



# The work and clients of CLSP CLCs in numbers

**During 2012/13, Community Legal Centres ('CLCs') funded through the Community Legal Services Program ('CLSP')<sup>1</sup> provided advice and casework assistance to more than<sup>2</sup> 202,703 clients.**

"Client" in the sentence above is any person who has received either an advice or a casework service in the 2012/13 financial year at the particular centre.

It is important to note that if a person visits the same CLC for multiple matters (e.g., for tenancy, consumer law and child support), the centre will record that person as one client, even though the person may have received several services possibly across several different areas of law. Accordingly, the figure for the total number of clients assisted is lower than the total number of services provided.

On the other hand, sometimes a CLC client may attend and receive a service at more than one centre in a year, for example, a family law service at a Women's Legal Service and social security advice from a Welfare Rights Centre. In these cases, which are less common, there will be some duplication in CLSIS, as the one person will have been recorded as a client at both CLCs.

**These CLCs provided these clients with a total of 249,310 advices in 2012/13. In total, 76,336 casework files were open for matters in 2012/13.**

The above figure includes new cases opened in 2012/13, and cases that were opened in previous years and are still running.

**In addition, these CLCs provided 171,337 individual instances of information, and made 118,218 referrals in 2012/13.**

CLCs record instances of information assistance and referrals that are provided as the sole service at that time to clients. These figure do not include the many examples of information and referral services provided to clients by CLC workers in the course of their providing legal advice and casework services to clients.

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<sup>1</sup> Only CLCs that receive funding under CLSP are required to collect data using the Community Legal Service Information System ('CLSIS') database, the program that generated this data.

<sup>2</sup> These figures are an underrepresentation of the total number of work activities performed and the total number of clients assisted, by all CLCs. Some CLCs are not funded under the CLSP and their services and client figures will not be represented here. Further, many CLCs that are funded through the CLSP, also receive funding from other funding programs or sources. That work does not have to be recorded in CLSIS – although it or some of it commonly is – and some of it is not. The client and services statistics of services provided with funding from sources other than the CLSP are in some cases recorded in other databases and are not included here.

**During 2012/13, CLCs also completed 3,955 community legal education ('CLE') projects, and 958 law reform and legal policy projects.**

The CLSIS database counts CLE and law reform projects only when the project file is completed and closed. Many CLE and law reform projects go over a lengthy period, so these figures are only a proportion of the total of these types of activities that would have been worked on in this year. Note too that CLSIS counts a CLE project as one, even when, for example, it comprises a series of legal education sessions delivered over several weeks if they are part of one organised program.

**The data reveals the following information<sup>3</sup> about the CLC clients assisted by CLSP-funded CLCs for matters in 2012/13:**

- **16.5% (25,296) were living in a sole parent family with dependent children**
- **18.4% (37,296) were not living in a family and instead are living as a boarder; living alone; or living in a shared house, hostel or boarding house**
- **5.8% (11,788) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander**
- **15.9% (32,240) reported having a disability**
- **57.8% (117,104) were female**
- **65.8% (133,417) reported having either a low<sup>4</sup> or no income**
- **43.1% (87,335) reported receiving a government pension, benefit or allowance (e.g, family payment, rent assistance, age pension)**
- **While the majority of these clients mainly spoke English at home (86.1% / 174,553), the other three main languages were: Arabic (1.1% / 2,189), Mandarin (0.9% / 1,715) and Vietnamese (0.7% / 1,352)**

**Note:** The figures provided in this briefing paper are accurate reports from the CLSIS database as at 26 February 2014. However, CLSIS is a live database and these figures can change. Accordingly if quoting these figures, refer to the date of access.

<sup>3</sup> All percentages have been rounded to the nearest decimal point.

<sup>4</sup> The *CLSIS Data Dictionary* advises that a client should be recorded as having a low income if their weekly income is under \$500 per week or \$26,000 per year.