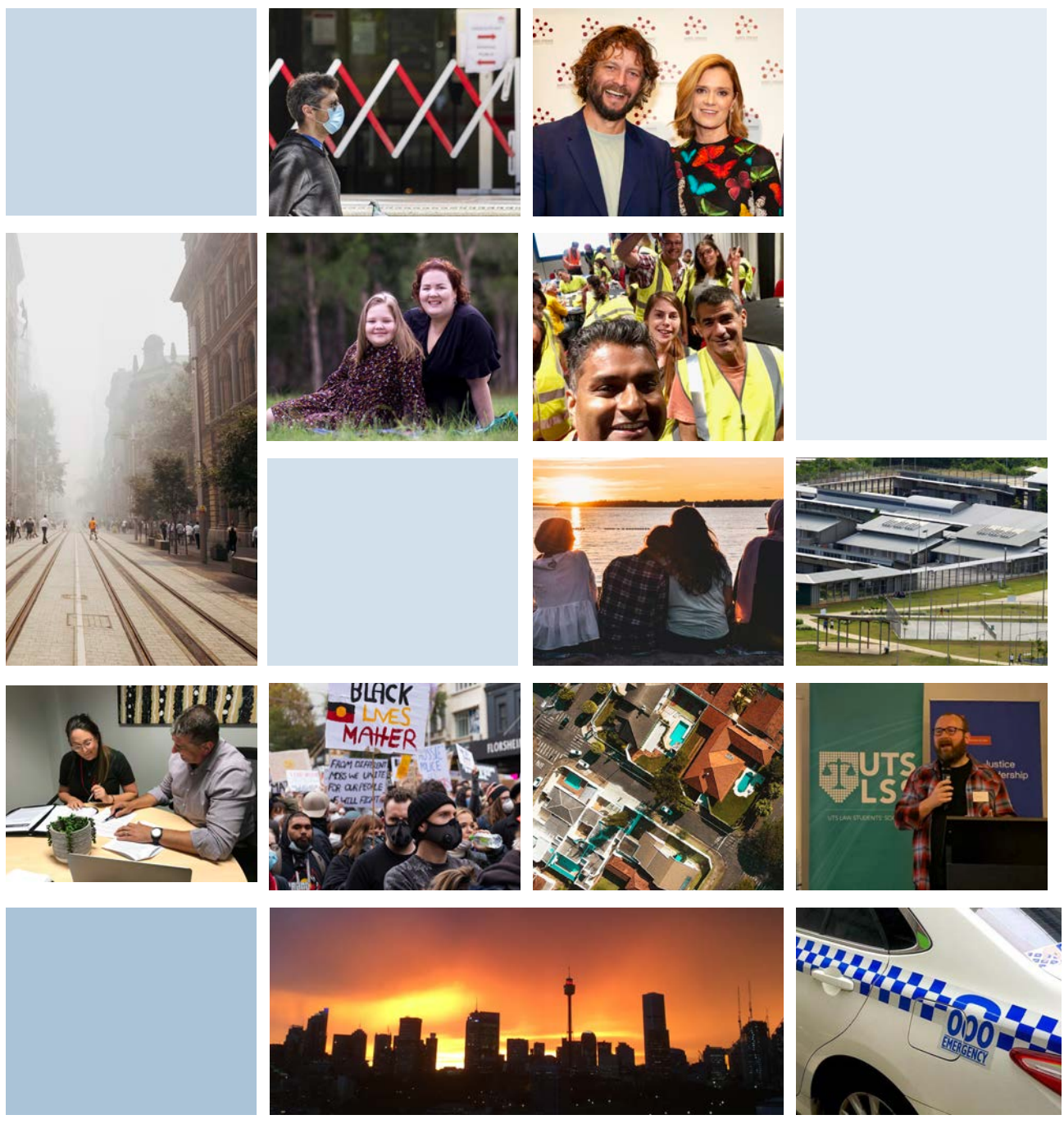


# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2019-2020







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## PIAC: achieving social justice

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre is a community legal centre that specialises in test cases and policy advocacy to achieve social justice and protect human rights. We remove barriers to justice and fairness experienced by people who are facing disadvantage through:

### Transparency

Exposing laws, policies and practices that are unfair or inconsistent with rights.

### Accountability

Challenging decision-makers on actions that are unlawful or unfair and helping people facing disadvantage to access justice.

### Solutions

Leading and collaborating with others to develop laws, policies and practices that deliver fair outcomes.

### Empowerment

Empowering people and organisations in civil society to initiate, inform and influence positive change.





## Reducing homelessness

The Homeless Persons' Legal Service works to ensure that the human rights of people experiencing homelessness are recognised and respected. Our consumer advisory committee, StreetCare, empowers people with a lived experience of homelessness to initiate, inform and influence positive change. Together, we work to build a community in which everyone has a secure, appropriate place to call home.

- **80% positive outcomes for 404 finalised casework files**



## Justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

We work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to provide access to justice and bring about systemic change in areas where there is disadvantage and discrimination. In 2019/20 our focus has been on police accountability, improving the child protection system for Aboriginal children and families and reducing the over-representation of Aboriginal children in prisons.

## Fair use of police powers

This year we have fought for improvements to the transparency of police practices, held police to account for unlawful and improper use of their powers and discretion, and collaborated to improve unfair laws, policies and practices.

## Access to affordable energy and water

In June 2020, our Energy and Water Consumers' Advocacy Program had a major win, with the Australian Energy Market Commission (AEMC) making its final decision to introduce a demand response mechanism into the energy wholesale market. This mechanism lowers energy prices, helps prevent blackouts and supports the transition to a renewable power system.

- **82 submissions**
- **518 meetings with government and industry**
- **107 public forums, workshops and conferences**



## Equality

This year we played a leading role in the public debate on the Government's flawed Religious Discrimination Bill. We have also worked to secure equal access for people living with a disability to services such as transport, insurance and media. We continue to actively advocate for reforms that will deliver fairer outcomes from the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

- **122 public interest cases run on behalf of 117 individuals and organisations**

## Asylum seeker health rights

We have worked with civil society to challenge the over-use of restraints in immigration detention and reduce the chance of a catastrophic COVID outbreak, as well as ensuring asylum seekers have access to essential medical care.

## Truth and accountability

We continue to play a major role in advancing transitional justice in Sri Lanka through our Conflict Mapping and Archive Project which collects, analyses and preserves open source documentation in relation to the Sri Lankan civil war. We also provide practical, foundational support for the truth-telling process called for in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, with our Towards Truth project a partnership with the Indigenous Law Centre at the University of New South Wales.

## Communicating for impact

We are an influential and authoritative voice in the media on social justice issues, achieving national coverage. We provided media skills training for 30 people in civil society organisations, amplifying the voices of organisations and individuals working for change.

- **24 media releases**
- **59 national media stories**
- **100 Publications and submissions**
- **50,274 website visits**
- **3290 eBulletin subscribers**
- **Twitter followers up 13%**
- **Facebook page likes up 12%**





## From our Chair and CEO

This year's extraordinary events have presented major challenges, but also opportunities, for civil society and organisations like PIAC working to advance social justice.

Our expertise and relationships have been at the heart of our ability to influence change.

We were able to quickly and effectively adjust our operations to ensure that our work could continue. This enabled us to respond strongly to some of the social justice impacts of the pandemic on our community.

As well as holding government to account, we worked constructively with decision-makers to protect the rights and promote the wellbeing of people experiencing disadvantage and marginalisation. Faced with the deep, complex and widespread nature of the crisis, government has needed organisations like PIAC for our knowledge, our connections into our communities and the solutions we bring.

This report provides just some of the highlights from the past financial year, with a focus on the practical impact that we have achieved for the people who trust us to work with them for justice. Our work has included:

**Helping** school children, travellers and people with mental health conditions overcome disability

**discrimination and improving systems and practices that disadvantage people with disability**

**Driving** the NSW campaign to raise the age of legal responsibility to 14

**Changing** the rules of the energy market, to bring down electricity prices and increase sustainability and reliability through the introduction of a new system of 'demand response'

**Improving** transparency of police practices like the secretive 'Suspect Targeting Management Plans' and holding police accountable for misuse and abuse of power

**Protecting** the health and safety of people in immigration detention, by ensuring close scrutiny of the conditions in places of detention and the measures taken to prevent COVID-19 infection

**Advancing** reform to the child protection system to reduce its devastating impact on Aboriginal children and families

**Ensuring** the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness are heard and have influence in the response to COVID-19 for people experiencing homelessness

**Helping** to lay foundations for truth-telling about the impact of laws and government policies on First Nations people, responding to the call of the Uluru Statement from the Heart

**Influencing** the national debate on proposals for the Commonwealth Religious Discrimination Bill

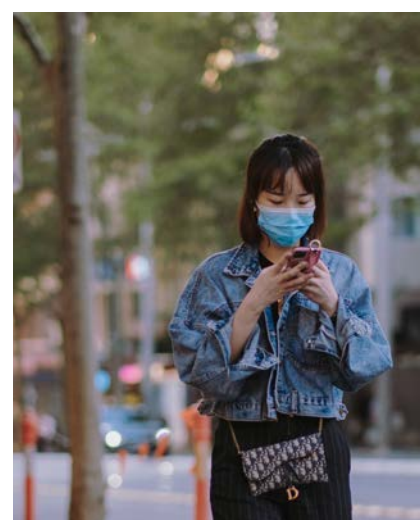
**Promoting** the accountability and transparency of decisions under the National Disability Insurance Scheme to get fairer outcomes for people in need of support.

Thank you to the many people whose dedication makes PIAC's work possible: our staff, directors, volunteers, donors, supporters, clients and partners in the community. We hope this report captures the depth and breadth of what we have achieved together.

We look forward to continuing our work with you in the year ahead.

REBECCA GILSEAN  
CHAIR

JONATHON HUNYOR  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Photos: Kate Trifo/Pexels, Keith Saunders

## Responding to COVID-19

Like most organisations, PIAC has had to make changes to how we operate to manage the risks of COVID-19 to staff, clients and the community. While working remotely we have continued to focus on delivering change across our existing project areas.

We also committed to working with people and organisations across the community to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on people already facing disadvantage.

In particular, we have been working to:

- **Highlight the impacts on people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.** We joined with others in civil society to call for the government to prevent evictions and have ensured the voices of people with lived experience of homelessness are heard as active members of the NSW Government's COVID-19 homelessness response taskforce.
- **Urgently protect the health of people in immigration detention.** We have worked with the Australian Human Rights Commissioner, peak medical groups, advocates and our colleagues across civil society to mitigate the risk of infection for this vulnerable group of people. In May, our Asylum Seeker Health Rights team lodged a complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman on behalf of 14 men in onshore detention who are unable to follow public health advice and practice social distancing in crowded, shared facilities. The Ombudsman has since released a statement calling for a range of changes to better protect women and men in detention, staff and the broader community.
- **Develop appropriate legal and policy responses to ensure people have access to essential services:** Our Energy + Water Consumers' Advocacy Program has been a leading voice for people struggling to access power, water, telephone and online services as a result of COVID-19 related hardship.
- **Ensure people in prisons and young people in detention are protected.** Together with our legal networks we have been working to reduce both the direct impact of COVID-19 on people in detention and the flow-on mental health impacts of preventive measures such as isolation that may need to be taken in these facilities.

Photo: Roslyn Cook





# Democracy and social justice

We expose laws, policies and practices that are unfair or inconsistent with rights and collaborate with others to develop solutions that promote justice, democracy and accountability.

Photo: AUSPIC



Photo: Noorulabdeen Ahmad /Unsplash

## Children in care: justice for victims of crime

We have been working with young people formerly in State care, and who were victims of crime, to hold the government accountable for the failure to lodge victims' compensation claims on their behalf.

These young people were eligible for victims' compensation at the time they were in State care for violence against them as children, but their claims were not lodged. As a result, when the victims' compensation scheme changed in 2013 and became significantly less generous, these young people lost their entitlement to compensation under the old scheme. In some cases, the difference between the compensation available to them is significant or no claim can now be made.

We have successfully negotiated compensation for a number of clients and are working with the Department of Justice on a systemic response to address this unjust outcome.



## Challenging the Religious Discrimination Bill

This year, PIAC was a leading civil society voice in public debate about the Commonwealth Government's proposed Religious Discrimination Bill.

While we support a law that protects people from discrimination on the grounds of religious belief, our analysis shows that both Exposure Draft Religious Discrimination Bills released by the Government during the year have the potential to impinge on the enjoyment of rights across the community. They would erode current protections from discrimination against women, LGBTI people, single parents, people with disability, and people from minority faith backgrounds.

In particular, the proposed legislation directly overrides state and territory anti-vilification protections, provides extraordinary exceptions allowing religious schools, charities and even hospitals and aged care services to discriminate on the basis of religious belief, and undermines non-discriminatory access to essential health services.

In addition to providing detailed submissions in response to both Exposure Draft Bills, we have engaged directly with a wide range of Parliamentarians. We have also been an influential voice in the media, publishing opinion pieces in mainstream publications (including Sydney Morning Herald), featuring regularly in reports (including Guardian Australia), and helping to inform the debate by sharing our legal and policy expertise with journalists.

We have had particular impact through key partnerships (with groups such as Equality Australia and the Australian Discrimination Law Experts Group), while supporting the voices of other organisations, including women's groups, LGBTI organisations, other civil society bodies as well as some faith groups. This included information sharing, assistance with submission writing and direct briefings to peak bodies such as the Australian Council of Social Service.

Our public forum in January 2020 was very successful in generating awareness of the many problems and concerns with the second Exposure Draft Bill and encouraging submissions. The forum featured:

- Human Rights Commissioner Edward Santow (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- Professor Simon Rice (University of Sydney)
- Dr Mary O'Sullivan (Women's Electoral Lobby)
- Brandon Bear (ACON), and
- Dr Deidre Palmer (Uniting Church in Australia).

The Attorney-General was expected to introduce a final version of the Bill in the second half of March 2020, however, the coronavirus pandemic and associated health and economic challenges have meant that it has been delayed indefinitely.

PIAC remains ready to respond to any future Religious Discrimination Bill and will oppose any attempt to undermine existing protections against discrimination.

*'The latest bill does not address the serious concerns of groups across the community who stand to have their rights eroded.'*

*'This bill will not help build a more inclusive and tolerant Australia.'*

PIAC CEO Jonathon Hunyor  
(SBS News 10/12/19)





# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice

We work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, communities and organisations to protect and promote human rights, in areas including policing, youth justice, child protection and truth-telling.

*We acknowledge the generous support from Allens for our work on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice. Since 2001, Allens has funded a Senior Lawyer to lead our work on issues including reparations for the Stolen Generations, repayment of stolen wages and police accountability.*

*We acknowledge the generous support of the B B & A Miller Foundation and the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation for the Indigenous Child Protection Project.*

Photo: Matt Hrkac/Flickr

## Improving the child protection system

Our work on child protection advances a strategy developed in partnership with the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT Ltd (ALS) to improve outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in the NSW Child Protection system.

Working in collaboration with the ALS and other Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, we are focused on:

- Early support for families – strengthening the obligation on the Department of Communities and Justice to support families and prevent the removal of children.
- Permanency of culture – ensuring that connection to culture is recognised as integral to the wellbeing and best interest of Aboriginal children, particularly in court proceedings.
- Adoption and guardianship – increasing transparency around the NSW government's approach to adoption and guardianship of Aboriginal children, and advocating for the implementation of the Family Is Culture Review recommendations.
- Housing – improving consistency between housing and child protection policies to ensure that families at risk can access appropriate housing.

*'We know that Aboriginal children are significantly over-represented in the out-of-home care system in NSW, and that this has long-term, far-reaching consequences.'*

*'The Family Is Culture Review represents a historic opportunity for the Government to take meaningful action to improve the lives of children, families and communities and address entrenched inequality.'*

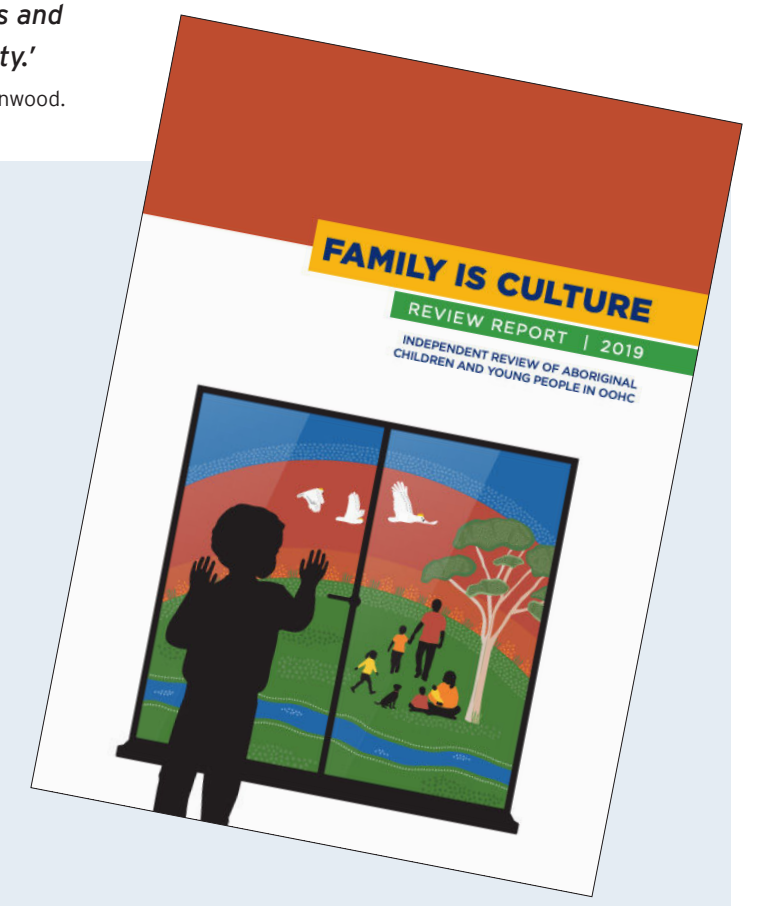
- Senior Solicitor, Brooke Greenwood.



Members of the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT Care Team at a planning day hosted by PIAC.

## Addressing overrepresentation in out-of-home care

Released in November 2019, the Family is Culture Review found that there is a continuing crisis for Aboriginal children in out-of-home care in NSW. The Review made 125 recommendations for systemic change, many of which reflect the reform priorities we are pursuing as part of our work. The NSW Government's response to the Review has been disappointing and we are working with the ALS, AbSec, the Jumbunna Centre and other CLCs to advocate for implementation of the recommendations and stronger action to address the growing overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in care in NSW.





# Raise the age: a positive future for our children

Right now, children as young as 10 years old can be imprisoned in every state and territory in Australia, including NSW. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are disproportionately impacted by these laws, accounting for 70 per cent of children aged 10 to 13 in detention.

This year we worked with organisations including the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT (ALS), Just Reinvest, Amnesty and the Royal Australian College of Physicians (RACP) as part of the national campaign to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14.

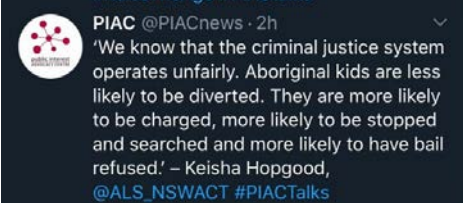
We convened a roundtable for NSW-based stakeholders and led a coalition of 22 organisations and academics to write to the NSW Attorney General Mark Speakman, urging action.

In the lead up to the Council of Attorneys General (CAG) meeting in July 2020, we met with the Attorney and hosted a public Zoom forum with a panel of expert speakers to profile the issue.

We have also been active in the media to promote public discussion of youth justice issues, with appearances on Triple J Hack, ABC 702 Breakfast, Radio National's Late Night Live and ABC TV's The Drum.

Despite decades of medical, social and legal research highlighting the harm caused by forcing kids into the criminal legal system, at their July 2020 meeting CAG chose to defer the decision to raise the age for at least 12 months.

We continue our collaborative work to achieve change on this crucial issue in NSW.



*'Raising the age of criminal responsibility is not just an Aboriginal issue, it's about the fundamental human rights of young people in this country. However, like most human rights issues in this country it affects our people the most,'*

- Daniel Daylight  
(WEAVE Youth Services).



## Reducing Homelessness

Our Homeless Persons' Legal Service protects the human rights of people experiencing homelessness and works to build a community where everyone has a secure, appropriate place to call home.

PIAC manages, trains and supervises pro bono lawyers from 16 leading legal practices to provide outreach clinics in partnership with 15 community services in Sydney and the Newcastle region.



Ahead of the meeting of the Council of Attorneys General in July, more than 160 people joined our virtual forum, moderated by PIAC CEO Jonathon Hunyor, and featuring speakers Daniel Daylight (Weave Youth Services), Keisha Hopgood (Aboriginal Legal Services NSW/ACT), Dr Jacqueline Small (Royal Australasian College of Physicians), as well as Youth Ambassadors, Isaiah Sines and Terleah Williams (Just Reinvest NSW).

Photo: James Haworth/ Unsplash





The Homeless Persons' Legal Service runs 15 legal outreach clinics, including at The Shed in Emerton.



Roslyn Cook, Managing Solicitor, Homeless Persons' Legal Service, at the launch of the End Street Sleeping Collaboration.

## Legal practice and outreach clinics

Across HPLS, we aim to deliver outcomes for clients on issues directly relating to their homelessness. In this past financial year we provided 952 advice sessions to 665 people needing legal help.

We also finalised 404 casework files. Of these, we achieved a positive substantive outcome for our clients in more than 80% of cases.

In our civil practice, our single largest area of work (44% of cases) involved helping improve our clients' financial position: including by resolving financial hardship issues such as fines and credit and debt issues, and assisting clients to access entitlements or compensation such as victims compensation. This important work recognises the close connection between financial hardship and homelessness.

Our next largest area of civil practice involved assisting clients to access services, including by getting ID, resolving issues with banking and utilities services, and overcoming discrimination. Finally, a significant proportion of our civil casework involved helping clients to obtain housing or resolve housing insecurity, often in highly complex matters.

About half the HPLS casework involved criminal matters. Our criminal practice provides an important safety net for clients with complex needs, many of whom might not turn up to court or be legally represented without our support, making them more likely to end up in police custody or sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Notably, we helped our clients avoid a custodial sentence in 60% of resolved cases.

Like all outreach-based services, HPLS was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Since mid-March 2020, all HPLS clinics have operated on an entirely remote basis, with advice offered by phone or over email. Many of our community partners have experienced service changes, with lunch and drop-in services suspended at most locations, and some crisis services moving residents to lower-density settings such as hotels, to reduce the risk of an outbreak. At the same time, the majority of our pro bono partners commenced remote work. The immediate impact of this has been a reduction in the numbers of people seeking assistance from HPLS.

We are aware, however, that the underlying vulnerability to legal problems for people experiencing homelessness will remain high and is likely to significantly increase in coming months. We anticipate continuing and increasing demand for legal services connected with tenancy, financial hardship, social security, and domestic violence in particular.

## Case study: Liveable public housing

In October 2019, we successfully settled a major case against the NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LHC). Our client was a tenant in public housing who had been severely impacted by the construction of the light rail along Anzac Parade. Despite noise issues that made her apartment functionally uninhabitable, and repeated complaints and requests for assistance, LHC declined to undertake essential noise remediation work.

We pursued action in the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) and made extensive attempts to reach a negotiated outcome, but LHC were determined to litigate. With support from PIAC's strategic litigation team and counsel Madeleine Bridgett, we obtained judgment in favour of our client, with the NCAT Member commenting that rather than acting on our client's concerns, the landlord had 'stonewalled her, or alternately fobbed her off by directing her back to [the contractor]'.

LHC ultimately agreed to a final resolution of the matter that included covering all required remediation works, a five-figure sum of compensation, and a portion of our costs. This was a significant victory, and forms part of a body of work that is about protecting the rights of public housing tenants, and holding housing providers accountable.







StreetCare Project Officer Maddy Humphreys (left, front) with NSW Governor Margaret Beazley, Dame Louise Casey, Institute of Global Homelessness Advisory Committee Chair and members of the End Street Sleeping Collaboration.

*'We rely on the StreetCare group for the wisdom that comes from a lived experience of homelessness. We couldn't do our work without them.'*

– Christine McBride  
(End Street Sleeping Collaboration)

## StreetCare and policy work

StreetCare continues to be an important voice for change in the homelessness sector. The group brings together people with lived experience of homelessness and supports them to be effective advocates and advisors. This year we farewelled long-standing StreetCare members Dave and Carol, and welcomed new members Carlos and Rebecca. We also welcomed back Damo after a period away from the group. Together with regulars AJ, Amir, Talie, Dougie and Megan, we have had a full and vibrant membership this year.

We have worked closely with the Department of Communities and Justice, and maintained our membership of the Premier's Council on Homelessness and the NSW Homelessness Strategy's Monitoring and Evaluation Advisory Group. We have worked collaboratively with the Sydney Women's Homelessness Alliance and the End Street Sleeping collaboration. Members have also made appearances at conferences and seminars, and have made significant contributions to our research and policy work.

Our policy work this year included advocacy on public space policing and the NSW Protocol for Homeless People in Public Spaces ('the Protocol'). We appeared on the Law Report in March discussing the criminalisation of homelessness, and gave evidence to the NSW Parliamentary Committee conducting a review of the Protocol, following a detailed written submission. We also provided a submission to the five year review of the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Commonwealth Inquiry into Homelessness.

Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a major feature of the final months of the financial year and demonstrated the value that StreetCare adds to the homelessness sector. We have attended a weekly Ministerial forum and regular interagency taskforce meetings, supported StreetCare members to engage in several working groups, and worked closely with Departmental staff to ensure our State has delivered a coordinated, effective response with a focus on the dignity and rights of service users. We also hosted a forum in June to bring together leaders in the sector to discuss the long-term pathways to secure housing for all former rough-sleepers housed during the emergency response.

# Police Accountability

Our work challenges the misuse of police power, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people and people who are homeless.

We expose unlawful police conduct, hold police to account and collaborate to improve unfair laws, policies and practices.

Photo: Mitchell Luo/ Unsplash



## 'Unjustified and oppressive': Police watchdog to audit bail compliance checking

The NSW Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) will undertake a state-wide audit to scrutinise the conduct by NSW Police in undertaking 'bail compliance checks', following an investigation into the conduct by police towards two PIAC clients: a young Aboriginal man and his partner.

The couple were visited by the police at their family home at all hours of the night, sometimes multiple times per night, and over several months. The checks persisted despite police never suspecting the man had breached his bail conditions, or finding him to be in breach. The man's partner was pregnant at the time with their second child. The charges against the man were ultimately withdrawn.

The audit announced in April by the LECC is an important step towards ensuring that bail compliance checks are undertaken lawfully and in a way that minimises the negative impact on families and communities.

The LECC's investigation (Operation Cusco) follows the launch of landmark proceedings in the District Court of NSW by PIAC on behalf of the man and his partner, that tests the powers of police to enter private land to conduct 'proactive' curfew checks without a Court order. The case is ongoing.

We remain concerned that the NSW Police approach to bail compliance checks is inconsistent with the Bail Act. Our clients' experience points to a systemic problem regarding excessive and unreasonable curfew checking practices by Police Area Commands throughout NSW. We look forward to the findings of the LECC's state-wide audit.



## Increased scrutiny of pro-active policing practices

We continue to advocate for greater transparency in relation to the Suspect Targeting Management Plan (STMP) and reform of its use on children and young people.

The STMP is a secret 'pro-active policing' policy that disproportionately targets Aboriginal young people. Young people targeted under the STMP are often repeatedly stopped and searched, or visited at home at all hours of the day.

The Law Enforcement Conduct Commission (LECC) conducted an investigation (Operation Tepito) into the STMP following sustained advocacy by PIAC and the release of a report by the Youth Justice Coalition on the STMP, authored by PIAC's Camilla Pandolfini and Vicki Sentas from UNSW.

The LECC's February 2020 report confirmed the concerns of many of our young clients, including that STMP practices disproportionately affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people, and that 'overt and intrusive policing tactics' resulted in 'apparently unreasonable surveillance and monitoring of children and young people'.

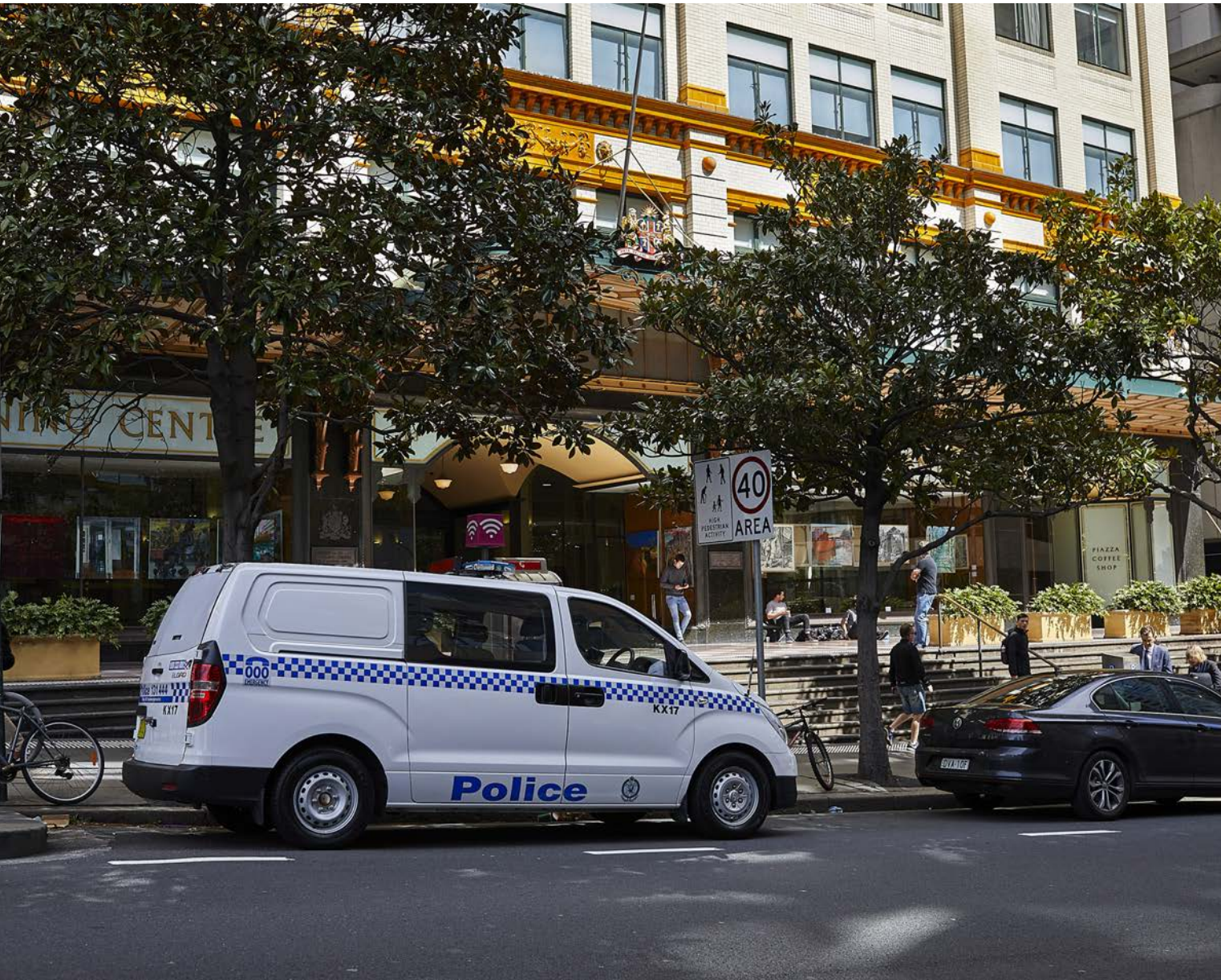
The LECC's report also raises serious concerns about the lack of transparency in the process by which a young person becomes an STMP target.

Young children have been subject to these invasive policing strategies even though they have not been charged with any crime and are known to police as being the victims of crime or children at risk.

Exposing these children to more interactions with police and the criminal justice system is well-known to have a serious negative impact on young people and runs counter to the efforts being made to divert young people from the criminal justice system.

We continue to call for NSW Police to stop using the STMP on children and young people, and for greater transparency and accountability in the use of the STMP.

Photo: Keith Saunders



## Asylum Seeker Health Rights

The Asylum Seeker Health Rights Project aims to secure humane standards of medical and mental health care for asylum seekers in Australian immigration detention centres.

Despite the high levels of trauma suffered by asylum seekers and the damage to mental health caused by long-term, indefinite detention, conditions in immigration detention centres – including rights of access to essential health care – are unprotected in legislation. The Federal Court has described this as a 'legislative vacuum'.

Through test cases and policy advocacy, PIAC is working to change the system.

*PIAC's ASHRP work is made possible with the generous support of the Australian Communities Foundation (Williams Fund), The Fred P Archer Charitable Trust, Australian Communities Foundation Impact Fund, The Ross Trust, Planet Wheeler Foundation, River Capital Foundation and Modara Pines Charitable Foundation.*

Photo: Flickr/JosephB





Photo: DIAC Images

## Ensuring access to life-saving hepatitis C treatment

In May 2019, we achieved a major breakthrough when the Commonwealth Government agreed to provide all detainees living with hepatitis C life-saving curative treatment, commensurate with the Australian community standard.

For years, people in immigration detention were routinely denied access to medication that was readily available in the community.

Despite this significant policy change, we uncovered concerning data that revealed almost a year later as many as 34 immigration detainees were living with hepatitis C and only five had commenced medication (in March 2020). The average wait-time for the treatment was 573 days.

One of our clients is currently detained at a Western Australian facility. When he first arrived in immigration detention in April 2018, the Department of Home Affairs knew he was living with hepatitis C. However, it was not until April 2020 that antiviral medication was provided, following a Federal Court application on his behalf.

Holding the Department to account in relation to its 2019 commitment continues to be a major focus of the project.

## Challenging the excessive use of force and restraints

We have continued to raise serious concerns about the increasing use of mechanical restraints, such as handcuffs, in immigration detention, especially during transfers between facilities and medical appointments. These practices are particularly concerning given that many asylum seekers have a history of trauma and torture.

In December 2019, we filed a complaint under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) with the Australian Human Rights Commission in relation to the overuse of handcuffing for transfers to medical appointments. Our client is living with severe mental illness and the use of handcuffs is particularly retraumatising for him. This has led to him refusing medical attention, and as a result, his medical care is frequently disrupted and delayed.



Photo: HoustondwiPhotos/ Flickr



Photo: Keith Saunders

## Immigration detention phone ban harmful, unnecessary and unjustified

We joined advocates across the sector in challenging the Government's proposal to prohibit mobile phones in immigration detention.

People in immigration detention need access to mobile phones in order to communicate freely with family, friends, advocates and lawyers and to generally maintain connection with the outside world. This has never been more true than during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are very concerned about the harmful health consequences of a blanket prohibition of mobile phones, particularly given the potential for this to exacerbate mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety already experienced by many asylum seekers in immigration detention.

PIAC's response to the proposal was outlined in a submission to the Inquiry into the Migration Amendment (Prohibiting Items in Immigration Detention Facilities) Bill 2020.

## MedEvac: ensuring access to essential medical care

In response to growing concerns that some MedEvac evacuees have failed to receive adequate medical and mental health care upon arrival in Australia, we have been working to ensure that the Department of Home Affairs is complying with its duty of care to this cohort of vulnerable people.

In partnership with a law firm acting pro bono, we act for a sample group of 50 evacuees detained in Melbourne and near Brisbane, to investigate key areas of concern. We are exploring a range of legal options for our clients including pre-litigation steps and both individual and systemic advocacy to ensure that adequate care is provided.



Photo: Alex Craig





Photo: DIAC Images

## Reducing the risk of a catastrophic COVID-19 outbreak in detention

In May, PIAC lodged a complaint with the Ombudsman on behalf of 14 men in onshore detention facilities. The men who made the complaint are unable to follow public health advice and practice social distancing in crowded, shared facilities and have specific health conditions that increase their risk of serious harm in the event of an outbreak in detention.

The complaint called for an urgent inspection of immigration detention facilities and alternative places of detention, to examine the adequacy of conditions and measures being taken to mitigate and manage the dangers posed by COVID-19 to detainees and staff.

The Ombudsman released a public statement in July, following inspections of immigration detention centres in May and June.

Staggeringly, the statement revealed that numbers in our overcrowded detention centres had increased in recent months, despite the clear and consistent recommendations of public health and infectious diseases experts to reduce detainee populations. The statement also highlighted inconsistency in practices across places of detention and a lack of monitoring and assurance by the Department of Home Affairs.

The most effective way to reduce the serious health threat to immigration detainees, staff and the community, is to transfer people out of held immigration detention into appropriate community accommodation where possible, as a matter of urgency. We are continuing to call for urgent action.



## Sustainable and affordable energy and water

The Energy + Water Consumers' Advocacy Program (EWCAP) works to ensure all New South Wales households have access to affordable and sustainable energy and water services.

The team engages with community organisations, consumer advocates, state and federal governments, rule-makers, regulators, ombudsmen and industry stakeholders, and receives policy input from a community-based reference group.

Photo: Jason Blackeye/ Unsplash



Major energy market reform win

The Australian Energy Market Commission's (AEMC) June decision to introduce a wholesale demand response mechanism is a major win for households that affirms the EWCAP team's broad expertise and ability to get results for households and other energy users.

The new mechanism fundamentally transforms the energy market. It allows the Australian Energy Market Operator to pay energy users to voluntarily consume less electricity when demand is high and supply is tight, instead of turning on more expensive generators. This lowers energy prices, helps prevent blackouts and supports the transition to a renewable power system.

The rule change to allow demand response follows years of work by PIAC and others, and a joint proposal to the AEMC made by PIAC, The Australia Institute and Total Environment Centre. PIAC played a highly influential role in the AEMC's decision and design of the reform, taking part in AEMC working groups, making our own detailed submissions and leading joint submissions. PIAC brought together groups including the Australian Council of Social Services, Consumer Action Law Centre, and Tenants Union; innovative energy businesses such as Enel X and Reposit; and large energy consumer advocates such as Energy Users Association Australia and Australian Industry Group.

PIAC also led a media campaign to promote the reform, with extensive coverage in major outlets including the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *ABC*, *The Guardian*, *Australian Financial Review*, *RenewEconomy*, *The Australian* and others.

The AEMC's final decision is a huge victory for Australian homes and businesses over the incumbent energy businesses who have opposed demand response reform to protect their own share of the \$18+ billion a year wholesale energy market.

Leading an expert group advising on energy regulation

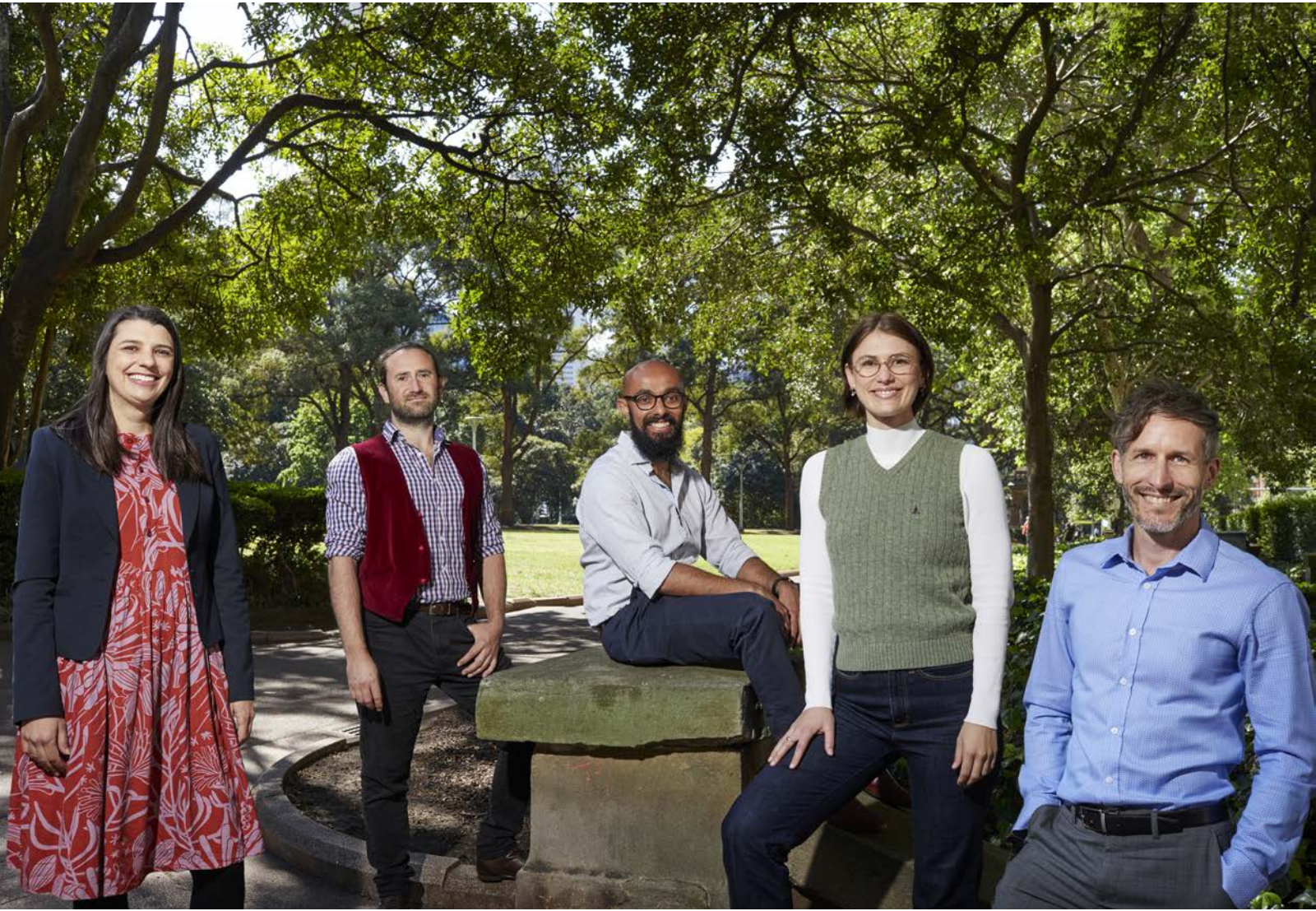


EWCAP's expertise will help shape major decisions that impact on the prices people pay for energy, through the appointment of Program Director, Craig Memery, as chair of the Australian Energy Regulator's Consumer Reference Group

The Group advises on the Regulator's reviews of inflation and the rates of return for regulated electricity and gas businesses across the National Energy Market. These will determine how much monopoly businesses are allowed to charge consumers in recovering the cost of billions of dollars of electricity and gas infrastructure, having material impact on energy prices.

The Customer Reference Group makes key contributions to these processes, including providing advice and recommendations to the Regulator, and comprises consumer representatives, former regulators, members of industry, consultants and academics.

PIAC's appointment to chair the group reflects its expertise and experience in regulatory matters, economics, consumer advocacy and energy systems, engagement and leadership.



L-R: EWCAP team Thea Bray, Douglas McCloskey, Miyuru Ediriweera, Anna Livsey, Craig Memery.

Integrating new renewable energy technologies

PIAC was a key contributor to the Distributed Energy Integration Program (DEIP), helping to guide reforms to facilitate the fair uptake of more renewable energy and the timely and efficient transition of the energy system.

The DEIP is a partnership between the Australian Energy Market Operator, Australian Energy Council, Australian Renewable Energy Agency, Clean Energy Council, Clean Energy Finance Corporation, Energy Consumers Australia, Energy Networks Australia, Clean Energy Regulator, Council of Australian Governments Energy Council, CSIRO, Australian Energy Market Commission, Energy Security Board and the Australian Energy Regulator.

PIAC worked with consumer organisations, such as Australian Council of Social Services and Total Environment Centre, and DEIP partners on DEIP's Access and Pricing workstream aimed at increasing the value of people's distributed energy resources (DER), such as solar and batteries, for all energy users. Rule changes have been proposed off the back of this work, which we hope will support urgent energy system transition.







## Supporting households during crisis

Since the COVID-19 pandemic took hold in March, the EWCAP team worked to ensure the utilities sector supports people through the health and economic crisis. Recognising the impact widespread unemployment and disruption would have on people's ability to afford energy and water bills, and also the crucial role of these services in the public health response, PIAC has worked with the utilities industry, governments and other community groups to improve supporting measures for households.

In March, PIAC led 14 community and consumer groups, including Australian Council of Social Services, Consumer Action Law Centre, Physical Disabilities Council, St Vincent de Paul Society and Brotherhood of St Laurence, to call for immediate Government funding for energy bill relief and stronger commitments by energy businesses to help people afford their energy bills during the COVID-19 crisis. The group also called on Government to fund immediate measures to improve energy efficiency for people required to stay home during the crisis, such as more efficient heaters, draught sealing kits, and advice services.

In June, PIAC joined more than 50 other groups, including the Australian Industry Group, Australian Council of Social Services and National Shelter to call for an energy efficiency and solar low-income housing installation program in the pandemic recovery.

PIAC was also a voice for NSW households in regulatory changes aimed at helping energy consumers through the crisis. It made influential submissions on a rule change to allow retailers to defer paying network charges for their customers in hardship during the crisis, and Australian Competition and Consumer Commission authorisations to allow retailers to work together to better support their customers. It has also worked with retailers and government service providers to develop systems to better support people with their energy use and bills throughout the crisis.



EWCAP's Douglas McCloskey on Channel 7 News, calling for fairer and smarter water pricing.

# Responding to the global climate crisis

Climate change caused by human activities is one of the most serious, far-reaching, and urgent challenges we face.

Photo: VirtualWolf/Flickr



Limiting the effects of climate change is the most urgent and far-reaching challenge facing the world today, and will likely remain so through this century. In Australia, the unprecedented bushfires in late 2019 and early 2020 highlighted both the immediacy and the scale of the threat presented by the global climate crisis.

Climate change has a disproportionate impact on those already experiencing disadvantage, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people experiencing homelessness, and the many living in poor quality housing. This year, PIAC's work has had an increased focus on the adverse effects of the climate crisis on people facing disadvantage, the need to avoid catastrophic climate change through emissions reduction and to ensure the transition to a sustainable, resilient, zero-emission economy and society is just and fair.

PIAC has been promoting an innovative, fairer framework to fund the billions of dollars of electricity transmission infrastructure required to support the large-scale Renewable Energy Zones (REZ) needed to transition to a zero-emissions energy system.

PIAC has developed a comprehensive regulatory and market model for funding future REZ infrastructure that balances the risks and costs of investment in transmission between consumers, investors and government, as an alternative to the current cost recovery framework which places all the cost on households and other consumers.

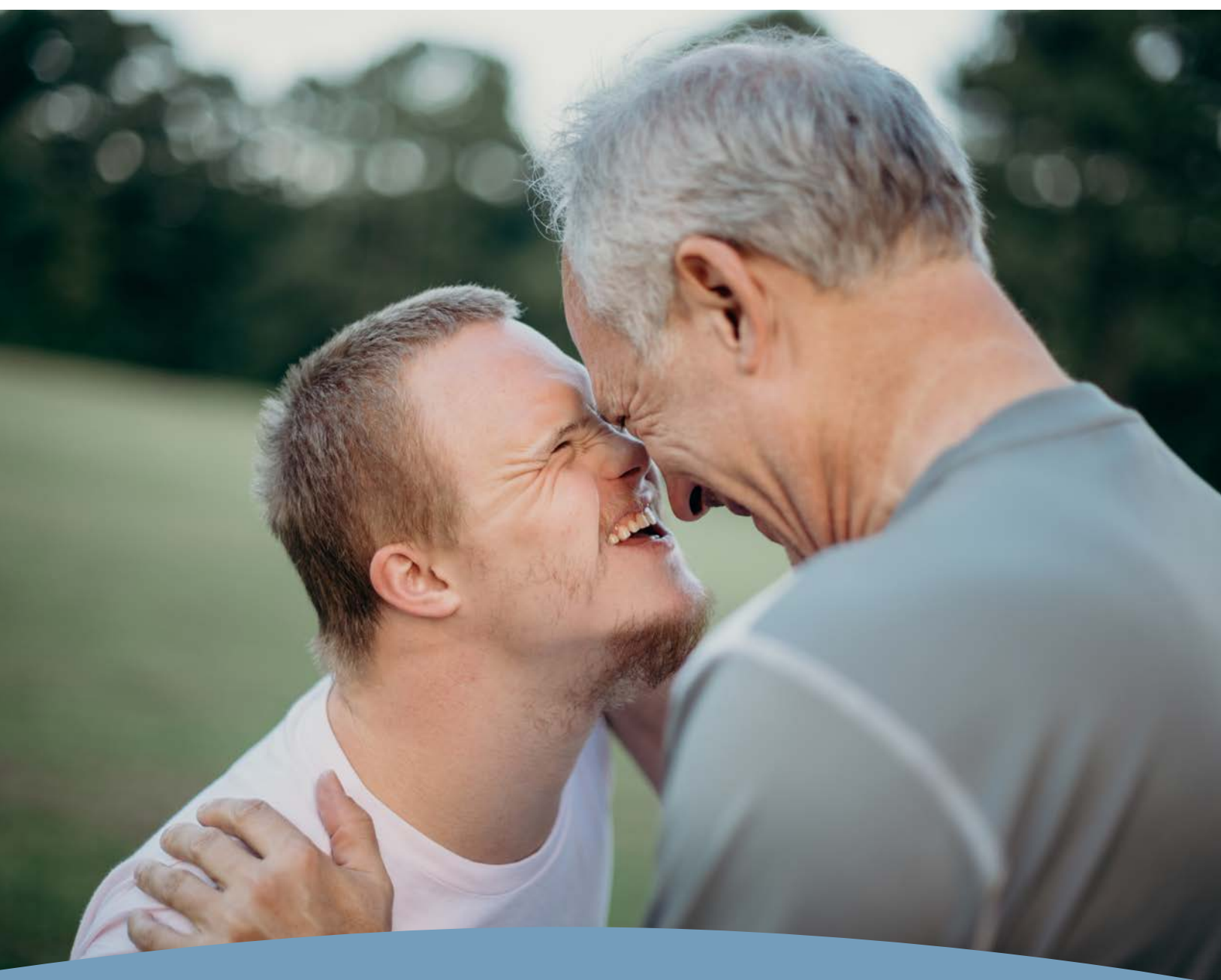
PIAC's model allows faster, deeper decarbonisation by encouraging investment in renewable energy generation while maximising the deployment of renewable energy and the best use of existing and new transmission infrastructure.

In the last year REZ reforms have had the attention of the New South Wales government, the Energy Security Board (ESB) and other energy market institutions and the EWCAP team has worked closely with them all. NSW government has been leading the development of REZs, with two recently announced in the state's Central West Orana and New England regions, and are considering elements of PIAC's approach.

As more large-scale renewables are developed, funding models like PIAC's, will be important in ensuring the energy transition is timely, efficient and fair.

The disruption caused by climate change will have an impact on nearly all aspects of our lives. PIAC will continue to work to limit the effects of the climate crisis on groups facing disadvantage, and ensure the timely and just transition to a sustainable, resilient, zero-emission economy and society.





# Rights of people with disability

PIAC maintains one of Australia's leading practices in discrimination law, with a history of successful test cases and systemic change.

Photo: Nathan Anderson/ Unsplash



Photo: Kevin Bluer/ Unsplash

## Cruise case drives improvements for passengers

It will be easier for people with disability to access and enjoy cruises following the successful settlement of a claim against Royal Caribbean by Professor Justin Yerbury.

Professor Yerbury faced a number of barriers because of his disability (motor neurone disease) in trying to organise the cruise with his family in March 2019. This resulted in him being denied boarding on the Explorer of the Seas, an experience Professor Yerbury described as 'disappointing and degrading'.

Royal Caribbean has now committed to a range of important practical changes that will make travel more accessible.

*'I am pleased Royal Caribbean has listened to my concerns and has worked with me to make changes to ensure that other people with complex needs don't have to experience the disappointment and hurt of being refused access to a much-anticipated family holiday because of their disability.'*

- Professor Justin Yerbury.





## Tackling disability discrimination in schools

We have highlighted the significant challenges faced by autistic children in the education system, in a major test case that successfully settled in July 2020.

Hannah Blundy and her eight-year-old daughter Catherine, challenged The Lakes Christian College, for their treatment of Catherine, who has autism spectrum disorder.

The Blundys argued that the College failed to provide appropriate supports for Catherine, resulting in her being suspended, banned from the school bus and ultimately expelled.

The settlement of Catherine's case brings relief to the Blundy family and affirms the importance of disability awareness training and having a behaviour management policy that reflects the different needs of students with disability.

*'In running this case, we just want all children, including children on the spectrum, to have the chance to win at education. We hope our case has raised awareness about the challenges that children on the spectrum can face at school.'*

*'We also hope that we have been able to show how diverse ASD is. Autistic people are a very special part of our community. We hope that we have been able to highlight that someone with Autism is simply different not less.'*

- Hannah Blundy, Catherine's mum.

## Test case to challenge mental health discrimination by insurers

We continue to challenge unfair and discriminatory practices of insurers in their treatment of people with mental health conditions.

Our latest test case, filed in the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal in May 2020, is on behalf of a Melbourne man who had unreasonably broad mental health exclusion clauses placed on his income protection cover because he disclosed that he had seen a psychologist to discuss life stresses.

Accepting cover on the terms offered by the insurance company would have meant that if he had developed a serious mental health condition, or a broad range of other unrelated conditions, at any point in the future, he would not have been able to make a claim on his policy.

Our casework has shown that insurers frequently and routinely deny cover and apply unreasonably broad mental health exclusions to policies taken out by people who declare even minor mental health conditions, or have even visited a psychologist. This approach has the potential to exclude many people from being able to obtain insurance, or make claims and creates a perverse incentive for people to avoid actively managing their mental health.

We hope this case will compel insurance companies to take a fairer approach to handling applications and claims, so that the many people who seek help for mental health issues do not face discrimination.



Photo:Andrea Piacquadio/ Pexels

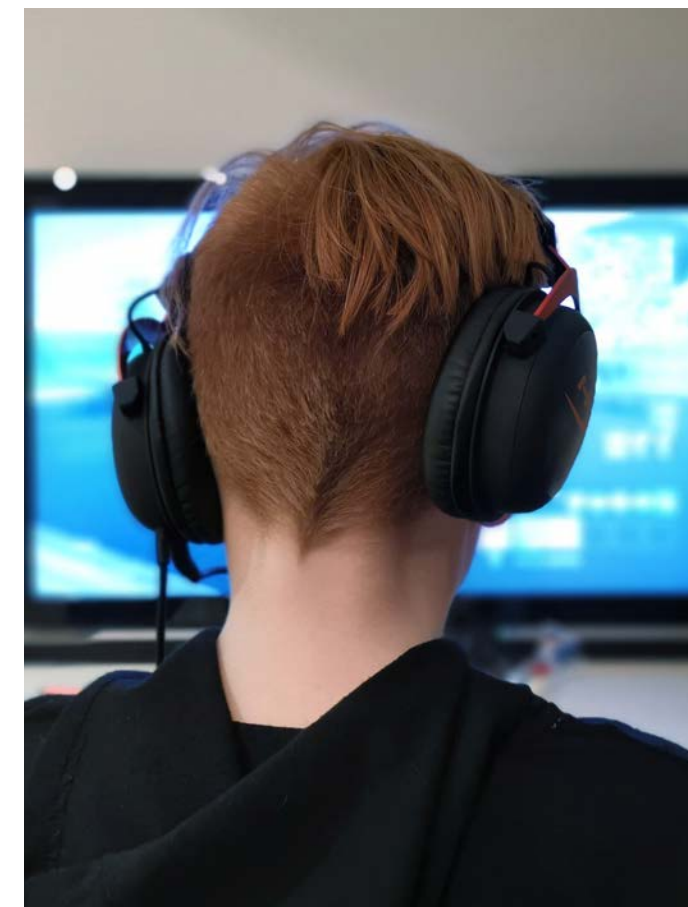


Photo: Bokskapet/Pixabay

## Audio description: Improving access to the media

Australia lags behind many other countries, including New Zealand and the United Kingdom, in making television accessible to people who are blind or have low vision.

The ABC and SBS this year announced the introduction of audio description for an average of 14-hours of content per week. While welcome, concerns remain about the lack of audio description on commercial free-to-air TV, and the still limited nature of the audio description being offered by the ABC and SBS.

In October 2018, PIAC lodged a complaint on behalf of Ms Lauren Henley with the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disability, in relation to the failure of Australia to plan or legislate for audio description on free-to-air TV. We look forward to the UN Committee's consideration of Ms Henley's complaint.



# A fairer NDIS

We are working with people with disability, carers, peak groups and stakeholders to make the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) fairer and better meet the needs of people with disability.

Photo: Keith Saunders



# Truth and accountability

Our work advances transitional justice by supporting truth-telling and accountability processes for large scale, systemic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

*We acknowledge the generous support of the Maple-Brown Family Foundation, the Clayton Utz Foundation, Herbert Smith Freehills, Maurice Blackburn, Harbour Litigation Funding and Lander & Rogers for Towards Truth.*



## Improving transparency and accountability

A key aspect of our work has been to call on the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) to make public the details of appeal cases it settles with scheme participants at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, to promote transparency and accountability in its decision-making. The latest figures published by the NDIA show that approximately 97% of cases that are appealed are resolved without hearing.

In many of these cases, the appeals are resolved through private settlements, with no information published as to what supports the participant requested, what the NDIA was prepared to provide, and what was ultimately approved after often lengthy review and appeals process. This makes it difficult for participants to understand how the NDIA makes decisions, and to understand what they can expect to be funded.

PIAC advocated for the publication of this information, with our recommendation being adopted by the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the NDIS in its Interim Report on Planning in December 2019.

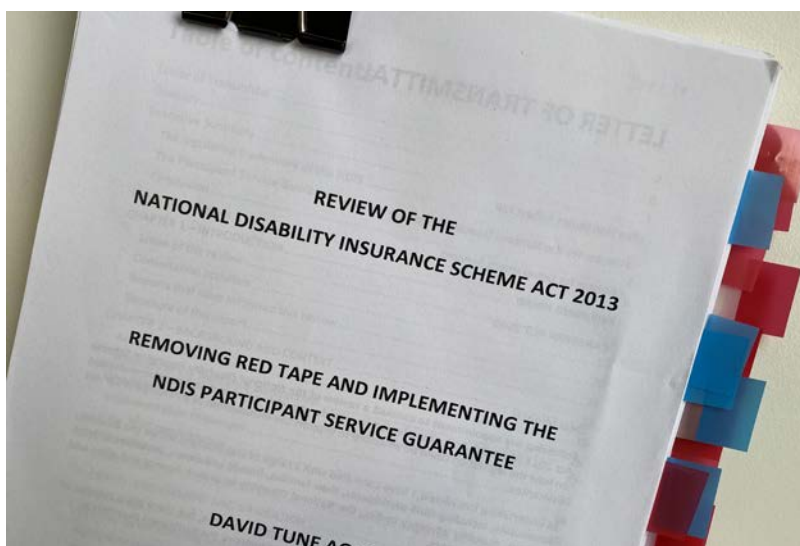
The Government did not act on the Committee's recommendation, and in July 2020, PIAC collaborated with over 25 disability organisations in an open letter requesting the Minister to reconsider the Government's position.

PIAC continues its work with the disability sector to advocate for this important reform, to bring greater transparency of decision-making.

***'Transparency and accountability are essential to promoting confidence in the system. We stand with the disability sector in calling on the Government to promote consistent decision making around NDIS settlement outcomes by publishing this information.'***

- PIAC Senior Solicitor, Chadwick Wong.

Photo: Halahmoon/ Flickr

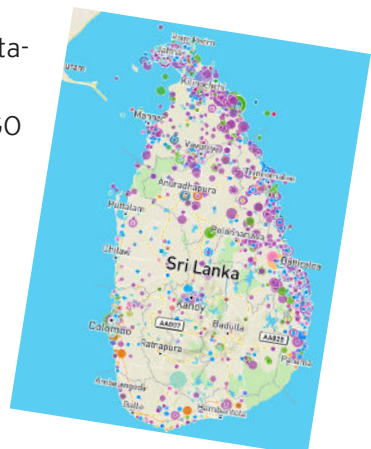


## Supporting transitional justice in Sri Lanka

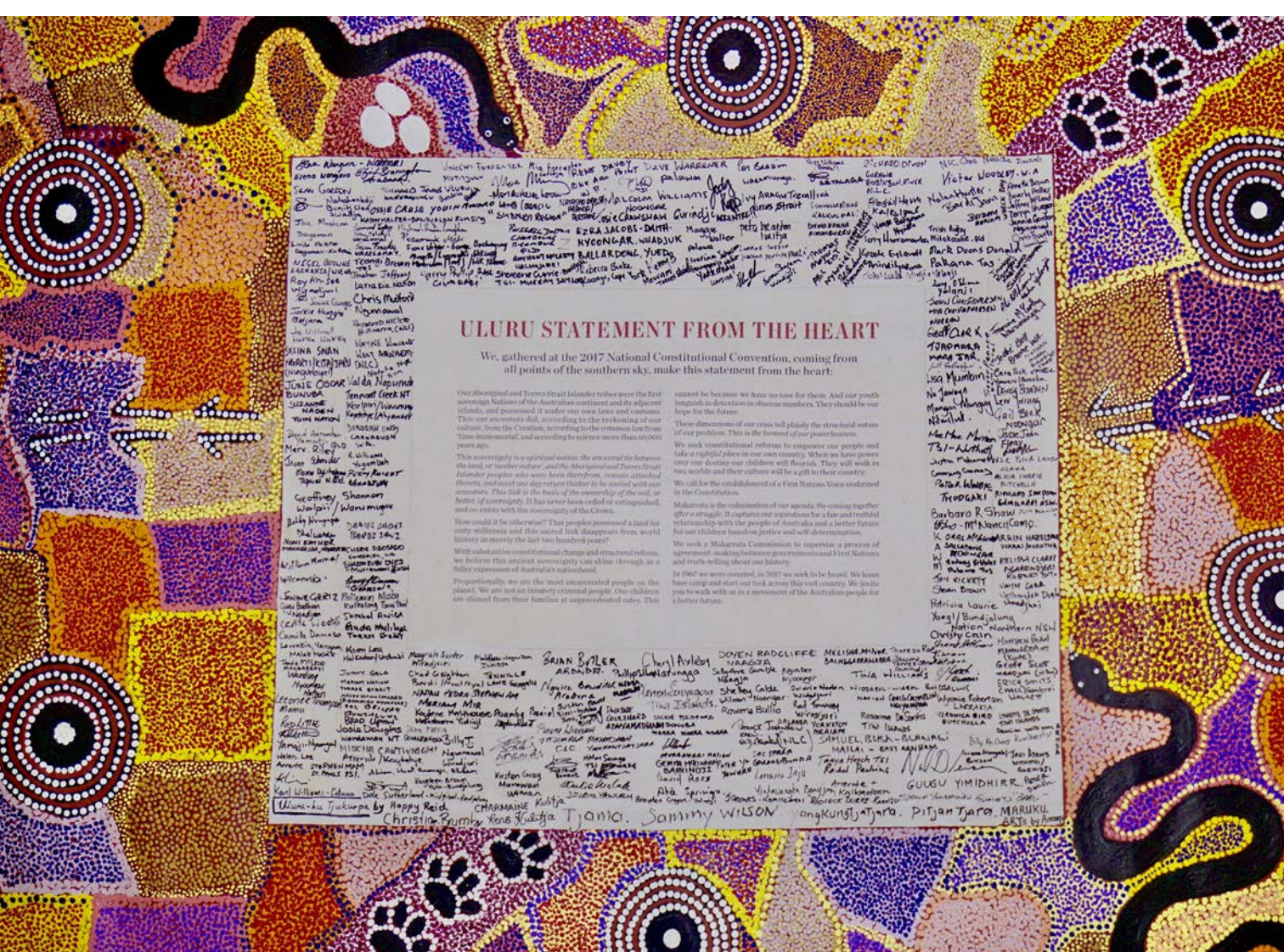
The Conflict Mapping and Archive Project (CMAP) collates and analyses open-source information on alleged violations of human rights and international humanitarian law during the Sri Lankan civil war.

This year the project has worked to make its data more widely accessible and contribute to truth and accountability processes. Following the May 2019 publication of its conflict mapping report (Tides of Violence: Mapping the Sri Lankan conflict from 1983 to 2009), the CMAP team has prepared its entire database for transformation into an interactive, accessible website. This involved reviewing over 5,000 incidents based on over 10,000 documents, ensuring that incident analysis was accurate, clear and respectful of the privacy of victims, and geo-locating each data-point in preparation for its representation on a web-map.

- The CMAP team is working with a Belgium-based NGO to design a website, which will provide future truth and accountability mechanisms with information on patterns of violence, investigative leads and gaps in reporting of human rights incidents.
- The team also continues to use the information we gather for further research and analysis to support truth and accountability.

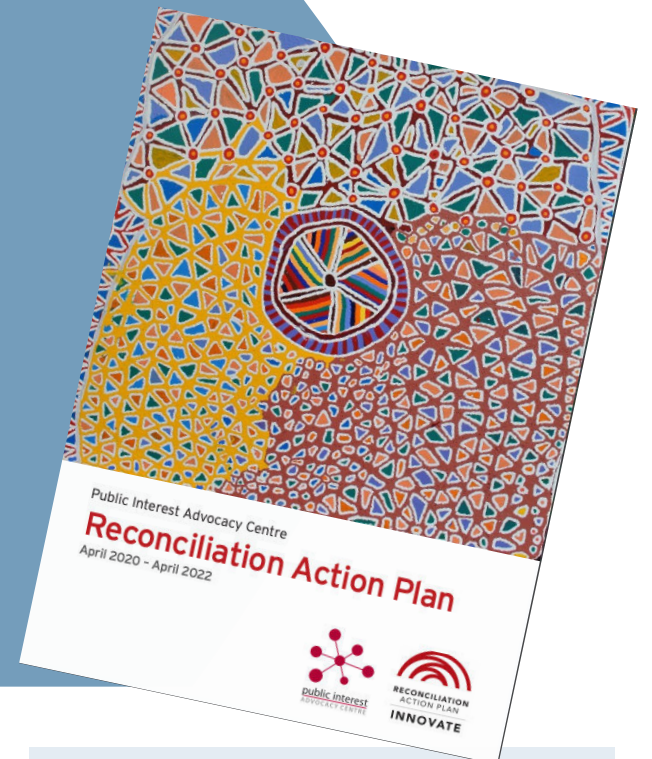






# Our commitment to reconciliation

In May we launched a new Reconciliation Plan (RAP) for the period 2020 - 2022. The new RAP builds on our previous RAP and introduces new initiatives that deepen our commitment to reconciliation across the organisation.



PIAC's first RAP was launched in July 2017 following consultation with key Aboriginal stakeholders. It brought many successes, including strengthening our relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partner organisations, increasing staff knowledge through regular RAP events and activities, and the creation of new identified positions.

New actions in the 2020-2022 plan include:

- formalising our commitment to the Uluru Statement from the Heart;
- developing principles of engagement to guide our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners;
- holding quarterly events to increase our understanding of, and celebrate, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and histories; and
- embedding engagement with the RAP across PIAC, including in position descriptions and performance reviews.

## Working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

As a non-Indigenous controlled organisation, PIAC recognises the need for clear principles to guide our work alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals, community groups, and organisations. This year we developed principles of engagement, to ensure our work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and partners is underpinned by the principles of respect and self-determination. In practice, together with our RAP, our principles of engagement support the ongoing process of building a culturally competent organisation and provide a framework for accountability.

## Uluru Statement from the Heart: Towards Truth

In September 2019, PIAC commenced a 12-month pilot project, Towards Truth, to support First Nations-led truth-telling as called for by the Uluru Statement from the Heart. The project is a partnership with the Indigenous Law Centre (ILC) at UNSW. It is part of our response to the Uluru Statement's invitation to walk together 'in a movement of the Australian people for a better future'.

The Uluru Statement calls for constitutional reforms to empower First Nations to take a rightful place in their own country. These reforms include a constitutionally-enshrined First Nations Voice to Parliament and a 'Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history'.

Building on the expertise of our Truth and Accountability team, Towards Truth is developing a database to map legislation and government policies that have impacted upon First Nations' lives throughout Australian history.

The pilot project has benefitted from substantial pro bono legal support and the work of student interns. The Towards Truth team has analysed original government documents, scholarly materials and commentary, providing a rich and unique resource for truth-telling. Our vision is an accessible database that will empower truth-telling by First Nations people and communities and provide an invaluable resource for non-Indigenous people seeking to better understand Australia's history.



This year all staff had the opportunity to participate in cultural awareness training focussed on analysing resources for cultural bias, presented by Dr Lynette Riley. The RAP committee also organised zoom discussions on the book Growing Up Aboriginal In Australia, edited by Anita Heiss, and the highly acclaimed documentary In My Blood it Runs.



► Board

Rebecca Gilsenan, Chair

Rebecca Gilsenan is a Principal Lawyer at Maurice Blackburn. She has extensive experience in running complex and novel litigation, including class actions in the areas of price fixing, failed investment schemes, product liability and securities. She has also run a number of ground-breaking public interest cases in relation to gene patents and refugee rights.



Sally Aurisch

Appointed May 2020.  
Sally is the General Manager of Projects and Engagement for Blind Citizens Australia. She has extensive policy expertise, gained through roles with Ability Options and Break Thru People Solutions. Sally also brings lived experience of disability, namely a vision impairment, to PIAC's Board.



Eileen Baldry, Deputy Chair

Professor Baldry is one of Australia's leading academics in the field of criminology. In 2017 she was appointed Deputy Vice-Chancellor Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, at University of NSW. Eileen regularly chairs government committees and working groups, and appears as a witness in commission and government inquiries in relation to social justice issues.



Bob Debus AM

Bob Debus served as a member of NSW Parliament and Federal Parliament for over 22 years. Before becoming a parliamentarian, Bob worked as a solicitor, editor and journalist.



Ian Farmer

Ian has over 30 years experience as a practising accountant and advisor, including 20 years as a Partner with PwC. Ian is Chairman of Lifeline Northern Beaches, where he is a telephone crisis supporter, Chairman of the Sydney Drug Education and Counselling Centre and a Director of the Community Restorative Centre.



Directors who stepped down during the year:

Damian Griffis, October 2019  
Sarah Ferguson, November 2019  
Ralph Pliner, November 2019  
Avani Dias, February 2020  
Juliana Warner, August 2020

Julie Foreman

Julie is the former Executive Officer of the Tenants' Union of NSW and has worked in the areas of human rights, community education and community management for over 25 years.



Penny Gerstle

Appointed May 2020  
Penny has advocated for asylum seekers and refugees for 25 years, holding positions at the Refugee Advice and Casework Service, and Australia for UNHCR. Penny is a Director of Participate Australia, and chairs the Aminata Maternal Foundation and the Sydney Committee for Human Rights Watch.



Peta Macgillivray

Appointed May 2020  
Peta is a Kalkadoon and South Sea Islander lawyer and criminology researcher and is currently the Youth Justice lead for Yuwaya Ngarra-li, a community-led partnership between the Dharriwaa Elders Group and UNSW. Peta is also a Director for the Community Restorative Centre, and the ALS NSW/ACT.



Kate Morgan SC

Appointed November 2019  
Kate Morgan is a leading Sydney barrister who appears throughout numerous jurisdictions (civil and criminal) with a focus on regulatory matters. Her practice includes regulatory investigations and litigation, corporate and commercial litigation, class actions and general appellate matters.



John Walker

John Walker is a leader in the global litigation funding market. He is the Managing Director of Investor Claim Partner Pty Ltd and ICP Capital Pty Ltd. John has worked in litigation funding for more than twenty years after working in accounting and economics and practicing as a commercial litigator in Sydney.



► Staff

Noah Bedford	Research Assistant, Towards Truth
Thea Bray	Policy Officer, EWCAP
Thomas Chailloux	Policy Officer
Michelle Cohen	Principal Solicitor
Roslyn Cook	Managing Solicitor, HPLS
Anna Dawson	Senior Solicitor, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Justice
Kishaya Delaney	Research Assistant, Towards Truth
Gudrun Dewey	Senior Solicitor, ASHRP
Miyuru Ediriweera	Principal Policy Officer, EWCAP
Mary Flanagan	Senior Legal Officer, Truth and Accountability
Daniela Gavshon	Program Director, Truth and Accountability
Erol Gorur	Paralegal, Truth and Accountability
Brooke Greenwood	Senior Solicitor, ICPP
Madeleine Humphreys	Project Officer, StreetCare
Jonathon Hunyor	Chief Executive Officer
Nadeshda Jayakody	Legal Officer, Transitional Justice
Julie Kuk	Legal Secretary
Alastair Lawrie	Senior Policy Officer
Jane Leibowitz	Senior Solicitor, ASHRP
Ruby Lew	Paralegal, Truth and Accountability

Anna Livsey	Policy & Communications Officer, EWCAP
Laura Lombardo	Principal Solicitor
Lena Lowe	Administrator, Training and Publications
Douglas McCloskey	Policy Officer, EWCAP
Craig Memery	Program Director, EWCAP
Deirdre Moor	Deputy CEO
Timothy Ngui	Senior Solicitor, HPLS
Jason O'Neill	Research Assistant, Towards Truth
Camilla Pandolfini	Principal Solicitor
Scott Parker	Operations Manager
Gemma Pearce	Media and Communications Manager
Melissa Pinzuti	Legal Secretary
Jeremy Rea	Solicitor Advocate, HPLS
Emily Rice	Legal Officer, Truth and Accountability
Sarah Schwartz	Solicitor, ASHRP
Ann Sloan	Relationships and Events Coordinator
Verity Smith	Solicitor, Strategic Litigation
Sally Spence	Office Coordinator
Daniela Taylor	HPLS Administrator
Ellen Tilbury	Senior Solicitor
Erin Turner Manners	Solicitor, Strategic Litigation
Chadwick Wong	Senior Solicitor, Strategic Litigation

Secondees

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Emma Bastable	Australian Government Solicitor
Caroline De Paoli	Clayton Utz
Sarah Feyen	MinterEllison
Luke Joseph	Sparke Helmore
Danielle La Malfa	Clayton Utz
Mara Lejins	MinterEllison
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Jade Tyrrell	Johnson Winter & Slattery
Joshua Wilde	MinterEllison

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Megan Bingham
Aidan Hammerschmid
Sylvie Houston
Filip Manganaro
Emily McGeorge

Pooja Saini	StreetCare Members
Lily Whiting	AJ

Volunteers

Elsie Cheung
Emmaline Clark
Siobhan Deacon
Justin Handisurya
Leisa Hayward
Jonathon Klug
Naoko Lambert
Alexander Macintyre
Rachel Mannion
Nicholas Rice
Ann Wen
Ryan Whittard
Alan Zheng

Amir
Carlos
Carol
Damo
Dave
Dougie
Megan
Rebecca
Talie





# Thank you

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre gratefully acknowledges our partners, sponsors and donors who share our passion for achieving social justice and protecting human rights.

Photos: Keith Saunders

## ► Thank you

Core funding for PIAC’s work is provided by the Public Purpose Fund NSW, NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (Energy and Water Consumers’ Advocacy Program), Community Legal Services Program funded jointly by the NSW and Commonwealth governments (Homeless Persons’ Legal Service) and the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (StreetCare)

We thank the following organisations and individuals who also make our work possible.

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The Public Interest Advocacy Centre gratefully acknowledges our PIAC Partners for making an essential contribution to PIAC’s sustainability and strength through leadership and regular giving. In addition to those listed below, we also acknowledge PIAC’s supporters who wish to remain anonymous.

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Friend

- Blake Ayshford

In-kind Support

Thank you to our many friends and family who have provided in-kind support, especially towards the 2020 Social Justice Dinner and other events throughout the year. PIAC is incredibly grateful for your generosity.

We especially thank Sydney Grammar School for hosting our annual public forum, and The Honourable Justice David Hammerschlag for assigning the royalties from *Hammerschlag's Commercial Court Handbook* to PIAC’s Homeless Persons’ Legal Service.

To discuss making a donation towards PIAC’s work please contact Ann Sloan, Relationships & Events Coordinator on (02) 8898 6523 or [asloan@piac.asn.au](mailto:asloan@piac.asn.au).

<https://www.piac.asn.au/donate/>

► Thank you

PIAC is driven by partnerships and a commitment to strengthening the community. The passion for social justice shared by our pro bono partners, barristers and community partners is vital to PIAC’s success and we acknowledge your generous support.

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- Brotherhood of St. Laurence
- Clothier Anderson
- Combined Pensioners and Superannuants’ Association NSW
- Consumer Action Law Centre
- Edward Eagar Lodge
- Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW
- Equality Australia
- Ethnic Communities Council of NSW
- Financial Counsellors Association of NSW
- Hepatitis Australia
- Human Rights Law Centre
- Immigration detention advocates across the country
- Independent Doctors Network
- Jenny's Place - Newcastle
- Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law, UNSW
- Legal Aid NSW
- Matthew Talbot Hostel
- Mental Health Australia
- Deb Michaels
- Mission Australia Centre
- National Justice Project
- Newtown Mission
- NSW Council of Social Service
- Parramatta Mission
- People with Disability Australia
- Physical Disability Council of NSW
- Ann Porcino
- Queensland Council of Social Service
- Refugee Advice and Casework Service
- Refugee Council of Australia
- Refugee Legal
- Professor Simon Rice, University of Sydney
- Penny Ryan
- Salvation Army
- Salvation Army Raymond Terrace Hope Centre
- SNAICC
- Soul Café - Newcastle
- St. Vincent de Paul Society of NSW
- Sydney Alliance
- Tenants Union of NSW
- The Australia Institute
- The Haymarket Centre
- The Jumbunna Institute
- The Kirby Institute, UNSW
- The Shed

- The Station
- Total Environment Centre
- UTS Law School
- Vincentian House
- Wayside Chapel
- Wayside Chapel Mob Lunch
- Wayside Chapel Norman Andrew House
- Wurringa Baiya
- Women's Legal Service NSW
- Woolloomooloo integrated Services Hub (WISH)

CMAP Project Advisory Group

- John Ralston
- Brenda Hollis
- Alexa Koenig
- Alexander Mayer-Rieckh
- Peter McCloskey

PIAC Fundraising Committee

- Wendy Brooks
- Penny Gerstle
- Jane Marquard
- Ralph Pliner
- John Walker (Chair)



## ► Finances

The audited financial result for the 2019-20 financial year is a surplus of \$390,426, representing 7.6% of our annual income.

At 30 June 2020 we maintain healthy net assets and retained earnings of \$2,401,288.

We have continued to diversify our funding sources and increase the number of funding partners, seeing our income grow on 2018-19 by 24% to \$5,134,289. Strong growth in fundraising and the receipt of government stimulus income under the JobKeeper scheme were major factors in this.

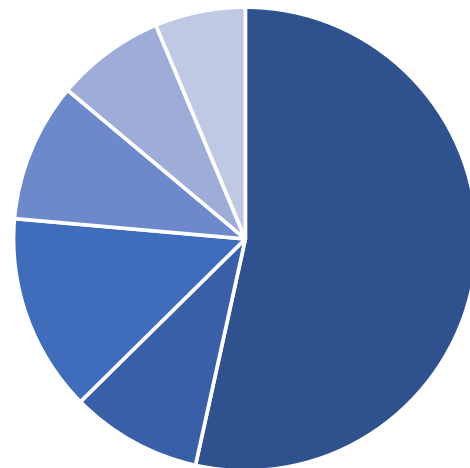
For the past three years PIAC has made a deficit – 2017: (137,782), 2018: (381,641), 2019: (80,140). The surplus this year will provide some buffer against what we expect to be some difficult years ahead as Australia continues to manage the impact of COVID-19 and the resulting recession.

We continue to receive a range of generous in-kind support from our pro bono partners including secondment of staff, volunteer engagement and donation of resources and facilities.

PIAC's full financial statements are available on request, and are also available from the Australian Charities Register, on the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission website, [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

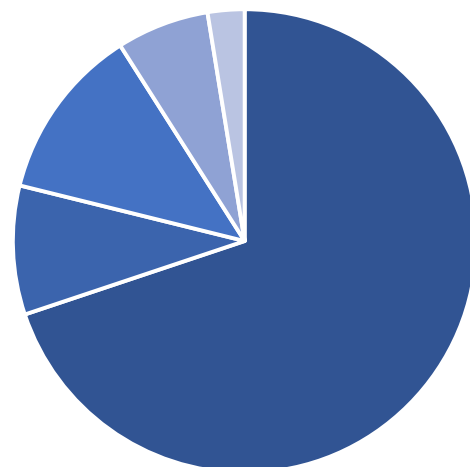
### Income

- Grants
- Philanthropic
- Donations and events
- Fee for service
- Other income
- JobKeeper



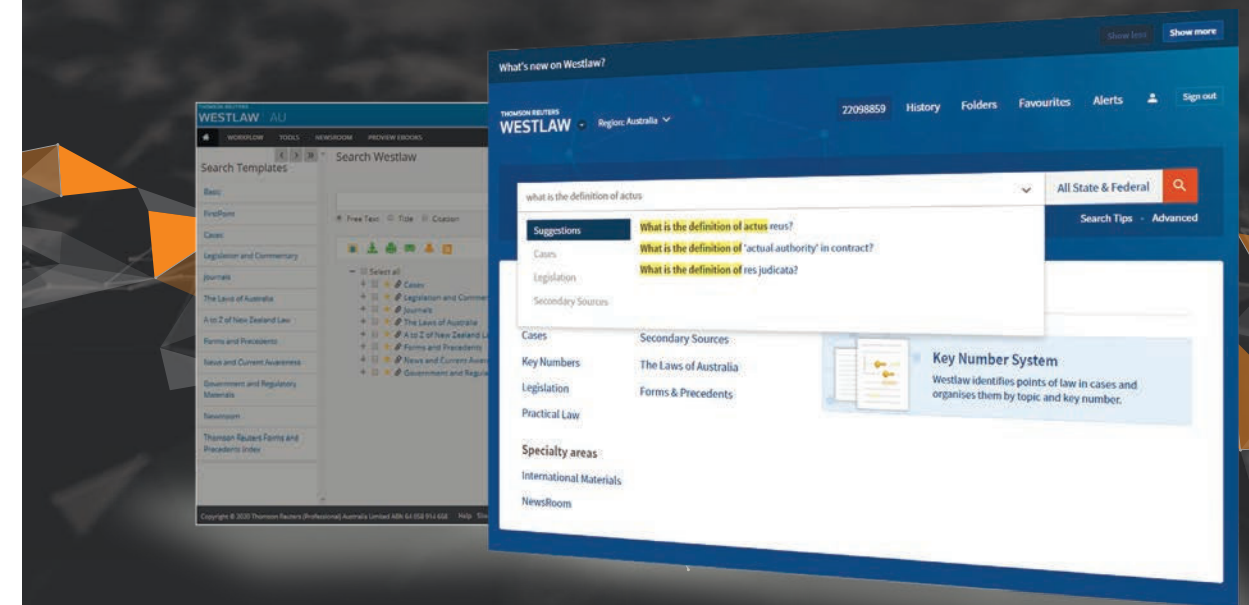
### Expenses

- Employee
- Project and casework
- Depreciation and amortisation expense
- Administration
- Other



# Time matters

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ISSN 1324-5376