Annual Impact Report

2026

Peninsula Community Legal Centre



Acknowledgement of Country

Peninsula Community Legal Centre acknowledges the traditional owners of country, recognises their continuing connection to land, water, and community and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

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Chairperson's Message

2026 has been a year of focus, alignment, and purposeful change for Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

As an organisation, we commenced the implementation of our 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, setting a clear direction for how we will strengthen access to justice, deepen our community impact, and build a sustainable future. This work has challenged us to think beyond immediate service delivery and focus on creating the systems, partnerships, and capabilities needed to support our community into the future.

Throughout the year, demand for legal assistance remained constant. Many individuals and families across our region continued to face significant pressures arising from housing insecurity, financial hardship, family violence, and cost of living. Against this backdrop, PCLC continued to provide support, while adapting our approach to ensure we were reaching people earlier and responding more effectively to changing community needs.

A key focus of the year has been strengthening the foundations of our organisation. Guided by our Strategic Plan, we have worked to build community capability through prevention and education, deliver more connected and coordinated legal services, strengthen organisational sustainability, and increase our contribution to advocacy and systems reform. These priorities are helping position PCLC not only as a provider of legal services, but as an organisation that actively contributes to long-term social change.

Among the key milestones achieved during 2026 were:

- Strengthening the organisational foundations of PCLC through improvements to systems, workforce capability, governance, and long-term planning.
- Increasing our focus on prevention and early intervention through community legal education, outreach, and initiatives designed to build community capability.
- Enhancing the quality and coordination of legal services through stronger referral pathways and partnerships with key community stakeholders.
- Expanding opportunities to use client experiences and service data to inform advocacy and contribute to systemic reform.
- Continuing to adapt and innovate to ensure our services remain accessible, responsive, and centred on the needs of our community.

While strategic plans, projects, and performance measures are important, our true impact is reflected in the experiences of the people we serve. Every day, our staff and volunteers help individuals navigate challenging circumstances, understand their rights, and move forward with greater confidence and certainty. Our team's dedication continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of thousands of people across our community. On behalf of the Board, I would like to acknowledge and thank our Chief Executive Officer, Jackie Galloway, our skilled and passionate staff, volunteers, funding partners and community stakeholders. The professionalism, expertise, and compassion they bring to their work ensure that PCLC remains a respected and trusted organisation across the communities we serve.

Looking ahead, we are particularly excited about 2027, which will mark the 50th anniversary of Peninsula Community Legal Centre. This significant milestone provides an opportunity to celebrate five decades of service, advocacy, and community connection. It is a chance to honour the vision and commitment of those who have contributed to PCLC's history while recognising the countless staff, volunteers, Board members, supporters, and partners who have helped shape the organisation we are today.

As we approach this important anniversary, we do so with optimism and confidence. Our strategic direction is clear, our foundations are strong, and our commitment to a fair and just society remains unwavering. We look forward to celebrating our past, embracing new opportunities, and continuing to serve our community.

Matthew Bolle
Chairperson



Our Year

This Annual Report reflects a year of significant achievement, resilience and impact for Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC). Guided by our unwavering commitment to client-centred, rights-based practice, we expanded access to justice, advanced social justice and achieved better outcomes for the people and communities we are proud to serve.

Throughout the year, demand for our services remained relentless as rising living costs, unaffordable rents, limited housing supply and persistent family violence placed increasing pressure on individuals and families—particularly those already experiencing financial disadvantage, poor health or social isolation. These interconnected pressures frequently gave rise to multiple and increasingly complex legal problems, prompting more people to seek timely and accessible legal assistance from PCLC.

In response, we regularly reviewed our operational data and systems to ensure our limited resources were directed where they could have the greatest impact, with particular attention to casework and representation services. Despite these efforts, demand continues to exceed available capacity, and without increased funding, many community members will remain unable to access the legal help they need.

As this Annual Report demonstrates, the collective efforts of our staff and volunteers delivered impressive results across the region. During the year, PCLC provided **14,907 legal services** to **7,217 clients**, managed **2,461 cases** and delivered **a record 3,638 duty lawyer services**, demonstrating both the scale of community need and the commitment of our team to providing timely, accessible legal assistance.

Our community education, engagement and early-intervention work also achieved extensive reach. More than 14,000 people participated in over 70 community education, information and engagement activities across the region. In addition, 5,000 young people attended 34 performances of our youth theatre production, On the Ropes.

A key highlight of the year was PCLC's recognition as Frankston City Council's Community Group of the Year, acknowledging our longstanding contribution to the Frankston community where the Centre was founded.

Our commitment to continuous quality improvement was affirmed through PCLC's accreditation under the National Accreditation Scheme for Community Legal Centres.
We continued our reconciliation journey, strengthening our commitment to culturally safe and responsive services and deepening our understanding of how PCLC can contribute to reconciliation through our practice, partnerships and organisational culture.

PCLC deeply values the partnerships and collaborations that make our work possible. The support of our funders, pro bono contributors, partner agencies, community organisations and networks strengthens our collective impact and our ability to advance access to justice across the communities we serve.

As we reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, PCLC looks to the future with confidence and a steadfast commitment to advancing access to justice. At the heart of everything we have achieved are our extraordinary staff, whose passion, professionalism, resilience and compassion make a meaningful difference in the lives of our clients and communities every day. We extend our deepest appreciation to each member of the PCLC team for their exceptional contribution and unwavering commitment to our shared purpose.



Jackie Galloway
Chief Executive Officer

Service Delivery 2025-2026

14,907

total legal services

8,808
legal advices

3,638
duty lawyer

2,461
ongoing cases



7,217

total clients assisted

47%
experiencing family violence

79%
experiencing financial disadvantage

9%
experiencing or at risk of homelessness

28%
living with a disability or mental illness

27%
culturally or linguistically diverse

66% female

32% male

2% other gender

Client Comments



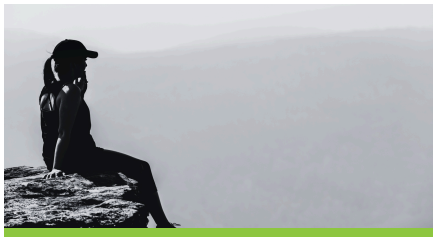
Hooray hooray hooray!
Thank you so much for your work and advice on these matters. I am delighted and very grateful for the outcome.



I can't thank you all enough for the incredible support along this humble journey, however there's no way we would of got that result without your dedication.



You have provided me with complete legal service... Furthermore, you restored my faith in human nature, decency and generosity which are rare these days... I am fortunate to have met you and you're really a great asset to PCLC.



I wanted to thank you for helping when everyone else told me i had no chance. You believed the injustice too and helped to keep believing in hope.



Your lawyer remained professional, compassionate, dedicated, and incredibly thorough. He truly listened to me and believed me as a victim and advocated for me genuinely and diligently. His dedication and persistence ultimately resulted in all of my matters being withdrawn today, which is something I will never forget. He has made an immense and lasting impact on both my life and wellbeing.



After exhausting my options and feeling completely hopeless, your lawyer provided clear guidance and made the entire process much easier and far less stressful. She was professional, supportive, and highly knowledgeable, and thanks to her help, I was able to achieve a positive outcome.



I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for the exceptional support you have provided in my family law matter. It truly feels like a miracle to have received your support. Your guidance has brought great relief and given hope for my child.



What a wild journey, thank you for all the support you offered me. You were more than just a lawyer, but became my backbone to deal with the other party. I could not have done it without the level of support, and I am grateful. Yay to freedom!



I am deeply grateful and incredibly moved by your support. Without your presence, they would have pressured me into withdrawing the case... I was hopeless before. You are the only person who has truly helped the family; my mom is also incredibly grateful to you.

Family Law

Family law remained PCLC's highest-demand practice area in 2025-2026, with cost-of-living pressures contributing to relationship breakdown and family violence. The team provided trusted advice and advocacy, helping clients facing complex and often life-changing circumstances, including family violence, parenting disputes and property settlements, helping them achieve safer outcomes and protect their rights, housing and financial security.

Throughout the year, changes to the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia's (FCFCOA) procedures increased administrative requirements, imposing tighter timeframes and limiting ability to accept new matters. Despite these challenges, our team remained responsive, achieving life-changing outcomes for clients. Our team also adopted the eBrief platform to improve efficiency and access to justice by enhancing collaboration with counsel and streamlining administration through integration with Actionstep.

PCLC continued to prioritise clients facing intersecting and high-risk issues, including family violence, mental health challenges, substance misuse and parental incapacity, often requiring intensive legal assistance, sustained engagement and ongoing guidance. Applying trauma-informed practice and the MARAM Framework, the team responded safely while managing growing demand for interpreter assisted services, with a 2025-2026 Court Practice Direction noting that these matters can take up to three times longer than those involving English-speaking clients.

Responding to complex needs, PCLC's Family Violence to Family Law Continuity Program (FLCP) provides intensive legal representation to victim-survivors involved in high-risk parenting matters, including the specialist Evatt List.

Through sustained, trauma-informed advocacy, FLCP lawyers secured protective outcomes, including orders safeguarding children, sole parental responsibility and international relocation approvals. They also helped clients establish safe and sustainable parenting arrangements through lawyer-assisted mediation, avoiding court where possible.

Alongside advocating for individuals, FLCP contributed to the development of family law jurisprudence. In Ursini & Flaherty [2025] FedCFamC2F 888, PCLC's submissions helped clarify the application of section 65DAAA of the Family Law Act, a key provision governing whether new parenting orders should be made. The matter resulted in no contact between the child and father, sole parental decision-making for the mother, and a 12-year family violence intervention order (FVIO) against the father. The decision has also been cited in the decision of Haskett & Delberg [2025] FedCFamC2F 1626.

The REACHher Program (Recover, Empower, Advocate, Collaborate, House) launched on 1 July 2025 with funding from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSBC) and is delivered in partnership with South-East Community Links (SECL) and Southside Justice. By integrating legal, financial and wraparound support, REACHher helps women affected by family violence secure fair settlements, housing stability and financial independence. In its first year, REACHher achieved **over $4.1 million** in property settlements, enabling women and their children achieve greater financial security.

Demand for PCLC's court-based family law services continued to rise, driven by cost-of-living pressures, reduced access to affordable legal representation and the urgent, increasingly complex matters. Through the Family Advocacy and Support Services (FASS), PCLC provided daily

legal assistance at the Dandenong Registry, delivering timely advice, advocacy and court support to vulnerable and unrepresented clients. Despite sustained demand, FASS lawyers secured critical outcomes that enhanced the safety of children and victim-survivors of family violence.

PCLC's EMERGE program provides dedicated legal assistance to women and children living in refuge. Working closely with EMERGE staff, PCLC delivers legal health checks, advice and casework to identify and address issues that might otherwise remain unresolved during a critical period of recovery and rebuilding. This coordinated, trauma-informed approach draws on PCLC's specialist services to provide integrated assistance, helping women and their children affected by family violence strengthen their safety, protect their rights and achieve greater housing, long term financial stability.

PCLC was delighted to celebrate Family Law team member Chris Gunasekera, who received the 2025 Law Institute of Victoria President's Award for Outstanding Service. This well-deserved honour recognises Chris's exceptional contribution to the legal profession and his enduring commitment to the legal assistance sector, including through his work with Victoria Legal Aid and PCLC. We warmly congratulate Chris on this achievement.



Trapped by intersecting jurisdictions, protected by holistic legal services

When Cassandra arrived in Australia with her young child, she expected to build a life with her partner and raise their family together. Instead, she found herself isolated, experiencing family violence, financial abuse, and immigration uncertainty in a country where she had no support network.

After the relationship ended, Cassandra's former partner withheld their child's passport, preventing her from returning home to access family support and rebuild her life. Family violence escalated and, due to language barriers, Cassandra was misidentified as the perpetrator, resulting in a family violence intervention order (FVIO) against her.

PCLC's Continuity Program provided intensive legal support, with interpreter assistance, successfully defending the FVIO, securing a final FVIO for Cassandra and her child, obtaining migration advice and securing legal aid funded counsel for parenting proceedings.

Through collaborative advocacy and representation across complex family law proceedings over a year, PCLC secured final parenting orders by consent that prioritised the safety and best interests of Cassandra and her child, enabling them to return home and rebuild their lives with family support.



From financial abuse to financial security

Ava, a single mother of two children, experienced years of family violence, including coercive and controlling behaviour, emotional abuse, and threats of physical and sexual violence. Following a family violence incident, a family violence intervention order (FVIO) was put in place for Ava and her children and excluded her former partner from the family home.

Although the relationship had ended, Ava remained financially tied to her former partner and was uncertain about her future. She wanted to secure ownership of the family home so she and her children could continue living safely and avoid further disruption. Despite attempts to negotiate a settlement, her former partner refused to engage in the process and rejected the authority of the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (FCFCOA).

As the deadline to commence property proceedings approached, PCLC's REACHHer program assisted Ava to initiate court proceedings to protect her legal entitlement. Her former partner failed to participate in the matter, and the case ultimately proceeded on an undefended basis. The Court made orders allowing Ava to retain the matrimonial home, valued at approximately $700,000, recognising her significant financial contributions, family violence, her ongoing role as primary carer for their children and her future needs. The outcome reflected a 90% share of their asset pool in Ava's favour and provided long-term housing security for her family. Ava can now focus on building a safer and more hopeful future for herself and her children.

1,966
total clients assisted

2,466
legal advices

415
ongoing cases

632
duty lawyer services



Protecting a child through persistent advocacy

Debra sought assistance from PCLC following years of ongoing family violence, which was affecting their young child. Despite existing parenting orders, the father's non-compliance with the orders and his refusal to communicate, coupled with his continued breaches of a family violence intervention order (FVIO), created significant challenges for Debra and her child.

Over time, the child began displaying signs of distress, including heightened anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and reluctance to spend time with the father. Child Protection investigations ultimately found the father had caused psychological harm to the child.

PCLC provided ongoing legal representation, secured a litigation grant of legal aid, and successfully established significant change in circumstances warranting new parenting proceedings. Following negotiations, the matter resolved by consent, with orders granting Debra sole parental decision-making responsibility and allowing the child to maintain contact with their father if they wished, with Debra's support.

Through specialist advocacy, PCLC secured greater safety, stability and certainty for Debra and her child.

Family Violence

The Family Violence team continued to advance PCLC's commitment to improving access to justice. Despite rising demand and increasingly complex client needs, the team delivered high quality, trauma-informed legal services that prioritised safety, empowerment and equitable access to justice.

Early intervention achieved significant protective outcomes, including long-term and indefinite intervention orders for victim-survivors and their children. Recognising that legal issues rarely occur in isolation, PCLC strengthened referral pathways to support coordinated and sustainable outcomes.

Demand for the Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service remained exceptionally strong, with referrals from the Specialist Family Violence Courts at Moorabbin and Frankston again exceeding service targets. In this complex and high-risk environment, the team employed the MARAM framework to provide timely advice, representation and referrals to victim-survivors.

Sustained demand continued to place significant pressure on capacity. Nevertheless, duty lawyers, supported by Practical Legal Training (PLT) students from Leo Cussen Centre for Law and The College of Law, undergraduate students from Deakin University, Victoria University and Australian Catholic University, and a secondee from Russell Kennedy, ensured uninterrupted legal assistance. Additional resourcing would strengthen service continuity, reduce delays and support the service's long-term sustainability.

PCLC managed an increasing number of high-risk matters involving coercive control through the misuse of legal processes. Some victims were required to respond to cross-applications, compounding their distress amid extensive family violence, repeated contraventions, and related criminal proceedings. PCLC's specialist service was critical in ensuring victims navigated proceedings safely and protected their rights.

Across PCLC's four offices and partnerships with The Orange Door, Emerge and Wellsprings for Women, the team delivered accessible, coordinated support to victims. Through urgent legal assistance at the point of need, secondary consultations and frontline worker education, the team reduced barriers to justice, empowered clients to navigate confidently and be heard. Recognition of PCLC's work at The Orange Door (TOD) has secured new funding to strengthen this critical partnership and expand legal education and capacity-building for The Orange Door staff over the next 12 months.

Beyond direct client services, the Family Violence team actively contributed to systemic reform, including a submission to the Second Action Plan (2027–2032) under the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children, calling for legal assistance organisations like PCLC to be recognised and sustainably funded as a core part of Australia's response, alongside prevention programs, family law reform, action on systems abuse and long-term recovery support for victims. PCLC also welcomed the Justice Legislation Amendment (Family Violence, Stalking and Other Matters) Bill 2025 (Women's Safety Package), including reforms addressing misidentification and systems abuse, recognising stalking and harm to pets as family violence, and strengthening protections for young people.



Specialist family violence services deliver life-changing outcome

Tyra and her two dependent children had experienced years of family violence. Although a full no-contact family violence intervention order (FVIO) with drug and alcohol conditions had previously been made, it expired after 12 months.

Following separation, Tyra's former partner continued to subject the family to harassment, intimidation, threats, and technology-facilitated abuse, leaving them fearful for their safety.

PCLC represented Tyra throughout the FVIO process, presenting evidence of the ongoing abuse and advocating for long-term protection. Recognising the significant and ongoing risk to Tyra and her family, the Court granted an indefinite full no-contact FVIO, providing lasting safety and certainty for Tyra and her children. Tyra felt validated, heard, and empowered during one of the most difficult periods of her life.

2,188
total clients assisted

1,596
legal advices

606
ongoing cases

2,866
duty lawyer services



Securing long-term safety and challenging systems abuse

Systems abuse is the deliberate misuse of legal and government processes to control, intimidate, and/or punish a current or former partner.

After experiencing ongoing family violence, including stalking, intimidation, and property damage, Thina sought PCLC's assistance to obtain protection through a family violence intervention order (FVIO). Despite substantial evidence, her former partner continued to contest the FVIO application and sought to use a cross-application against her as a further means of coercion and control.

PCLC successfully challenged the application as systems abuse, ensuring Thina could continue pursuing protection and access justice without further misuse of the legal system. PCLC provided ongoing legal representation to Thina and her two adult children through a complex and highly distressing court process. Through strong advocacy, the team ultimately secured indefinite full no-contact FVIOs for all three family members, while the perpetrator withdrew his cross-application. PCLC's specialist services play a vital role in addressing systems abuse, supporting high-risk clients, and delivering life-changing outcomes.

Civil Law

2025-2026 was a year of growth and impact for PCLC's Civil Law team. Through expanded outreach, early intervention and specialist services, including enhancements to the School Lawyer and Street Law programs and a new Older Persons Legal Clinic in Bentleigh, the team improved access to justice and delivered timely assistance across debt, divorce, fines, estate planning, deceased estates and Financial Assistance Scheme (FAS) matters. This work helped clients facing financial hardship, housing insecurity, language barriers and digital exclusion to resolve legal issues early and build greater stability and security.

The Civil Law team delivered significant financial and wellbeing outcomes, securing the waiver of **more than $406,000** in debt and helping victims of crime access **over $62,000** in financial assistance to support their recovery and rebuild their lives. Through early intervention, skilled advocacy and holistic assistance, the team resolved disputes before they escalated, reduced financial hardship and removed barriers to justice for people experiencing disadvantage.

PCLC was delighted to enhance our partnership with South-East Community Links (SECL) to bring financial counselling services to our Cranbourne office, strengthening our integrated service model and improving access to holistic support for clients experiencing financial hardship.

Building on the success of our School Lawyer Program at Cranbourne Secondary College, PCLC expanded its School Lawyer Program to McClelland College in Frankston, with the financial support of Frankston City Council. The program provides an onsite legal service offering confidential legal advice, casework and court representation to students. A key element of the program is preventative community legal education, with a structured workshop program on common issues for young people including family violence, fines, consent, cyberbullying, and police interactions.

Family violence remains a significant theme in school lawyer casework, highlighting the importance of early intervention. The program is already demonstrating strong outcomes, with 96% of participants reporting a better understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities and 96% able to identify where to access legal help. By engaging young people early, PCLC helps to create safer relationships and stronger pathways to justice.

With more than 11% of PCLC clients aged 65 or older, legal issues affecting older people remain a significant focus for PCLC. During the year, PCLC expanded its Older Persons Legal Clinic by establishing a new clinic in Bentleigh, providing free legal assistance with wills, decision-making, aged care, retirement villages, guardianship and elder abuse. Supported by three lawyers from our pro bono partner, Russell Kennedy, the expanded service strengthens PCLC's capacity to respond to financial elder abuse and related legal issues affecting older people across Glen Eira, Kingston and surrounding communities.

Helping community members navigate the complexities of Australia's immigration system remained a key focus of the Civil Law team's Migration Clinic. Supported by FCG Legal, the clinic provided advice and casework across a range of immigration matters, with a particular focus on assisting women experiencing family violence while on partner visas. The team also made a significant contribution to updating PCLC's Guide to Safety tool for workers who are supporting family violence clients.

1,676
total clients assisted

2,122
legal advices

276
ongoing cases

26
court appearances



Timely intervention prevented court proceedings and legal costs

Summer, a widower with a dependent child, relied solely on her Disability Support Pension and lived in public housing. After a motor vehicle accident, she was pursued by the other driver's insurer and debt recovery agency for more than $3,500 in damages. Despite her efforts to resolve the matter herself, Summer was unable to stop the recovery action and sought assistance from PCLC. Summer attended a PCLC's after-hours service at Bentleigh, and her matter was recommended to our day staff for ongoing assistance.

The lawyer involved investigated the matter, gathered evidence, and assessed liability. They disputed liability on Summer's behalf and managed to have the insurer ceased all recovery action against her. This outcome prevented significant financial stress for Summer and legal assistance enabled Summer to successfully challenge the unfair claim and protect her rights. Timely legal assistance can prevent matters from escalating into court proceedings, judgment debt enforcement, and unnecessary costs for all parties.

Criminal Law

PCLC's Criminal Law team expanded its impact in 2025–2026, representing clients in increasingly complex matters across the Frankston, Dandenong, Moorabbin and Melbourne Magistrates' Courts. Criminal law accounted for 12% of the Centre's legal work, with road traffic offences, theft, assault and contraventions of family violence intervention orders among the most common summary crimes and indictable crimes that were heard summarily.

Based on PCLC's observations, we have seen increased use of adjourned undertakings in the Magistrates' Court and youth diversion in the Children's Court. This reflects a growing focus on rehabilitation and early intervention, with youth diversion now accounting for more than half of all Children's Court outcomes.

PCLC welcomes the increasing focus on early intervention and rehabilitation, recognising these approaches as critical to reducing youth offending, improving community safety and supporting positive long-term outcomes for young people.

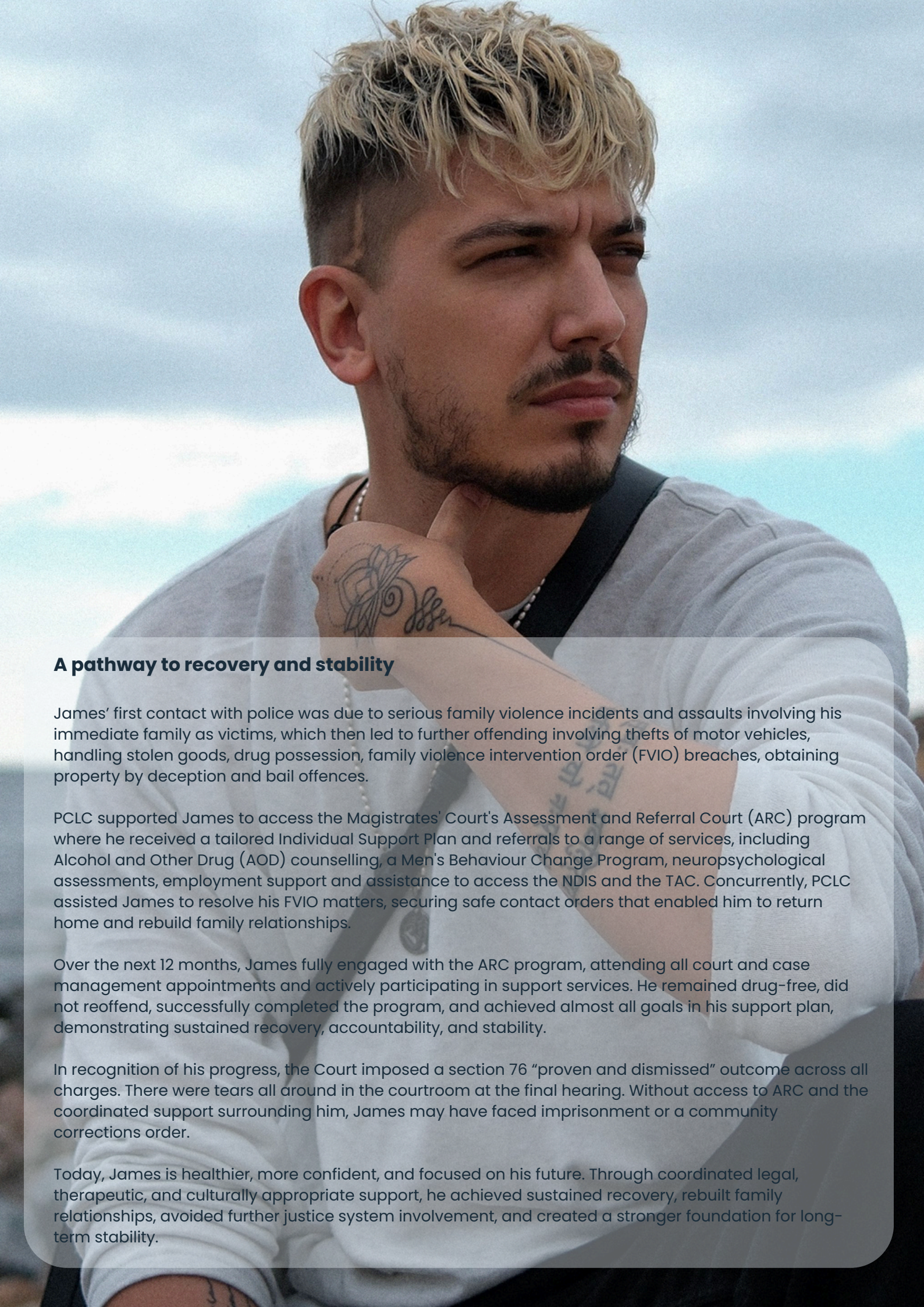
The team strengthened its advocacy through work in contested hearings, contest mentions, diversion applications, and complex sentencing matters, including cases involving vulnerable clients and intersecting legal and social issues. Through skilled advocacy, the team secured fairer outcomes and reduced the long-term impact of criminal charges for clients facing systemic barriers.

The team's regular Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) List appearances reflect our commitment to therapeutic jurisprudence for clients with mental illness, cognitive impairment, acquired brain injury, autism, neurological impairment, or other complex needs. The ARC List supports treatment, reduces harm, and helps divert people with mental impairment from prison where appropriate. Through Individual Support Plans and referrals to health, welfare, disability, and housing services, clients receive practical support that addresses the causes of offending and promotes rehabilitation.

PCLC strengthened its collaboration with Corrections Victoria to support clients on Community Correction Order (CCO) through compliance advice, contravention assistance, and reintegration planning. This work helped clients avoid imprisonment, maintain support networks, and engage in rehabilitation. In one matter, advocacy and evidence challenges led to a negotiated outcome and a CCO, allowing a client with caring responsibilities to remain in the community.

Through its work with children and young people, PCLC sees firsthand the effects of trauma, disadvantage and unmet support needs. We welcomed the increase in the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12, recognising that vulnerable children are better supported through early intervention and rehabilitation than criminal justice responses.

PCLC strongly opposed the recent "adult crime, adult time" sentencing reforms, which are inconsistent with evidence showing incarcerating children causes long-term harm. We continued to advocate for fair bail laws, therapeutic supports and community-based sentencing that reduce reoffending and improve outcomes for young and vulnerable clients. PCLC supported the Bail Saves Lives campaign, calling on the Government to prioritise evidence-based youth justice responses that strengthen community safety. We also advocated for the repeal of the anti-begging provision in section 49A of the Summary Offences Act 1966 (Vic) and greater investment in housing, early intervention and support services addressing the underlying causes of disadvantage, homelessness and justice system involvement.



A pathway to recovery and stability

James' first contact with police was due to serious family violence incidents and assaults involving his immediate family as victims, which then led to further offending involving thefts of motor vehicles, handling stolen goods, drug possession, family violence intervention order (FVIO) breaches, obtaining property by deception and bail offences.

PCLC supported James to access the Magistrates' Court's Assessment and Referral Court (ARC) program where he received a tailored Individual Support Plan and referrals to a range of services, including Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) counselling, a Men's Behaviour Change Program, neuropsychological assessments, employment support and assistance to access the NDIS and the TAC. Concurrently, PCLC assisted James to resolve his FVIO matters, securing safe contact orders that enabled him to return home and rebuild family relationships.

Over the next 12 months, James fully engaged with the ARC program, attending all court and case management appointments and actively participating in support services. He remained drug-free, did not reoffend, successfully completed the program, and achieved almost all goals in his support plan, demonstrating sustained recovery, accountability, and stability.

In recognition of his progress, the Court imposed a section 76 "proven and dismissed" outcome across all charges. There were tears all around in the courtroom at the final hearing. Without access to ARC and the coordinated support surrounding him, James may have faced imprisonment or a community corrections order.

Today, James is healthier, more confident, and focused on his future. Through coordinated legal, therapeutic, and culturally appropriate support, he achieved sustained recovery, rebuilt family relationships, avoided further justice system involvement, and created a stronger foundation for long-term stability.

294
total clients assisted

344
legal advices

58
ongoing cases

29
court appearances



Effective advocacy prevents misidentification of victim-survivor

Winter, a young client with no prior criminal history, was charged with assault related offences arising from an incident at the end of a violent relationship. The incident followed a week of physical and emotional abuse by her partner, including an assault the night before. During an argument while Winter was driving, her partner became verbally abusive, grabbed the steering wheel and threw several objects inside the vehicle. After Winter stopped the car, a physical altercation occurred as she attempted to remove her partner from the vehicle, sustaining injuries.

PCLC assessed the evidence, applied a MARAM risk assessment, and identified Winter as the primary victim of family violence. Following advocacy at a summary case conference and contested mention, our lawyer successfully established that Winter's actions were reasonable and necessary in self-defence. The prosecution ultimately accepted that Winter was the primary victim and withdrew all charges, and the Magistrate struck out the charges. Effective legal advocacy leads to prevention of misidentification and criminalisation of victim-survivors, and fair outcomes and the withdrawal of unjust charges.

Fines & Transport Law

Demand for PCLC's Fines Clinic continued to outstrip capacity as cost-of-living and housing pressures drove increasing numbers of people into fines debt. The clinic assisted some clients with liabilities exceeding $200,000, demonstrating the severe impact of accumulating penalties and enforcement fees. This issue increasingly affected not only traditionally disadvantaged cohorts, but also working individuals and families struggling to meet everyday expenses.

Through internal and enforcement reviews, payment arrangements, and Family Violence, Special Circumstances and other applications, the Fines Clinic secured **more than $1.56 million** in successful outcomes for clients. This advocacy reduced or resolved liabilities, prevented unnecessary enforcement sanctions and ensured clients' circumstances were considered fairly within the infringements system.

By working with infringement agencies and Fines Victoria, PCLC improved access to justice for people experiencing poverty, unemployment, family violence and other forms of disadvantage, helping them regain financial stability and move forward with greater security.

PCLC's Work and Development Permit (WDP) Project is also transforming how vulnerable clients access the WDP Scheme across our region. By fostering a broad network of health and community partners to become WDP sponsors, we are increasing opportunities for clients to address fines in a way that supports recovery, wellbeing, and long-term social and economic wellbeing. This year alone, PCLC assisted clients to resolve **more than $502,000** in fines through the WDP Scheme, reducing financial hardship and helping people avoid deeper engagement with the justice system.

Beyond casework, PCLC continued to be a strong voice for the community through our law reform and systemic advocacy work this period. PCLC was one of 12 CLCs that responded to the Victorian Government's consultation on the remaking of the fines regulations, opposing the proposed 72% increase in administrative fees. The Government's decision not to proceed with the increase was a positive outcome for people already facing significant hardships. It was particularly encouraging to see collective advocacy across the community legal sector contribute to a result that will help protect Victorians from further financial burden.

Transforming lives through specialist fines advocacy

Nola came to PCLC after receiving a "seven-day notice" from the Sheriff's Office relating to more than $50,000 in fines debt. Her multiple and significant health conditions affected her capacity to assess risk and consequences, and to understand her fines. Living with those conditions and relying solely on a Disability Support Pension, Nola faced significant barriers to managing her legal obligations.

PCLC provided urgent legal assistance, gathering evidence and lodging an enforcement review application. Through skilled advocacy, we established that Nola's circumstances met the criteria for special circumstances. All fines were withdrawn, eliminating more than $50,000 in debt. This life-changing outcome relieved significant financial pressure, prevented further enforcement action, and allowed Nola to focus on her health, wellbeing and recovery.

736
total clients assisted

901
legal advices

231
ongoing cases

25
court appearances



Disentangling complexity to achieve a life-changing outcome

Delta was experiencing multiple and intersecting forms of disadvantage and challenges. When she sought assistance from PCLC, she received a seven-day notice from the Sheriff's Office relating to unpaid infringements and court fines. Navigating the legal system independently was overwhelming for her. Years of accumulated paperwork, combined with the impacts of her disabilities, made it difficult for Delta to explain and present her case effectively.

Recognising these barriers, PCLC worked closely with Delta to organise and review her documents, obtain supporting evidence from her housing worker, and gather records relating to her experiences of family violence. Through careful preparation and advocacy, PCLC were able to build a clear picture of Delta's circumstances and present compelling evidence to the court. At the hearing, PCLC successfully argued that Delta's fines should be discharged. The court agreed, eliminating Delta's entire fines debt over $14,000. What had begun as the threat of escalating enforcement action ended with a life-changing outcome.

Housing

Demand for PCLC's Tenancy Assistance & Advocacy Program (TAAP), funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV), remained high as renters across Melbourne's south-east faced escalating housing insecurity. With rental vacancy rates at a record low of 1.3%, the risk of tenancy breakdown and homelessness increased. TAAP provided early legal advice and advocacy, helping renters understand their rights and sustain their housing.

TAAP reduced barriers to justice through outreach delivered at Launch Housing, the Pakenham Living and Learning Centre, Westall Hub, and Casey North Community Information and Support Centre. Expanded partnerships and referral pathways across the Bayside and Southern regions enabled earlier intervention, helping renters protect their rights, sustain tenancies and improve housing stability.

PCLC's TAAP team refined its triage process to prioritise renters facing imminent housing loss, family violence, urgent repairs and other critical tenancy issues, providing intensive case management where needed. Support from Frankston City Council expanded TAAP's local reach, while pro bono assistance from Thomson Geer (now Thomsons) increased our capacity to assist renters. PCLC values these partnerships and looks forward to strengthening their impact in the years ahead.

PCLC welcomed the introduction of Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria (RDRV) as an alternative pathway for resolving tenancy disputes. However, renters continue to report delays, inconsistent communication, and uncertainty throughout the process. PCLC has contributed to RDRV roundtable discussions and is pursuing a formal referral pathway to improve timely access for renters.

Family violence remains a key driver of housing insecurity, with around 18% of TAAP clients reporting family violence. PCLC continues to advocate for improved responses to victims within the tenancy system while providing a trauma-informed, MARAM-aligned service. Through referrals to PCLC's specialist Family Violence team, we help renters access legal protection, enhance their safety, and maintain secure housing.

PCLC is grateful for its ongoing collaboration with key stakeholders, particularly VCAT, whose recognition of its Duty Advocate Services highlights its vital role in supporting renters. These partnerships are instrumental in improving access to justice, and we look forward to building on this work together.

PCLC actively engaged in law reforms and this year saw significant reforms to strengthen renters' rights in Victoria, including longer notice periods, portable bonds, a ban on rental bidding, stronger privacy protections, and higher minimum rental standards.

In early 2026, PCLC farewelled an experienced and dedicated Advocate and Co-Practice Manager Tenancy Program, Cathie Currie, after 26 years of outstanding service. Cathie made a lasting impact on our clients, colleagues, and the broader community. We thank Cathie for her remarkable contribution and wish her a happy and healthy retirement.





Securing housing stability during the loss of family and hardship

Mack and Max, two brothers in their fifties, faced homelessness after their parents, the named renters of their long-term home, passed away within months of each other. Mack experienced mental health challenges and Max lived with a disability, making it difficult for them to secure alternative accommodation.

Although they continued paying rent, the rental provider issued a notice to vacate and sought possession of the property. PCLC successfully represented the brothers at VCAT, arguing the notice was invalid because it had been issued in the names of their deceased parents. The Tribunal agreed and dismissed the rental provider's application.

PCLC then assisted Mack and Max to file a creation of tenancy application with VCAT. The matter was initially adjourned by VCAT. While awaiting the new hearing date, the rental provider filed an application for possession order for premises occupied without consent. PCLC continued to advocate on behalf of Mack and Max and secured a hearing on both matters together. VCAT ultimately found in favour of Mack and Max, ordering the creation of a new tenancy agreement in their names. As a result, Mack and Max were able to remain in their home and avoid homelessness during a time of significant grief and hardship.

1,005
total clients assisted

1,379
legal advices

421
ongoing cases

536
court appearances



Keeping a family safe at home

Amalfy, a mother of five, sought help from PCLC after separating from her partner due to significant family violence. Although her former partner had been removed from the family home by police following a serious family violence incident, he remained listed on the tenancy agreement and stopped contributing to the rent, leaving Amalfy at risk of eviction.

To access financial assistance for rental arrears, Amalfy needed the tenancy transferred into her sole name. When the rental provider through the real estate agent refused to assist, The Orange Door referred her to PCLC.

PCLC swiftly applied to VCAT under the family violence provisions of the Residential Tenancies Act and successfully represented Amalfy at VCAT, securing orders to terminate the existing tenancy and create a new agreement in her sole name. Despite ongoing delays and attempts by the agent to circumvent the orders, PCLC continued to advocate on Amalfy's behalf, including returning to VCAT when the agent sought to increase the rent contrary to the Tribunal's decision. PCLC's specialist tenancy assistance kept another family safe at home.

Rooming House Outreach

As housing pressures intensified, rooming houses remained an essential source of accommodation for many Victorians. PCLC's Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP) continued to provide frontline assistance to residents experiencing housing insecurity, social isolation and other forms of disadvantage. Recognition of the program's impact secured funding for a further two years, supporting the continuation of its outreach, advocacy and practical assistance.

Rooming houses have expanded rapidly across PCLC's catchment, ranging from converted residential properties and purpose-built, self-contained facilities to larger traditional models. They provide crisis, student and longer-term accommodation to a diverse community, within a complex regulatory and service environment that can be difficult to navigate. RHOP's relationship-based model enabled the team to build trust with residents who may not otherwise engage with traditional services. Through a consistent presence in rooming houses, the program identified residents needs early, reduced barriers to support and connected residents with appropriate legal, housing, health and community services.

During the year, RHOP visited 436 rooming houses and engaged with 362 residents. The program distributed 288 emergency relief vouchers and 105 health packs, helping residents meet immediate needs and maintain their wellbeing. Through outreach and warm referrals to PCLC's TAAP, residents received timely advice and support on issues including rent increases, notices to vacate, bond disputes, and tenancy rights. This integrated model ensured coordinated assistance for residents at risk of housing instability.

RHOP's engagement data demonstrates the diversity of rooming house residents. Employed residents represented the largest cohort (33%), reflecting the growing number of working Victorians unable to access affordable housing. Other residents relied on the Disability Support Pension (26%), JobSeeker (25%) or the Age Pension (16%). Many residents faced intersecting challenges, including chronic illness, mental ill-health, family violence, substance use and legal issues. In response, RHOP provided coordinated, trauma-informed support while advocating for more responsive housing and support systems.

PCLC participated in the Dandenong Rooming House Taskforce, an initiative of the Residential Tenancies Commissioner established to identify and address problematic rooming house operations in the City of Greater Dandenong. Bringing together regulators, local government and support agencies, including WAYSS and PCLC, the Taskforce found considerable evidence of non-compliance and identified clear opportunities to strengthen oversight and resident protections.

A key focus was understanding who lives in rooming houses, the supports available to residents and how these needs intersect with compliance concerns. PCLC and WAYSS conducted targeted visits to registered rooming houses across Greater Dandenong, connecting residents with legal assistance, housing pathways, health and aged care services, financial support, alcohol and other drug services, and mental health support. This multi-agency pilot responded to systemic issues including overcrowding, safety risks, unaffordable rents and barriers to essential services.

PCLC welcomed the Taskforce Report and thanks the Office of the Residential Tenancies Commissioner for leading this important work. Together, these efforts improved living conditions, strengthened accountability and connected residents with the support they needed. We will continue to advocate for greater transparency and accountability across the sector, including reforms requiring the Rooming House Register to disclose both property owners and proprietors. Clearer ownership and operating information would help residents, regulators and service providers address non-compliance more effectively.

From rough sleeping to stable housing

When Joe left employment to care for his partner Jac, the couple's financial circumstances deteriorated, leading to rental arrears and the loss of the home they had rented for six years. For the first time, they found themselves homeless, sleeping in their car and on a foreshore while trying to manage Jac's complex and deteriorating health needs. With no family support, limited income, and few housing options, the couple faced profound vulnerability. Jac's severe health conditions and mobility challenges made stable housing critical, yet increasingly difficult to secure. Their elderly dog, their only consistent source of emotional support, further constrained available accommodation options.

Over several weeks, RHOP led a coordinated response involving housing, homelessness and health services to address the couple's complex needs. Through intensive advocacy, practical support and cross-sector collaboration, the team secured emergency accommodation and ultimately a self-contained, pet-inclusive home. For Joe and Jac, this outcome ended a period of homelessness and housing insecurity, providing the stability needed to support Jac's health, preserve their vital companionship with their elderly dog, and begin rebuilding their future.

FY 2025-2026

362
total clients assisted

436
rooming house visits

288
vouchers supplied

105
health packs delivered



Street Law

During the year, PCLC's Street Law program strengthened its community partnerships and expanded visiting services to Hampton Park and Western Port, improving access to legal assistance for people experiencing isolation and disadvantage who may not otherwise seek help.

Building on this work, PCLC invested in a dedicated Street Law Van, enabling the Street Law program to deliver proactive assistance in trusted community settings. Early legal intervention helped resolve debt, tenancy and other legal issues before they escalated into crisis or court proceedings.

Over the year, the Street Law program visited 95 community venues and conducted 1,600 legal health checks, with 36% identifying a legal issue. The team also delivered workshops to community organisations and other trusted problem noticers, strengthening their ability to recognise legal issues and connect people with appropriate assistance.

SVA Consulting's final impact report on the Street Law program confirmed the program's significant contribution to improving access to justice for some of the community's most disadvantaged members. The Street Law Van has also become a trusted and recognisable presence among local community organisations.

Street Law's place-based, 'no wrong door' model reached people who may not have otherwise engaged with legal services and connected them with further assistance where required. Of clients surveyed, 60% reported that they were unlikely to have sought legal support without Street Law's assistance, while all respondents said they now know where to obtain help. Host agencies also observed greater awareness of free legal services and increased confidence among community members to engage with the justice system.

Fear of financial debt when calling an ambulance

Stephanie, an aged pensioner, was shocked to receive an ambulance bill for over $1,400 after a medical centre called Ambulance Victoria on her behalf. Living on a fixed income, she believed she would need to use her limited emergency savings to pay the debt.

During a visit to a community lunch through PCLC's Street Law Program, our team identified that Stephanie was entitled to ambulance cover as an aged pensioner and should not have been charged. They assisted her in contacting Ambulance Victoria, securing a waiver of the invoice, and updating her records to prevent future billing issues. The debt was waived in full, protecting Stephanie's limited savings and providing peace of mind.

PCLC's intervention removed a significant financial burden and ensured Stephanie could access emergency healthcare in the future without fear of unaffordable debt.


POURING
PURPOSE
Discount Pharmacy
pclc
Free Legal Services



On the Ropes theatre

This year, PCLC took its award-winning Youth Theatre Project into new territory with the premiere of *On the Ropes,* a live theatre production tackling coercive control, image-based harm and consent for secondary school audiences. Building on the legacy of *This Is Not Who I Want to Be* (2022–2024), Bronze Award winner at the 2024 Australian Crime and Violence Prevention Awards, *On the Ropes* is PCLC's most ambitious legal education initiative yet.

Delivered free of charge directly into schools, the production has already reached students across South East Metropolitan Melbourne and beyond, with 34 performances delivered to approximately 5,000 students this year alone, prioritising schools in lower socioeconomic communities where access to legal education is often hardest to come by.

A partnership built for the stage

On the Ropes was written by Dan Giovannoni and directed by Krystalla Pearce in partnership with Red Stitch Actors' Theatre, the Melbourne-based, actor-led ensemble company renowned for bold, contemporary Australian works. The partnership paired PCLC's legal education expertise with Red Stitch's artistic integrity, ensuring a production that is both powerful and authentic. Set in a home affected by family violence, the play follows two 16-year-olds navigating a coercive relationship, told through the framework of a lawyer piecing together what happened and giving students an accessible way into how the law responds to violence, image-based harm and consent. Each performance closes with a PCLC staff member connecting the play's themes directly to the legal support available, turning drama into a practical pathway to help.

Safety by design

Because of the sensitivity of its subject matter, *On the Ropes* was built under a dedicated Safety and Wellbeing Framework, developed in consultation with young people aged 14–18, survivor-consultants and professional subject matter experts including trauma specialists, educators and legal experts. Every stage of development from draft script, through rehearsal, to pilot delivery was reviewed, with clear content boundaries guiding the work throughout.

How young people responded

The response from students has been immediate and personal. Many described recognising their own experiences on stage: "*I went through the same violence in the family as in the play and I noticed what I should have done*." Others spoke to the production's authenticity, calling it "*refreshing*" and more relatable than a guest speaker. Teachers and wellbeing staff noticed the effect too. One secondary college staff member reported an increase in students coming forward to talk about controlling behaviour in their own relationships in the days following a performance. Sector professionals were equally moved: at the premiere, 99% of the legal, education and family violence professionals in attendance rated the production's overall quality as excellent or good.

Interim evaluation results

An interim evaluation, drawing on surveys from over 420 students across four school cohorts alongside staff and sector feedback, points to outcomes rarely seen at this scale. Over 95% of students reported a better understanding of the legal consequences of youth violence, consent in real-life situations and how family violence affects children. Nine in ten students could name a place or person to go to for legal help, and felt more confident about seeing a lawyer if they needed one.

Find out more about the Youth Theatre Project at www.pclc.org.au/youth-theatre







Community Legal Education, Engagement & Law Reform

PCLC is committed to community legal education (CLE) as a core part of its preventative and early-intervention approach to access to justice. By equipping community members and support workers with practical knowledge of legal rights, responsibilities and pathways to assistance, CLE helps them identify legal issues early, make informed decisions and seek support before problems escalate.

This commitment is reflected in PCLC's ongoing investment in accessible, innovative and community-led education. Through face-to-face and online sessions, assertive outreach, multicultural partnerships, school-based projects and collaboration with trusted organisations, we bring legal information to places where people live, learn and seek support, helping them identify and address legal issues early.

PCLC delivered targeted CLE on family law, family violence, tenancy, wills and powers of attorney, and migration law, equipping community members with knowledge, confidence and connection. Through presentations to groups such as Family Life's Brave Voices Victim-Survivor Group in Frankston, PCLC helped participants better navigate legal systems and access legal support.

PCLC partnered with Family Life and Victoria Legal Aid to deliver a series of family law sessions, providing community members with practical guidance on family law and related issues. Together, we addressed common legal concerns, shared expertise and helped participants better understand legal issues and support options. PCLC directly engaged with various community events such as South-East Community Links' Bring Your Bills Days, increasing legal literacy and improving pathways to legal support.

Recognising the growing legal needs of an ageing population, PCLC also delivered targeted elder law education on elder abuse, decision-making, aged care and estate planning. These sessions strengthened participants' understanding of their rights and options, supported informed planning and improved pathways to legal assistance.

This year, PCLC also presented at the National Community Legal Centres Conference, strengthening sector relationships, advancing collective advocacy efforts, and creating opportunities for future collaboration. We were particularly encouraged by the strong response to our *This Is Not Who I Want to Be* youth theatre project, which showcased the power of creative PCLC's innovative CLE to amplify young people's voices, raise awareness of issues affecting them, and inspire positive change.

Drawing on the lived experiences of our clients and communities, PCLC employs a broad range of advocacy strategies, including law reform submissions, government consultations, media engagements, roundtables, working groups and sector-wide campaigns, to challenge unjust laws, policies and practices. Through this work, we advocate for a more just and accessible system, amplifying the voices of those most affected by legal disadvantage and strengthening our impact through sector partnerships.

Community Legal Education, Engagement & Law Reform

Through community legal education, PCLC empowers people with the knowledge and confidence to understand their legal rights and navigate legal issues. Our law reform and advocacy work helps drive systemic change that improves fairness, access to justice, and outcomes for our community.









Activities

134

Community legal education sessions delivered

54

Law reform submissions and advocacy initiatives

Our People

Management Committee

Chairperson Matthew Bolle
Vice Chairperson Dr Lee Stubbs
Treasurer Professor Mohit Sidana
Secretary Samuel Ellemor
Members Jodie De Gregorio, Joel Silver
Anne Marie Cade

Executive Team

Chief Executive Officer Jackie Galloway
Director of Legal Services Sokha Um
Director of Business & Operations Sue Vincent

Leadership Team

Practice Managers
Family Law Chris Daniels & Saskia Rijfkogel
Family Violence Sousan Gholami
Civil & Crime William Betts
Tenancy Robert Braun & Cathie Currie
Coordinator Business & Operations Hellen Argiriou

Finance Mark Duque

Engagement, Systems, Projects & Communications

Alison Laird
Andrea Rivera
Faye Brookstein
Jackie Currie
Kay Taranto
Krissy Beckerleg
Mark Patton
Robyn Coughlin
Steven Dupon

Administration Team

Jasminka Kumbaric
Nina Mitris
Caitlin Ruka
Chloe De Gregorio
Liya Stana
Louise Grant
Melanie Jones
Melissa Liapis

Senior Lawyers

Ashleigh Walker
Chris Gunasekera
Daniel Hombsch
Kate Bell
Sandy Watkins
Theresa Lam
Yih-Laine Teen

Legal Team

Aaliya Ishaque
Andrea Weaich
Ash Galvin
Brendan Stackpole
Casey Hill
Claire Slink
Emily McAlister
Emily Mineo
Faaizah Esaq
Grant Williams
Jenny Hill
John Gibbens
John Woo
Kate O'Brien
Laura Di Felice
Michele Simpson
Mike Chaplin
Mona Gholami
Nathan Locke
Nic Xerri
Nina Zec
Samuel Fung
Sharon Matashu
Tanika Donald
Tanya Lakic
Teddy Polydor
Vanessa Saunders
Warren Wheeler
Zahraa Albadri

Paralegal Joanna Dirksz


President's Award for Outstanding Service 2025


Sokha
Peninsula Community Legal Centre


3199
beachpatrol
Frankston
WAYSWILL


Peninsula
Community
Legal Centre
NO TO VIOLENCE
NO TO SILENCE
VICTORIA
AGAINST
VIOLENCE


Peninsula
Community
Legal Centre




Peninsula
Community
Legal Centre

Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are the heart of Peninsula Community Legal Centre. Through their generosity, expertise and commitment, they help us provide vital support to people across our community. This year, we proudly celebrate the outstanding contributions of our award recipients and thank them for the lasting difference they make. Their dedication, compassion and willingness to give back strengthen our organisation and help ensure access to justice for those who need it most.

Kath Nielsen Memorial Award

Joel Silver

Long Service Award

Janet Power - 10 years

Probono Award

Russell Kennedy

Volunteer Excellence Awards

Kai Tritcher
Angela Williams
Jenny Hill













Volunteer Lawyers

Alexandra Petherick
Alice Land
Amelia Edwards
Angela Williams
Anish Rebello
Arosha Perera
Christopher Hill
Claire Finegan
Claire Williams
Danielle Fernandez
Desmond Maruziva
Despina Djumas
Edmund Kennedy
Faith Brack
Freda Mandikos
George Chabvonga
Georgia Bailey
Holly Walker
Ilana Kacev
Jack Noone
Jennifer Hill
Jessica Toomey
Joel Silver
John Corcoran
Jonathan Welcome
Karolina Wlodarczak
Katherine Awad
Kayla Borg
Louise Russell
Marcus Frajman
Maria Zambrano
Mary Nasser
Michael Denison
Michele Simpson
Monika Hermann
Neil Smith
Philip Drew
Sachini Carvalho
Sherene Ozyurek
Sue Ellison-Whyte
Thirumalai Selvi (Shelvi) Shanmugam
Trish Samson
Victoria-Ann Baranov
Villy Raki
Vimali Samaratunga
Vinu Kumar
Zoe Preston

Volunteer Paralegals

Adam Marshall
Advika Anand
Aleiah Campang
Alex Shaw
Alyssa Davies
Amelie Wallace
Chanttel Forbes
Christopher O'Neill
Ina Carillo
Janet Power
Justin Leung
Kai Titcher
Kate McInnes
Laura Stark
Lauren Kavanagh
Madeline Wicks
Maree Pulis
Michaela Walker
Nadeera Gunawardena
Naomi Kricheli
Natasha Mirvis
Nicholas Tsanaktsidis
Olivia Biviano
Prakriti Roy
Rachel Malley
Shalinika N Fernando

Practical Legal Trainees

Antonio Fernandez
Ashley Shanks
Isobel Rae
Laurice Madrid
Maddison Jude
Tanya Voulgaris

Field Placements

Aaron Johnson
Amber Inglis
Arman Gill
Azita Karimi
Brandi Vawser
Diana Kelly
Flynn Roelink
Karla Salas Marrou
Nadia Karaan
Oliver Gibson
Oliver Heavey



Community Relationships

580
stakeholder engagements

188
community partners

51
community/agency networks

16
working groups

Strong partnerships are fundamental to PCLC's understanding of community need and our ability to respond to the issues affecting our communities.

This year, we worked alongside more than 180 partner organisations across community services, health, housing, local government, education and an array of other sectors. Our relationship with each of these partners varies widely in purpose and scale. From strategic relationships and frontline collaboration to joint initiatives, advocacy and system reform, with many involving a combination of these elements, the number and complexity of these relationships reflect the depth and breadth of collaboration required to respond to the complex issues faced by our communities.

Our partnership approach is grounded in understanding local needs and a commitment to genuine collaboration. This year, we have strengthened this approach through the introduction of a dedicated Partnership and Development Manager role and a new Partner Management System, giving us greater visibility of our partnership network and a stronger foundation for understanding and managing these relationships. This will support more conscious and informed decisions about where and how we develop partnerships across sectors and geographic areas in response to identified need. By combining PCLC's legal expertise with partners' local knowledge, specialist skills and trusted community relationships, we can connect people with the right support, strengthen referral pathways and develop more coordinated responses to evolving needs. Our partnerships also enable us to deliver outreach and community legal education in places where people already live, work and access services, supporting earlier intervention and improved access to legal assistance.

While the breadth of PCLC's partnership network is significant and the individual outcomes achieved are and will always be at the heart of what we do, these relationships also provide important opportunities to share knowledge, identify emerging issues and build collective responses, strengthening PCLC's contribution to broader advocacy, reform and system change.

We are grateful to all the organisations and community groups who continue to work alongside us to improve access to justice and create lasting, positive change.

Communications

106%
Increased Facebook interactions

2,403
Youtube views

6
video campaigns launched

67%
increased active web users

413
Linkedin engagements

In 2025, PCLC launched a dedicated communications function to strengthen how we show up for our community, partners and stakeholders. The work is grounded in visibility, trust and connection: helping people understand who we are, what we do, and how to find the support they need.

This work has been guided by four connected priorities, known as the 4Ps:

- Make sure our presence is warmly felt in the community.
- Lift the profile of the centre, our staff and our leadership.
- Promote PCLC projects, programs and partnerships.
- Contribute meaningfully to the public conversation in our subject matter areas.

Together, these priorities have helped PCLC communicate in a more consistent, human-first way, strengthening our visibility and deepening our trusted role across Melbourne's South East.

Highlights from the year include:

- The #OneCall brand film, bringing PCLC staff and legal services to life.
- The launch of the Myth-buster series, helping unpack common legal misconceptions.
- The launch of the Law + Life community briefing and a refreshed Law Matters internal newsletter.
- A rebranded and more consistent social media presence across Facebook, X and YouTube.
- Media relations and coverage in local and statewide mastheads, including The Age and Bayside News.

Together, these initiatives are helping more people see, understand, and connect with PCLC's work. They have created clearer pathways into our services, lifted the voices and expertise of our team, and made our impact more visible to the communities we exist to support. As the communications function continues to grow, this work will remain central to how PCLC builds trust, shares knowledge and stays connected to the people at the heart of our service.

Financial Report

PCLC finished 2025-26 in a solid financial position. During the year, we managed almost $8 million in grant funding, with all grant obligations met and the required reporting to funders completed. We finished the year with a modest deficit of $89,880. This largely reflects the timing of grant funding across financial years, rather than an underlying shortfall in our funding position. PCLC also maintained good liquidity throughout the year and remained in a strong position to meet its financial obligations as they fell due.

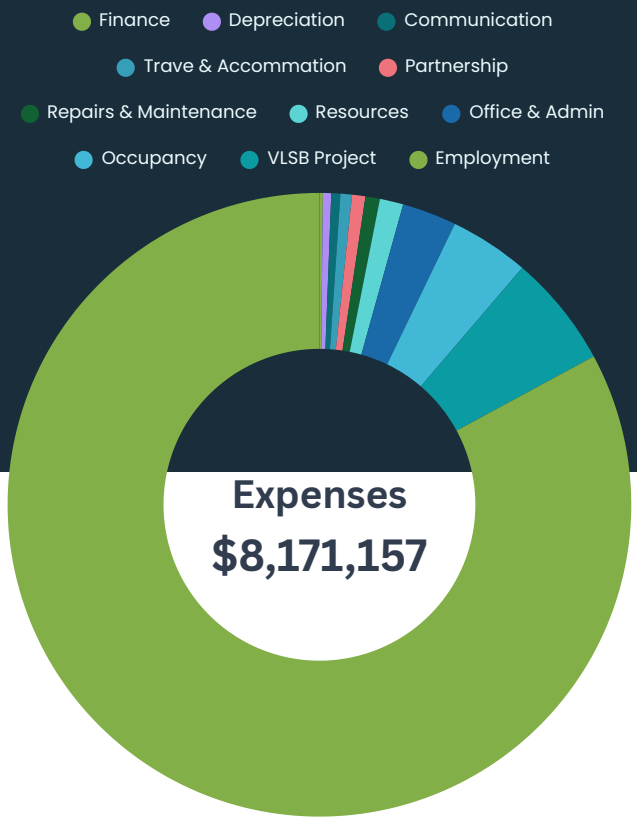
It is reassuring to see our major funding partners continuing or renewing their support as we move into the new financial year. Government and grant funding is central to PCLC's work, so that ongoing support matters. In my view, it also reflects the confidence our funders have in PCLC, both in the work we do and in the way we manage the funding they provide.

As Treasurer, I will continue to focus on maintaining that financial discipline and ensuring that PCLC remains in a solid position to support its work in the community.





Mohit Sidana
Treasurer



Thank You

We are deeply grateful to our dedicated and generous supporters, whose shared vision and commitment help PCLC improve access to justice and deliver meaningful support to vulnerable members of our community.

PCLC gratefully acknowledges the partners, funders, legal professionals, community organisations and staff whose generosity strengthened our services and extended our reach throughout the year.

Pro bono partners

Our pro bono partnership with Russell Kennedy Lawyers continues to strengthen PCLC's capacity to deliver community legal services. The firm supports PCLC through legal mentoring, professional development, contributions to the disbursement fund, assistance with the Older Persons Legal Clinics and a secondment to the Family Violence Duty Lawyer Service. We thank Emma Dunlevie, John Corcoran and the Russell Kennedy team for their valued support.

Through two secondments, our pro bono partnership with Thomson Geer Lawyers provided much-needed additional capacity to PCLC's tenancy team. We thank Bruce Crosthwaite and the Thomson Geer team for their valued support.

Legal community

Our legal community provides invaluable support to PCLC and our clients through pro bono services, substantially reduced-fee briefs, specialist mentoring, contributions to our volunteer program, and access to training and resources. This generosity strengthens the capability of our legal practice and helps us deliver timely, high-quality assistance to vulnerable members of our community.

Support services

PCLC's Rooming House and Street Law Outreach Programs were strengthened this year through collaborative visits, material aid and additional funding. This support enabled the programs to provide relief vouchers and healthcare packages to vulnerable community members affected by the cost-of-living crisis. We extend our appreciation to StreetSmart and Creswick Mills for their continued support of our health package program, and to our assertive outreach partners for generously sharing their time and resources. Together, these contributions help PCLC take its services directly to people who may otherwise face barriers to accessing assistance.

We also sincerely thank our staff, whose contributions through the staff giving program sustain PCLC's client welfare fund. The fund provides vital emergency relief to vulnerable community members and health packs to disadvantaged rooming house residents, translating staff generosity into immediate and practical assistance.

University and education partners

- Deakin University Melbourne (Burwood Campus) Internship Program
- Cranbourne Secondary College
- McClelland Secondary College
- Australian Catholic University
- Victoria University
- Leo Cussen Centre for Law

Funders - Government

- Australian Government Attorney-General's Department
- State Government Victoria, Department of Government Services
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Homes Victoria
- Glen Eira City Council
- City of Casey
- Frankston City Council
- City of Kingston
- Mornington Peninsula Shire

Legal Mentors/Counsel

- Dr Megan Blake, Svensons Barristers
- Gabriel Chipkin, Parnell's Barristers
- John Corcoran, Russell Kennedy Lawyers
- Daphne Foong, Svensons Barristers
- Sherene Ozyurek, FCG Legal
- Bonnie Renou, Svensons Barristers
- Joel Silver, Foleys List
- Marie Wilkening-LeBrun, Holmes List

Philanthropy Trusts and Project Partners

- EMERGE
- Southside Justice
- Southside Finance
- South East Community Links
- Tenants Victoria
- The William Angliss (Victoria) Charitable Trust
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Victorian Legal Services Board

Legal Firms

- FCG Legal
- Justic Crew Legal Services
- Maurice Blackburn
- MDL Law
- Southern Legal
- Universal Counsel
- Victoria Legal Aid
- Youth Law



Supporting our Community

Get involved

Donate

Support Peninsula Community Legal Centre by donating at www.pclc.org.au/donate

Volunteer

We gratefully utilise the commitment and skills of volunteers to extend and enhance our operations and service delivery.

Member

Help support your local community by becoming a member of Peninsula Community Legal Centre.

Apply at pclc.org.au/become-a-member

Practical Legal Traineeship

Our Practical Legal Traineeship (PLT) Program helps students to develop special skills required for the legal profession.

Our reach

Serving a community of more than 1.6 million people, PCLC works across Melbourne's South-East and Bayside region to provide accessible legal assistance to those who need it most. We recognise that distance, financial hardship and other barriers can make it difficult for people to seek help. Through our offices, outreach locations, community partnerships and flexible appointments options, we strive to connect people with legal support in ways that meet their needs.

4 branches
Frankston, Cranbourne, Bentleigh East & Rosebud

18 visiting locations
regular visits to community organisations

5 courts & tribunals
court representation and duty lawyer services

10 local government areas
Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program

6 local government areas
general program

1.6 million+
people live within PCLC's catchment area

Peninsula Community Legal Centre

441 Nepean Highway, Frankston Victoria 3199
e pclc@pclc.org.au t 03 9783 3600 f 03 9770 5200

Branches

751 Centre Road, Bentleigh East 3165
65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne East 3977
Suite 1, 16 Ninth Avenue, Rosebud 3939

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