

Welfare Rights Centre Ltd [NSW]

ABN 76 002 708 714

ANNUAL REPORT

JULY 2013 to JUNE 2014

Prepared for 2014 Annual General Meeting

Contents

Introduction	3
1. Casework	3
1.1 Information, Advice & Casework service.....	3
1.2 Casework statistics.....	5
1.3 Casework issues during 2013 – 2014	6
1.4 Case studies	8
2. Policy Report	9
2.1 Introduction.....	9
3. Community Legal Education & Community Liaison	12
3.1 Long term goals.....	12
3.2 Education and community liaison.....	12
4. Publications	13
4.1 Long term goals.....	13
4.2 Rights Review.....	13
4.3 The Independent Social Security Handbook.....	13
4.4 Social Security Reporter	13
4.5 Factsheets and brochures	14
5. Funding	14
5.1 Major funders	14
5.2 Welfare Rights Trade Union and HESTA Programs	14
5.3 Income generation.....	15
5.4 Project Grants	15
5.5 Auditor’s Report.....	15
6. Management	15
6.1 Board of Directors	15
6.2 The Directors who held office at any time during 2013-2014.....	15
6.3 Staff Members	16
6.4 Volunteer Workers.....	16
7. Auditor’s Report	18

Introduction

The Welfare Rights Centre is a community legal centre which provides specialist legal advice about social security and family assistance law. The Centre also undertakes casework and represents clients at the Social Security Appeals Tribunal and the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

Advocacy with a rights-based approach is a hallmark of the Centre.

Groups of clients the Centre regularly assists includes people with disabilities, people who are unemployed, older people, students and single parents.

The Centre's goals are to alleviate poverty and to help people in need to stabilise income support, participate where possible in the paid workforce and relieve pressure on other service delivery agencies in NSW.

The Centre is staffed by paid workers and volunteers. We could not operate without our dedicated volunteers.

The Centre also undertakes its own income generation activities to supplement our statewide services. Examples of these activities include quarterly bulletining and production of *The Independent Social Security Handbook* online for lawyers and community workers and our trade union program to assist casual workers and people who have lost their jobs.

During 2013-14, the Centre hosted and project managed the secretariat of the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN). The work of the NWRN is comprehensively outlined in its 2014 Annual Report which can be found at www.welfarerights.org.au.

Affiliations: In 2013 -14 the Welfare Rights Centre was a member of the Australian Council of Social Services and the NSW Council of Social Services. The Centre's peak national organisation is the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN) which undertakes policy development and law reform work on behalf of its members and their client bases. The Centre is also an accredited member of the National Association of Community Legal Centres and Community Legal Centres NSW.

1. Casework

1.1 Information, Advice & Casework service

The Welfare Rights Centre provides legal information, advice and casework services to people with income support problems related to social security and family assistance law and to agencies assisting people with such problems. The aim of the Centre's casework service is to achieve beneficial outcomes for individual clients and for classes of clients.

The casework service comprises a telephone advice service, research, assistance with self-advocacy, interventions directly with Centrelink, written advocacy on behalf of clients and written or personal representation before the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT), the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), or the Federal Court in some cases. Advice is given on almost all aspects of social security and family assistance. Further representation may be provided in complex cases particularly where children are at risk, matters of wide application, and matters where the client has no money at all or where they may not adequately represent their own interests.

Throughout 2013-14 telephone advice and assistance for the public was available four days per week. Ongoing clients may contact the Centre at all times between 9am and 5pm. The Centre has a toll free number to facilitate access for clients in country and outer-metropolitan areas and a TTY for people with hearing impairments. Initial advice is generally provided by telephone; however, the Centre has an access and equity policy to ensure that people unable to obtain assistance by telephone are not disadvantaged.

The Centre's casework service could not function without the valuable contribution of unpaid volunteer workers. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged in section 6.4 of this Annual Report.

Age	2012-2013	2013-2014
0-18	1%	2%
18-34	17%	18%
35-49	24%	24%
50-64	26%	31%
65+	11%	9%
Not specified	21%	16%

Gender	2012-13	2013-14
Female	49%	54%
Male	41%	40%
Not specified	10%	6%

1.2 Casework statistics

The following statistics are compiled from information provided to us by our clients. Some clients choose not to provide some of their personal information. The percentages are calculated on the total number of people volunteering particular information and may not represent the complete picture. Nevertheless, they provide a good overview of the casework of the Centre.

Number of clients

From July 2013 to June 2014 the Centre provided assistance to 2581 clients. We provided 4802 “advice activities” and opened 844 new cases (both major and minor) in the period. Advocacy included representing clients in internal Centrelink reviews and with appeals to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT).

The most common birth countries stated by clients were:

Country of Birth	2012-2013	Country of Birth	2013-2014
Australia	34%	Australia	35.9%
New Zealand	2%	New Zealand	2.1%
United Kingdom	3.5%	United Kingdom	2.0%
Lebanon	1.6%	Lebanon	1.4%
China	1.4%	China	1.6%
Egypt	0.7%	Iraq	0.8%
Iraq	1.3%	Russian Federation	0.8%
India	0.9%	Greece	0.7%
		Philippines	0.7%
Greece	0.9%	Turkey	0.7%
Turkey	0.7%	India	0.6%
Fiji	0.5%	Fiji	0.5%
Vietnam	0.5%	Iran	0.5%
		Sri Lanka	0.5%
		United States	0.5%

Clients of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background

In 2013-14, 4% of all clients identified themselves as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background. In 2012-13 the percentage was 3.5%.

Payment types

The most common payment types for matters over the period were:

Disability Support Pension	943
Newstart Allowance	676
Age Pension	255
Parenting Payment	212
Youth Allowance	171
Family Tax Benefit	294
Carer Payment	178
Special Benefit	89

1.3 Casework issues during 2013 – 2014

Casework trends

The Centre provides advice and representation with respect to all aspects of social security and family assistance law. This extends from assistance to vulnerable clients in dealing with Centrelink prior to or at the time of the original decision, to representation at all levels of internal and external appeal. The Centre also provides assistance to clients facing prosecution by conducting administrative review and making representations to the Commonwealth DPP in certain cases.

The practice is integrated, in the sense that all caseworkers advise and represent at all levels of appeal, which feeds back into the quality of advice and representation to clients.

A telephone advice service is available 4 days per week, for 3.5 hours per day. There is a toll free number to facilitate access for outer-metro and outside Sydney clients and a TTY. There is a nation-wide toll free number for clients referred by HESTA.

Caseworkers decide, in accordance with guidelines, which cases to take on for further assistance (either minor assistance, such as providing help with preparing evidence or writing submissions, or representation). Cases are triaged in accordance with guidelines which aim to focus our additional assistance and representation on cases where legal help makes a substantial difference to the outcome. Exceptions are made for vulnerable clients or where we believe there is a public interest in the issue.

This results in the following broad profile of our casework:

- member of a couple debts over \$10,000, with most of our casework focussed on debts between \$50,000 and \$150,000;

- income related debts, with most of our casework focussed on debts which are being prosecuted, or where there are reasonable prospects of administrative review (e.g. existence of administrative error, major mental health or capacity problems);
- student debts arising from loss of qualification;
- compensation preclusion period cases;
- waiting period cases, usually income maintenance periods and newly arrived residents waiting periods; and
- Youth Allowance Unreasonable to Live at Home cases.

As Legal Aid NSW provides advice and representation in disability support pension matters at Social Security Appeals Tribunal (SSAT) and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), we have a limited service in this area, focussing on appeal rights and sending self-help resources, unless the person is not in receipt of newstart allowance.

Tribunal Representation

The Centre represented clients at the Social Security Appeals Tribunal approximately 45 times and made 23 appearances at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal during 2013-14. Cases included large member of a couple debts to Youth Allowance (unreasonable to live at home criteria) and compensation preclusion periods. In making a decision to represent, the Centre applied its casework guidelines as to the merits of the case, the material difference involvement from the Centre could add, and the client's ability to self-advocate effectively. For this reason, representation often took place for clients with intellectual and physical disabilities, clients who are very young or very old, clients experiencing mental health problems, from Aboriginal communities, people from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and people experiencing homelessness or other life crisis.

Most tribunal representation was at the SSAT. These cases were generally in the priority areas identified above.

The Centre regularly appears at the AAT, either appealing from an unfavourable SSAT decision or in cases where the client first contacted at that level.

The Centre does not represent in cases where only a commercial settlement is likely to be achieved (e.g. a 20-30% commercial offer to reduce a debt), but regularly provides advice and assistance to clients with reasonable prospects about this.

In other cases, the main area of appeal in 2013-14 was compensation preclusion period cases. In most of these cases, favourable settlements were achieved with the Department of Human Services, and the Department took a reasonable approach to settlement. It is not clear whether this will continue in the coming year under a new government.

In terms of cases which raised wider issues, we had a good win in establishing that "constant care" does not require seven days per week of care, showing implicitly that Centrelink's longstanding policy is unlawful (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/cases/cth/AATA/2014/129.html>).

Other trends

The main areas of work remained consistent with previous years, especially:

- large debts, especially student and member of a couple debts; and
- compensation preclusion periods.

In terms of new trends in casework, the Centre ran a series of cases intended to establish unlawful or unduly narrow aspects of Centrelink's approach to income maintenance periods.

This casework gave rise to some successful SSAT appeals in a traditionally difficult area, where the SSAT took a wider view of reasonable expenditure in light of a person's individual circumstances. It also disclosed the Department's continued adherence to a policy expressly disapproved in the Federal Court – a matter now subject to an Ombudsman investigation.

1.4 Case studies

Carer Payment Case Study

Samantha cares for her two young children who both have severe developmental disorders. She also works part-time in the evenings. She receives carer payment and she and her husband receive family tax benefit. When Samantha first claimed carer payment, she gave Centrelink copies of her payslips, which showed that she was working and that her earnings varied from fortnight to fortnight. Centrelink should have put her on fortnightly reporting to make sure she wasn't overpaid, but it did not. Samantha also told Centrelink how much she and her husband earned every year when she reported for family tax benefit. In spite of this, Centrelink paid Samantha carer payment as though she was earning no money at all for several years. When Samantha called to check how her payment would be affected if she worked a few more hours a week, Centrelink told her it didn't know she was working at all. Centrelink then continued to overpay Samantha for almost another full year before raising a debt. When Samantha asked for review of the debt, Centrelink said that although it made mistakes, its letters to Samantha should have made her aware of their mistakes, and on that basis it refused to waive all but a small fraction of the debt. Samantha, whose life was already highly stressful, began to suffer extreme stress, anxiety and depression as a result of the debt.

We represented Samantha at the SSAT. We argued that the entire debt should be waived on the basis that it was solely attributable to Centrelink's error, and that Centrelink's letters were misleading and confusing. Centrelink should have taken into account Samantha's variable earnings, and it should have made it clear to Samantha that the reports of her income for family assistance purposes were not being taken into account for the purpose of her carer payment.

The SSAT agreed, and found that the debt was entirely Centrelink's fault. It ordered that the whole of the debt be waived, including a refund of the amount Samantha had already paid off. The SSAT also noted that although it did not need to consider Samantha's circumstances, they were special and uncommon and it would have considered waiving the debt on the grounds of special circumstances as well.

Compensation Preclusion Period

Michael received a lump sum compensation payment after being injured at work which resulted in him losing both hands. Michael has a history of traumatic brain injury and bipolar disorder. After receiving his lump sum payment, he incurred another brain injury after an assault and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Michael was not in the right physical or mental position to find employment. His decision making capacity was greatly affected by his most recent brain injury. He was taken advantage of by people close to him after he received his lump sum payment and his expenditure reflected his need for security and safety. Michael left home at age 15 and does not have any family or close friends to support him. After a few years, as the money was running out, he applied for disability support pension (DSP) but was rejected because of his compensation preclusion period. He appealed this decision to an Authorised Review Officer who recognised his financial hardship but did not have any evidence to prove this.

Michael contacted the Welfare Rights Centre after he had served almost 80% of his compensation preclusion period. An appeal was lodged to the SSAT. We gathered evidence from his landlord that he was in rent arrears of six months. Also we obtained evidence from his psychologist and GP about his PTSD and bipolar and how this affected his decision making capacity in relation to his ability to control his spending. A neuropsychological report was also provided to the SSAT which detailed the extent of his brain injuries.

We submitted that this amounted to special circumstances which warranted a reduction to the preclusion period. By not reducing the preclusion period, he would be in further rent arrears, be evicted and have no money for food and medication. However to have a preclusion period reduced due to special circumstances is very difficult and the appeal was not successful at the SSAT.

We lodged an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). Within a few days, Michael was scheduled to a psychiatric intensive care unit due to a manifestation of his mental health issues. With these new circumstances plus the evidence we provided to the SSAT, Centrelink's legal advocate agreed to settle the matter. This means that the preclusion period was ended and Michael was granted DSP.

2. Policy Report

2.1 Introduction

The Australian social security system is complex and tightly targeted. The Welfare Rights Centre has a clear set of goals to guide its important law reform and policy activities. Those goals are:

1. to develop and advocate proposals for reform of social security legislation, administration and Government policy in order to minimise hardship and poverty in Australian society in general, and for social security recipients and their children in particular;
2. to ensure the social security system is:

- based on rights and entitlements, responsibilities and obligations which are clearly stated in legislation and enforceable;
- administered under clear, publicly accessible policy guidelines;
- characterised by a robust review and appeals system that allows individual decisions to be challenged; and

3. to promote fair and accessible administrative law particularly in the field of income support.

The Welfare Rights Centre undertakes the majority of its policy and media work in conjunction with its peak body, National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN), to facilitate a strong national presence. Please see the policy and media section of the 2013 NWRN Annual Report at www.welfarerights.org.au for details about submissions produced, inquiry hearings attended, community engagement and other work undertaken by Welfare Rights Centre (NSW) staff working within the Network.

In addition, we have outlined in this report work either entirely or primarily by the Centre.

The Centre's policy officer continued to be a policy advisor on income support and employment to the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

Community and stakeholder engagement

During 2013-14, the Welfare Rights Centre participated in many activities, including:

- Bankstown Local Solutions Community Projects Launch, Bankstown, 18 July 20 2013
- Speech at Conference – Advocacy in the Third Sector, Blacktown 19 July 2013
- Launch of ACOSS Reconciliation Plan, Redfern, 29 July 2013
- Department of Human Services, Zone Meeting on Service Delivery issues, 6 August 2013
- Participation in NWRN/DHS Bi-Annual Delegations, 15 October 2013
- Combined Pensioners' and Superannuants Association of NSW Annual Conference, 30 October 2013
- Meeting with Chinese women's delegation on Australia's social security system, 10 November 2013
- Commonwealth Ombudsman Roundtable on complaints, 11 December 2013
- Speech to Worker's Compensation Conference on Disability Support Pension issues, February 2014
- Meeting with Opposition Spokesperson for Families, Disability and Indigenous Affairs, Jenny Macklin, Sydney, 7 February 2014
- Unions NSW Link up on Responses to the G20 and Civil Society, March 2014
- Meeting with NSW Shelter on Rent Assistance report, 11 March 2014
- Talk on expansion of income management: Progressive Breakfast, 3 April 2014

- Meeting with Prem Aleema, Director, Social Services Team, Social Services, Indigenous and Public Interest Disclosure Branch, and George Masri, Senior Assistant Ombudsman, *Social Services, Indigenous and Public Interest Disclosure*, 3 April 2014
- Presentation/briefing on Welfare Rights involvement in campaign for breaches and penalties, NSWCLC Law Symposium, Sydney
- Brief comments at Young Lawyers Forum with Attorney General, Just Deficit, 19 May 2014.
- Talk at UNSW Students Forum on the Federal Budget, 22 May 2014

The Centre also regularly attends the following local meetings:

- NWRN committee and members meeting teleconferences
- Department of Human Services NSW Homelessness Reference Group
- Department of Human Services NSW Mental Health Advisory Group
- Department of Human Services Sydney Employment Engagement Meeting
- CLC NSW Co-ordinators' meetings
- NSW Community Homelessness Alliance
- FONGA (organised by NCOSS)

Other Centre activities in 2013-14

Five staff from our Centre attended NWRN Conference in Brisbane, 21-23 July 2013.

Letter to NSW Minister for Fair Trading about Park and Village Service and the Older Persons Tenant's Service, 25 October 2013.

Speech to NSW Shelter Conference, 30 April 2013.

In addition to contributing to NWRN policy submissions and reports, and taking part in Parliamentary inquiries into proposed legislation, the Centre worked with Shelter NSW in a project about Rent Assistance in NSW. On 28 March, the Welfare Rights Centre and Shelter NSW released *The impact of Rent Assistance on housing affordability for low income renters: NSW*. Welfare Rights Centre and Shelter NSW issued a joint media release: *173,000 people in NSW are living in housing stress, after Rent Assistance*.

The Centre also undertook a survey that examined our client's experiences with housing affordability.

Media and information to the community

The Centre also took opportunities to highlight our concerns through the media. We also wrote articles for a number of community agencies' newsletters, including Shelter NSW, Carers NSW, Combined Pensioners, Search and St Vincent de Paul Society. The Centre's work was highlighted in a number of articles in the media, on issues such as disability support pension, overpayments, housing and rent assistance and Centrelink waiting periods. Of note was a feature article on the experiences of people from New Zealand living in Australia who are denied income support.

Other significant media by the Centre is highlighted below.

- AAP, *Fears disabled will end up on dole*, Sunshine Coast Daily, 7 March 2014
- Ireland, J. *Budget savings should not be found at the expense of Australians with disabilities*, Sydney Morning Herald, 7 March 2014
- Patty, A. *Growth in minimum house prices leaves minimum wage earners out in the cold*, Sydney Morning Herald, 25 March 2014

3. Community Legal Education & Community Liaison

3.1 Long term goals

The community legal education and training goals are:

- to provide high quality, accessible and targeted community legal education; and
- to provide specialist support to other NSW community agencies.

3.2 Education and community liaison

In 2013-14 the Centre continued to target disadvantaged groups for education, by delivering education to those groups directly and by providing targeted social security training to community workers that support disadvantaged groups.

Particular focus was given this year to expanding our outreach to regional and remote areas of NSW.

The Centre travelled to Bourke to provide social security training as part of the Adult Aboriginal Literacy Campaigns (AALC) post-literacy course which is managed by the University of New England. We returned to Bourke later in the year to provide intensive advocacy training to some of the graduates of the AALC to enable them to assist other members of their communities with Centrelink problems.

We also provided training sessions to community workers in Bourke and Dubbo, and participated in the Financial Literacy Roadshow in Broken Hill and surrounding towns with the Financial Rights Legal Centre and a number of other services.

The Centre provided several training sessions to Centrelink staff, and delivered some specialist legal education to lawyers from Salvos Legal and Legal Aid NSW.

Throughout 2013-14 the Centre continued to participate in the National Multicultural Advisory Group (on behalf of NWRN), NSW Centrelink Homelessness Reference Group, the NSW Homelessness Community Alliance and the ACOSS Board.

4. Publications

4.1 Long term goals

The Welfare Rights Centre's overall publication goals are to produce and distribute clear, informed, effective and targeted information and policy material designed to:

- increase accessibility to the social security system;
- educate and increase community awareness about social security issues, payments and rights; and
- improve the social security system in Australia.

The Centre established a blog, "Welfare Writes", in 2013-14 and is at the time of writing developing a website specifically for the Centre.

In pursuit of these goals the Centre's key publications for 2013-14 were:

- *Rights Review* quarterly newsletter;
- the *Independent Social Security Handbook*;
- *Social Security Reporter*;
- Factsheets; and
- Website on behalf of the National Welfare Rights Network.

4.2 Rights Review

The Centre published four issues of "Rights Review" in 2013- 2014, reporting every three months on changes to social security law and administration, raising awareness of social security matters, policy reform and assisting community workers to help their clients.

4.3 The Independent Social Security Handbook

The Centre published the quarterly editions of the *Independent Social Security Handbook* in 2013-2014 and continued to publish the online edition quarterly. The primary purpose of the Handbook is to inform community workers about social security law and Centrelink administrative practices and to assist them to better advocate for their clients with regard to social security payments.

4.4 Social Security Reporter

The Centre produced four editions of the *Social Security Reporter* (SSR) in 2013-14. The purpose of the SSR is to provide a useful ready reference for social security practitioners and others with a particular interest in this area of the law, in particular important case law developments.

4.5 Factsheets and brochures

The Centre has factsheets available to assist and inform people about social security matters. In 2013-14 we updated a number of factsheets to reflect the changes to the law.

5. Funding

5.1 Major funders

Funding for the period 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 was received from:

- Commonwealth Government – Welfare Rights Program - \$244,305
- Commonwealth Government separate grant - \$100,000
- NSW Government Community Legal Centre Funding Program - \$128,812

The Commonwealth Government also provided a “one off” amount of \$190,000 on 27 May 2013 which was provisioned for the 2013-14 and the 2014-15 financial years in order to help the Centre cope with the decision of NSW Family and Community Services to defund the Centre as of 30 June 2013.

5.2 Welfare Rights Trade Union and HESTA Programs

Throughout the year the Centre continued to provide service to and receive support from the following unions involved in its Trade Union Welfare Rights Program:

- NSW Independent Education Union;
- NSW Nurses and Midwives’ Association;
- NSW Teachers Federation;
- NSW Branch of United Voice;
- Public Service Association (NSW); and
- Police Association of NSW.

The Centre would also like to acknowledge the generous decision by the National Tertiary Education Union, the Centre’s landlord, to reduce rent on the Centre’s office premises in the face of the decision by the NSW Department of Family and Community Services to defund the Centre as of 30 June 2013.

In addition, the Centre has continued its service arrangement with HESTA, under which HESTA members who are injured or ill and without income support, are provided with advice and assistance in relation to their social security entitlements and income protection.

The Centre is appreciative of this support and the opportunity the Trade Unions and HESTA program provides the Centre to assist low income working people. Throughout 2013-14 the main features were:

- advising and representing trade union and HESTA members with regard to their social security matters;
- providing quarterly bulletins to each union with updates of changes to social security law; and
- writing articles in trade union journals to inform readers about their social security entitlements.

5.3 Income generation

In addition to the revenue from HESTA and the trade unions detailed above, the Centre also generates further income through sales of the newsletter (*Rights Review*) the *Social Security Reporter* and sales of the *Independent Social Security Handbook*.

5.4 Project Grants

The Centre also received the second instalment of a small grant of \$5,000 from the Law & Justice Foundation to pilot an education and legal advice outreach clinic at Dubbo.

5.5 Auditor's Report

The audit for the period was conducted by Steven J Miller & Co. The Auditor's Report forms part of this Annual Report. See section 7 of this Report for more details.

6. Management

6.1 Board of Directors

Throughout the period the following people played the very important role of strategic planning, governance, risk management and overseeing the Centre's work in their capacity as members of the Board of Directors.

6.2 The Directors who held office at any time during 2013-2014

- Estelle Adamek
- Liz Biok
- James Campbell

- Diana Covell
- Tony Eardley
- Carol Howard
- Michelle Jones (retired in February 2013)
- Meghan Carruthers
- Terry Mason (Chairperson)
- Cristina Pebaque
- Stella Topaz

6.3 Staff Members

The Centre employed the following staff at the end of June 2014:

Matthew Butt	Principal Solicitor
Alice Jones-Rabbitt	Administrative Assistant (employed on a casual basis)
Carolyn Odgers	Solicitor (3 ½ days per week)
Maree O'Halloran	Director
Jessica Raffal	Community Legal Education Coordinator/Solicitor
Danny Shaw	Senior Caseworker
Sharissa Thirukumar	Caseworker
Gerard Thomas	Policy and Media Officer

In addition the Centre hosted and project managed the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN) during 2013 -14. On behalf of the NWRN, the Centre directly employed the following staff:

Amie Meers	Executive Officer (3 days per week)
Gerard Thomas	Policy and Media Officer (4 days per week)
Alice Jones-Rabbitt	Administrative officer (2 days per week)

The Centre also sadly saw the loss of Katie Wrigley, Principal Solicitor, and Hannah Vieira, Administrative Assistant, in 2013-14.

6.4 Volunteer Workers

The Centre's success could not have been achieved without the help of our volunteer workers throughout the 2013-2014 year. At any given time the Centre has had about 12 casework assistant volunteers who provide an invaluable service each week on our advice shifts. Special mention should

also go to our administration volunteer workers who help with the administrative functions of the office. These volunteer workers perform their duties with style, diligence, patience and much skill.

The casework volunteer workers have the challenging task of direct contact with people who contact us for advice or referral. They assisted the Centre to interview 2,581 clients throughout the year. They displayed excellent communication and interpersonal skills in assisting many highly distressed clients. Their dedication and enthusiasm proved an inspiration to all of us at the Centre.

The Centre gratefully acknowledges the role played by all our volunteer workers.

These workers contribute services to the Centre valued at over \$200,000 each year. We hope they enjoyed being at the Centre as much as we have enjoyed having them and we look forward to their continuing involvement with the Centre. To those who left us in 2013-2014 we wish them well in their future endeavours and thank them for their years of service.

The volunteer workers at the Centre in 2013-2014 were:

- Estelle Adamek
- Iva Andric
- Selma Bekric
- Alice Beasley
- Timothy Buckley
- Taryn Chehab
- Jenny Cohen
- Lachlan Daly
- Alexandra Ellinson
- Pauline Foster
- Mary Huang
- Julia Hong
- Michele Izzo
- David King
- Shirley Innes
- James Jankulovski
- Bobby Kok
- Cynthia Lam
- Johnson Pang
- Petrina Slaytor
- Arnjali Sabapathy
- Gehan Sawires
- Ho Yan (Debbie) Yu

7. Auditor's Report

The Auditor's Report, prepared by Steven J Miller & Co, is part of this Annual Report. It is available on request.