (ACF sub fund)		Van Raay Family Fund (ACF sub fund)	

### \$5,000–9,999

Suzanne Adams	Emily Christie	DLA Piper	Kristof Mikes-Liu
Heidi Anderson	Community Impact Foundation	Espero Fund (ACF sub fund)	Andrew Carriline
Hamish Black & Morgana Brady	Barry Crisp & Joan Staples	Jamie Gardiner OAM	Alysha & Dave Prout
Aziz Bhimani	Anne Marie Delahunt	Ben Kiely & Peter Garrow	
Roger Burke			

**\$1,000–  
4,999**

Anonymous donors	Mary-Ann Cohn	Ben Graham	Craig Lenehan SC	Michael Rowe
Susie Allanson	Greg Connellan	William Haebich	Lite Grann (ACF sub fund)	Peta Severn
Philip Alston	Dropbox Pcard 42	Hall & Wilcox	Carly Lusk	Shulu Foundation
Dennis Altman AM	Kym Duggan	Frank Hancock	Senthuren	Christopher Sidoti
Ben Appleton	Melissa Emanuel	William Holdsworth	Mahendren	Kyle Siebel
Arnold Dallas McPherson	Elizabeth Evatt	The Holmes Family Foundation	Jane Matthews	Suresh Sivanesan
Rawan Arraf	Bryan Everts	Will Irving	Therese McCarthy	Michael Smith
Philip Brenton	Federation of Community Legal Centres	Melinda Jackson	Minter Ellison	Kate Spargo
Assia Altman Fund	Jamie Gardiner	Siubhan Jay	Adele Moloney	Tamieka Spencer Bruce
Liz Austin	Melanie Schleiger	Vandana Katyal	Marlene Morison	Miranda Stewart
Abdel Badoura	Gilbert + Tobin	Claire Kenna	Alastair Nicholson	Charles Tegner
Mark Banks	Lyn Gilbert	Michael Kingston	Norton Rose Fulbright	Frances Tolhurst
Christine Bayly	Mitzi Gilligan	Matthias Krups	Kerry O'Brien	Deanna Wang
Graham Bennett	Martyn Goddard & Barry Scott	Lander & Rogers	Mark Orr	Susanne Weress
Isobel Booksmythe	Russell Goldflam	John Larocque	Karen Probst	
Alison Cameron	Good2Give	Gina Lee	Ian Repper	
Hannah Casey	Tim Goodwin & David Inge	William Richardson	Alice Dawkins	

**\$500-999**

Anonymous donors	Krista Eleftheriou	Stu Knibbs	Alice Opper
Kelly Allen	Gillian Essex	Myles Kunzli	Michael Pearce
Lily Alting	Chris Felstead	Yvonne Langley Walsh	Meredith Pearce
Kieran Chester	Tomaso Gangemi	Robyn Lansdowne	Anna Pollard
Philip Batterham	Anna Gigliotti- Skret	Julienne Leathart	Depita Rahim
Barbara Baumgartner	Anneliese Gillard	Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation	Joanna Renkin
Kevin Bell	Gudrun Gilles	Mark Madden	Susanna Ritchie
Sarah Bradley	Suzie Gold	Sarah Matheson	Liberty Sanger
Sarah Brasch	Good Company	Jeffrey McBride	Michael Sassella
Rosemary Briggs	Ken Goodwin	Helen McCarthy	Cheryl Saunders
Keith & Lorraine Brister	Alastair and Brenda Greenall	Fiona McLeay	Vanessa Smith
Meg Brodie	Peter Haasz	Isabelle Meere	Angela Smith
Jessica Brown	Annette Hackett	Lacey Moon	Robert Snook
Henry Burmester	Alexandra Hasiotis	Jenny Morgan	Tania Sorrel
Elissa Campbell	Cindy Hauser	Christine Morris	Michael Stanton
Rachel Connor	Lauren Honcope	Martha Morrow	Gordon Stenning
Rob Crowdy	Sarah Hunter	Brendan Murphy	Michael Strasser
Bonnie Dale	Jimmy Hunter	Emma Murray	James Turnbull
Michael Dalton	Elizabeth Hurley	Poulad Naghoni- Bakhtiari	Fiona Tweedie
Bradley Danaher	Beverley Jan	Colin Neave	Estelle White
Hugh de Kretser	Jean & Andrew John	Catherine Nicholson	Peter Willis SC
Sam Drummond	Chris Kakris	Sally Nicolson	Michelle Withers
Helen Dunstan	Phillip Kanaley	Mark and Anitra Nottingham	
Grant Edney	Fran Kearey		
Christine Edwards	Susan Kneebone		

**\$300–499**

Sophie Arnold	Emma Collard	Andrew Grimes	Adrian Morgan	Barb Taylor
Carl Benjaminsen	Erica Contini	Peter Howard	Navid Paya	Joshua Tram
Grant Benvenuti	Nicholas Dean	Sarah Joseph	Netta Phoenix	Jeff Tullberg
Julia Bernardo	Charlotte Dent	Gabrielle Kuiper	Linda Raymond	Simon Underschultz
Che Bishop	Maryanne Dever	Trish Langford	Mikhaela Rodwell	Luke Van Peelen
Clare Brennan	Braden Dowling	Jim Lennon	Jelena Rosic	Catherine Whelan
Emma Browne	Bruce Dyer	Peter Lindenmayer	Collin Rozario	Peter Williams
Emma Buckley Lennox	Marc Gibbs	Maureen Magee	Moyra Shields	Gordon Wong
Suzanne Byrne	Fraser Gibson	Ruth McColl	Liz Snell	Jonathan Wright
Ann Cebon-Glass	Dorothy Goss	Isabella Moore	Alan Stewart	

**\$200–399**

Maritsa Adams	Meg Casey	Christine Fox	Megan Kemmis	Ruby Richardson
Mary and David Hill	Faruk Celikovic	Jill Furmage	Phil Lynch	Caroline Roche
Jennifer Strauss AM	Chantal Chateauneuf	Michael Garcia	Joan Lynn	Jeanette Rogers
Anne Barrey	Matt Ciavarella	Andy Griffiths	Suzannah Lyons	Maija Rove
Julian Barson	Paul Curtis	Roy Harvey	Daniel MacKinlay	Genevieve Scanlan
Sarah Barter	John Davison- Mowle	Sarah Heesom	Annette Madvig	David Steele
Lee Ann Bassar	Jeremy Dawson	Mark Holding	Deirdre McKeown	Mary Tapsall
John Bern	Peter de Waal	Jo Hind	Mary McLaughlin	Savitri Taylor
Garry Bickley	Peter de Waal	Liz Howells	Bruce Moore	Liz Telford and Ron Exiner
Priscilla Brice	Joana d'Orey Novo	Emma Hunt	Paul Munro	Ruth Tiffen
James Briggs	Tim Drury	Julia Hurley	Michael Noney	Nerida Wallace
Jennifer Burns	Paul Drury	Pamela Jones	Tomislav Petr	Bethia Wilson
Jaye Buswell	McRae Dunbar	Lesley Jones	Stephen Powrie	Penny Wright
	Sophie Ellis	Shoshana Kaminsky	Romina Reyftmann	Joel Ziffer

# Join our movement for human rights progress

The Human Rights Law Centre is fiercely independent thanks to the support of donors and philanthropists across Australia and beyond, standing up for a fairer future.

Your support will power our legal action and advocacy to advance human rights and end injustice. By giving today, you can advance human rights for people and communities for generations to come.

## Make a donation or regular gift

Online: Visit [support.hrlc.org.au/donate](https://support.hrlc.org.au/donate) to make a one-off gift or set up a regular donation

Over the phone: call 03 8636 4488

By bank transfer: email [grants@hrlc.org.au](mailto:grants@hrlc.org.au) for more information

## Grants & gifts in wills

For information about leaving a bequest or supporting our work with a grant, please contact Rachel Richmond, Development Manager, by calling 03 8636 4488 or emailing [grants@hrlc.org.au](mailto:grants@hrlc.org.au).

---

**Human**  
**Rights**  
**Law**  
**Centre**

The Human Rights Law Centre is an Australian registered charity with **Deductible Gift Recipient Status.**

**All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.**

Join our movement for positive change by becoming a supporter today.