



**Tackling injustice and  
inequality. Building a  
fairer, stronger society.**



# WHO WE ARE

**Established in 1982, PIAC is a leading social justice law and policy centre.**



**We work with people and communities who are marginalised and disadvantaged to change laws, policies and practices that cause injustice and inequality. Together we build a fairer, stronger society.**

Our team of lawyers, policy specialists, researchers and advocates bring a depth of experience from community and corporate law, government, media and civil society. We are known for our strategic legal and policy expertise, and for the skill, integrity and tenacity we bring to our work.

PIAC's impact can be seen in the changes we make for individuals and to systems. We understand that real change requires a commitment to working with others, often over many years. It demands deep listening, clear strategic thinking and responsiveness to opportunities as they arise.

PIAC has a special commitment to justice for First Nations people. We are a strong supporter of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for Voice, Treaty and Truth. Our commitment to reconciliation includes employment pathways: in 2022, eight Aboriginal people are working with PIAC, out of a total of approximately 45 staff.

# HOW WE MAKE CHANGE

PIAC tackles injustice and inequality by:



Our tools include running test cases and strategic casework; legal advice and representation; policy development and public advocacy, including engagement through the media.

# OUR STRENGTH IS IN OUR PARTNERSHIPS

**PIAC's success is driven by our relationships. We are a trusted and respected collaborator and partner.**

We are committed to empowering the community and amplifying the voices of people who are marginalised and excluded. This involves working closely with individuals, communities and NGOs to build their capacity for effective advocacy.

We also work with government, business and community partners to achieve change. We leverage the pro bono support of leading law firms and counsel to run public interest cases and get justice for our clients. Each year we harness more than 24,000 hours of pro bono legal help with an approximate nominal value of \$10 million.



# OUR WORK AND OUR IMPACT

## FIRST NATIONS JUSTICE

We work as an ally to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations to tackle injustice in the child protection system, raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14, and address discrimination in the policing of Aboriginal young people.

Our work has supported members of the Stolen Generations to seek justice; helped to establish a compensation scheme for Stolen Wages; secured compensation for Aboriginal young people mistreated by police; and established a monitoring and accountability framework for government to drive the implementation of the landmark Family is Culture report recommendations and reduce the numbers of Aboriginal children removed from their families.



## TRUTH-TELLING AND GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

We are working with UNSW's Indigenous Law Centre on a pioneering project that tells the story of how Australian laws have impacted on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people since 1788. 'Towards Truth' is a comprehensive database of legislation that will support truth-telling about our history and advance the vision of the Uluru Statement from the Heart.

## FAIR USE OF POLICE POWERS

We hold police accountable for misconduct and work to ensure police discretion and powers are used fairly on young people, people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people experiencing homelessness.

We secured justice for children unlawfully arrested because of defective police systems and records through a major class action;

were instrumental in establishing the NSW Government protocol for homeless people in public places; and have delivered changes to policing practices (the use of 'Suspect Targeting Management Plans') that have seen children as young as 10 experience harassment in the name of 'proactive policing'.

## EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION

PIAC is a leader in discrimination law reform with a record of success in major test cases that have delivered real systems change.

We have helped autistic children and their parents access inclusive education and changed the discriminatory policies and practices of schools; driven changes to banking technology, media and online shopping services to make them more accessible to Blind and Deaf people; and represented wheelchair users and people who are Blind in test cases to make bus, train and airline travel more accessible.

In the landmark Australian Iron and Steel case, PIAC helped over 700 women who had been unlawfully retrenched under a discriminatory policy; we have been a leading, principled voice on proposals for a Religious Discrimination Act; and have developed a blueprint for modernising the NSW Anti-Discrimination Act.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

We know climate change is already having a disproportionate effect on groups already experiencing disadvantage. We are working for a fast and fair transition to a zero-carbon energy system.

In 2020 we secured the first consumer-led rule change to deliver lower prices, help prevent blackouts and support the transition to renewables through a 'demand response' mechanism. We are influencing the design of the future energy system to support a rapid transition that does not pass costs to disadvantaged consumers. This includes developing regulatory and market models for Renewable Energy Zones; the integration of Distributed Energy Resources into the system; and supporting households to improve energy efficiency and transition to more affordable, efficient and renewable energy sources.

## A FAIRER NDIS

The National Disability Insurance Scheme promises choice and control for people with disability. We work with disability rights organisations to make sure it delivers on this promise. We provide strategic legal and policy support for systemic advocacy and seek to improve decision-making by the National Disability Insurance Agency through test cases and policy engagement.

Our work has exposed systemic failings by the National Disability Insurance Agency; led to changes in NDIA policy and practice; and helped prevent legislative change that would have disadvantaged participants and undermined the Scheme.







## ASYLUM SEEKERS' RIGHTS

PIAC fights for humane treatment of people in immigration detention, including securing access to adequate healthcare and challenging the excessive use of force and restraint (such as routine handcuffing).

Our work has delivered access to life-saving hepatitis C treatment for people in immigration detention and reduced the use of handcuffs during medical transport as part of an ongoing test case; and led to improved practices for managing the risk of disease outbreak in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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**PIAC IS HONOURED AND APPRECIATED  
 THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA AND EVEN BEYOND.  
 IT IS A JEWEL OF LEGAL SUPPORT.**”

The Hon Michael Kirby AC CMG

## REDUCING HOMELESSNESS

Our Homeless Persons' Legal Service prevents homelessness by helping people avoid eviction and solve legal problems that keep people out of stable housing. We provide specialist legal services for people experiencing homelessness at 16 outreach clinics, staffed by over 550 pro bono lawyers.

Through StreetCare, we empower advocates with lived experience to speak up and influence meaningful change in homelessness and housing policy.



# JOIN US IN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

## PIAC's work shows that real change can happen.

Please join us. Your support will make it possible for us to sustain our work and respond to urgent and emerging issues, including:

- The need for specialist legal help for women facing homelessness
- Ensuring low-income households have access to affordable and sustainable energy and water
- Tackling systemic racism in our child protection system and reducing the numbers of Aboriginal children being removed from their families
- Supporting the disability sector to defend the NDIS and make it work better for people with disability
- Raising the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 to prevent children becoming entrenched in the criminal legal system.

To become part of PIAC's work to build a fairer, stronger society  
 visit [piac.asn.au/support-us](https://piac.asn.au/support-us)  
 or contact:

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