

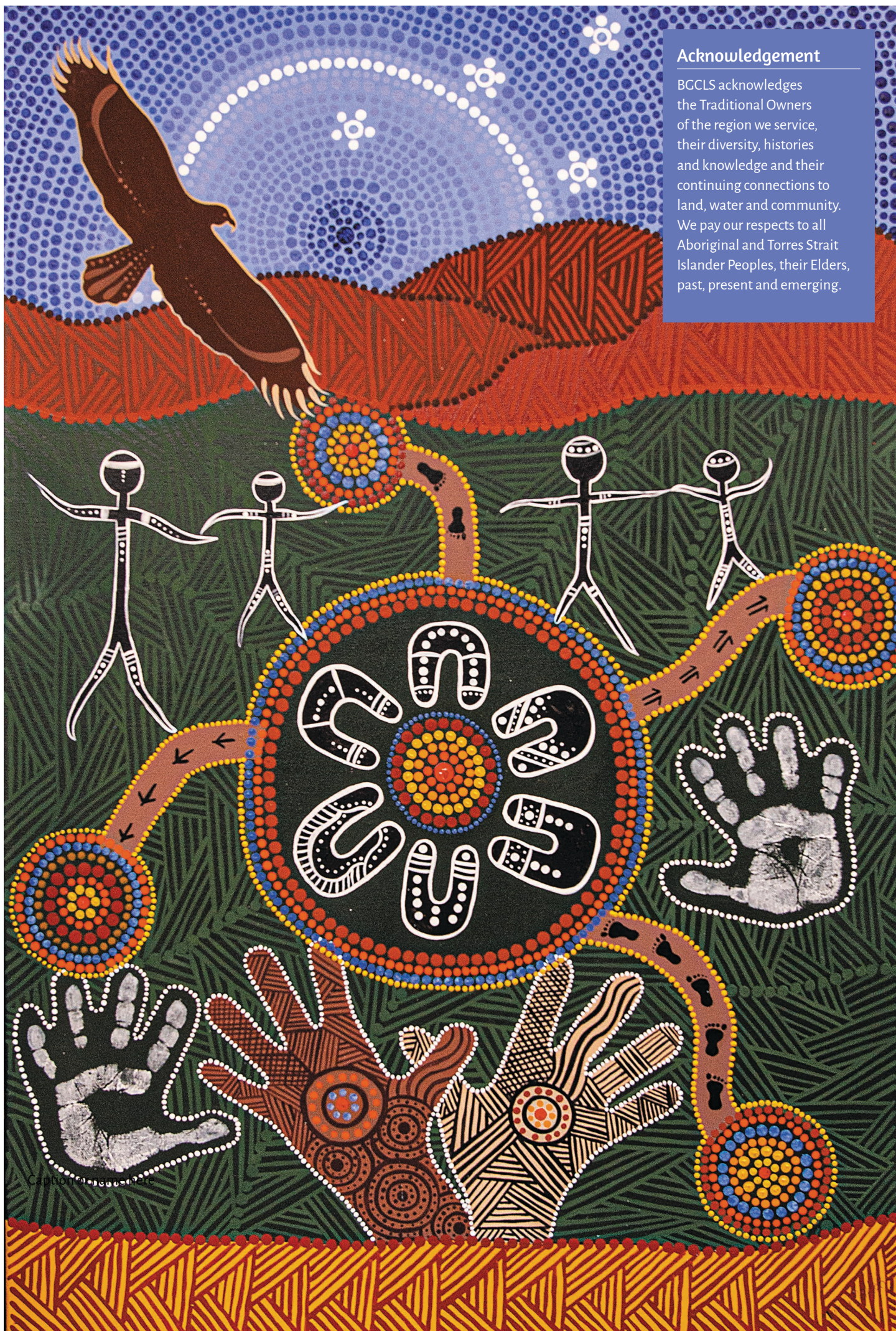
Annual Report

2023-2024



Acknowledgement

BCCLS acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the region we service, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land, water and community. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, their Elders, past, present and emerging.



Caption or notes here

Contents

Opposite: 'Reconciliation Journey Together' by Wadawurrung/Wathaurung woman, Trina Dalton-Oogjes, 2019.

Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service is a for-purpose organisation providing free legal services, community legal education, law reform and integrated services.

With offices in Ballarat and Horsham, we assist eligible people living in the regional, rural and remote areas we service.

Chair and CEO report	2
Paul Ryan Chair, Narelle Laing CEO	2
Our Work	4
Adrian Tinetti Principal Lawyer Report	5
Our Impact	6
Our region	7
Client snapshot	8
Case studies	9
Projects, Partnerships and Stakeholders	12
Our People	16
Board members	17
Staff and Volunteers	18
Financials	19
Finance Report	20
Financial Statements	21
Notes to the Financial Statements	25
Committee Declaration	32
Independent Auditor's Report	33

Chair and CEO report



Paul Ryan
Chair



Narelle Laing
Chief Executive Officer

For the communities across the Ballarat and Grampians region, bushfires and gender-based violence were significant challenges. The impact of these events continues to present the need for ongoing support in affected communities. The Victorian Government announced funding for the expansion of our health justice partnership in the Wimmera region and flood response funding for Horsham.

BGCLS provided immediate support to those impacted by bushfires, visiting fire relief centres and assisting with insurance matters. Our team continues to invest in training and development to ensure we are best placed to support communities with disaster legal preparedness and response.

68% of our funding is directly linked to family violence, however following the murders of three Ballarat women in 2024, BGCLS established a Gender-Based Violence Working Group to ensure we are maximising our services and resources to not only support those impacted by gender-based violence, but also support service providers and other key stakeholders in their response to family violence. We have worked closely with Ballarat Police and continue to develop initiatives that are meaningful and impactful.

Over the last year our top legal problem types included family violence orders and contact orders. We supported 1,096 clients and there continues to be more demand than we can service.

Volunteers and students significantly contribute to our ability to meet the legal needs of Ballarat in particular. And we are grateful to the 6 volunteer lawyers who provided afterhours legal advice and our law students who assisted our team in some ongoing project work.

Our restructure was finalised with the appointment of our inaugural CEO to lead the organisation through organisational change and strategy development to ensure BGCLS is positioned to provide impactful support to the region we serve across 11 local government areas.

As we acknowledged 35 years of evolving from a volunteer legal service to an integrated service practice, in June 2024 we opened our Horsham office which was a significant step in broadening our service delivery across the Grampians Region. With legal, community development and social work staff located in Horsham we can further extend our reach in a region that stretches to the South Australian border. We will specifically target Ararat, Northern Grampians and Horsham where the rates of family violence incidents sit at more than double the state average.

BGCLS invested significantly in the process of developing a new strategy.

The process commenced with all staff visiting other community legal centres with a view to “Imagine what is possible”. The Board and staff engaged in 34 stakeholder conversations and found their insights to be invaluable in the development of our strategy. Workshops with staff and board members further strengthened our strategy work. It is expected the Board will adopt the new strategy in November 2024 and we are excited about sharing this with the community and stakeholders.

A significant digitisation project commenced early 2024 and although we know the efficiencies that will result from this, we acknowledge the time, energy and effort of all staff and support services to ensure its success. We especially acknowledge the leadership of James McDonnell in driving this project.

The 2024 Legal Laneway Breakfast was a wonderful gathering of the legal community in Ballarat and we extend our thanks to our guest speakers Magistrate Guillaume Bailin, ARC Magistrate, Ballarat, Lynne Haultain, Executive Director, Victoria Law Foundation for so generously sharing their time and expertise. We look forward to again hosting this event in 2025 and acknowledge Adrian Tinetti for working with the Victorian Law Foundation to bring this important event to Ballarat.

The community legal sector more broadly has participated in the NLAP review which resulted in many recommendations to strengthen the sector and the important work we do nationally. This new 5-year framework will be rebranded the National Access to Justice Partnership (NJAP).

We acknowledge that there is still a significant amount of unmet need across our region. In particular, we acknowledge the impacts of family violence and gender-based violence in all communities. BGCLS continues to build strategic relationships to ensure we are best placed to influence the legal elements of preventing and responding to family violence and improve the safety outcomes for victim survivors.

BGCLS is most grateful for the ongoing support of stakeholders across the Ballarat and Grampians Region. We would like to acknowledge specifically our funding partners, Victoria Legal Aid, Federation of Community Legal Centres and Department of Justice and Community Safety for their investment in our region. To our networking partners and local service providers, your contribution to our work is valued and appreciated.

The people of BGCLS are the heartbeat of our organisation and without their collective contribution we could not strive for impactful services that change lives.

We farewelled Principal Lawyer, Toni Thomas. Toni commenced with BGCLS as a community lawyer in 2014 and accepted the role of Principal Lawyer in 2019. During this time, BGCLS experienced significant growth and we thank Toni for her significant contribution and leadership.

We acknowledge that organisational change can be difficult and extend to all staff who chose not to move forward with the new direction of BGCLS and to those who resigned for personal reasons our sincere thanks for their contribution.

We extend our sincere thanks to Helen Matthews OAM for temporarily retreating from retirement to support our legal practice as Principal Lawyer. Helen's experience as Director of Legal & Policy at Women's Legal Service Victoria significantly influenced our family law and family violence practice, and the reshaping of our service delivery model.

We welcomed new staff in all business areas at our Ballarat and Horsham offices. Their skills, professionalism and alignment with purpose has made our success this year possible. We acknowledge and celebrate their dedication and commitment to the vulnerable people we serve and the strategic direction of BGCLS.

We welcomed Susan Crebbin, Brooke Tamanika, Angela Morrison and Kate Astbury to the Board, and we would like to extend our appreciation to all Board Members for their significant and valued contribution. We would like to thank retiring Board Members Pauline Fay, Clare Moss, Sharon Hope and Russell Bennett for their contribution to BGCLS.

We are looking forward to the year ahead and our continued service to the individuals, families and communities of the Ballarat and Grampians region.

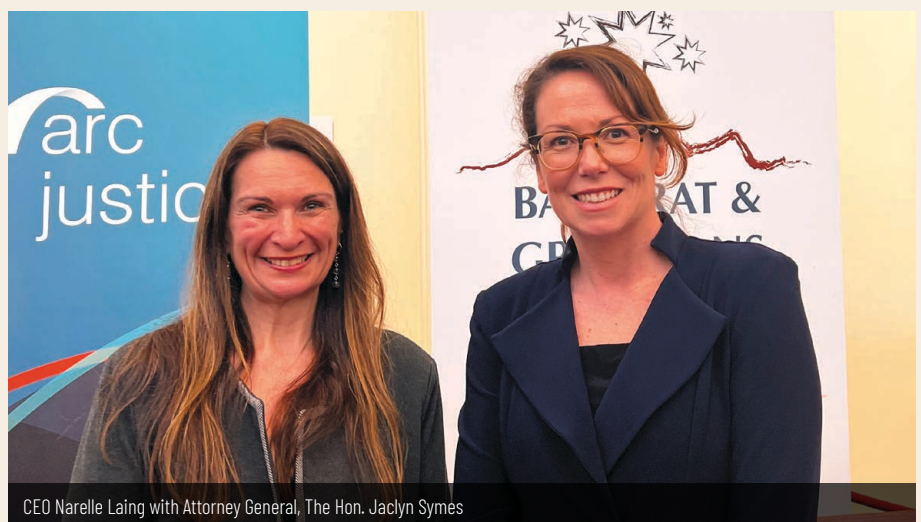


Paul Ryan

Chair

Narelle Laing

Chief Executive Officer



CEO Narelle Laing with Attorney General, The Hon. Jaclyn Symes



Our work

Principal Lawyer Report



Adrian Tinetti

Ballarat and Grampians Community Legal Service celebrated its 35th year of operations in the 2023-24 period, providing an integral community legal service across the western region of Victoria.

A key focus has been assisting vulnerable people, particularly in family violence and the related effects of this scourge, including family law issues, victims of crime compensation, housing insecurity, infringements and insurance matters.

We are committed to providing family violence duty lawyer services at the Magistrates' Courts in Ballarat, Horsham, Ararat, Stawell and St Arnaud. Our staff have participated in extensive training in this area, including the Emerging Lawyers Program offered by Women's Legal Service Victoria. Family violence will remain a focus with the introduction of the Ballarat community saturation model, designed to draw community attention to family violence, and to combat the issue in a comprehensive manner.

We are pleased to have established our Horsham office to provide tangible access to remote and regional residents within our catchment. This also supports our innovative Health Justice Partnership (HJP) and flood recovery work in the wake of the 2022 floods.

We have continued to foster the next generation of lawyers, including hosting legal interns and employing five law students as paralegals. The paralegals have contributed to an important project which is the transition to a digital file management system. We have also updated our client intake services to provide timely initial legal advice to clients seeking assistance.

I wish to acknowledge the contribution of all involved with our service, especially our valued volunteer solicitors and Toni Thomas, Helen Matthews and Andrew Clarke who have held the Principal Lawyer role over the course of the year.

It has been a year of growth and of embracing new opportunities, and our service is well placed for further development in the new financial year.

Adrian Tinetti

Principal Lawyer





Our impact

“ Thank you so much for all your hard work. This is life changing. You’re really making a difference in people’s lives. I appreciate you so much. ”

Our region

From Bacchus Marsh to the South Australian border, BGCLS services 11 Local Government Areas (LGAs).



71% of clients surveyed said the legal issue they sought advice from us for was causing financial problems and 43% of clients said it was causing them mental health issues.

Client Snapshot 2023–2024

Top five problem types³

1 July 2023 –30 June 2024

	Number	Proportion
Family or domestic violence order	893	51.00%
Child contacts or contact orders	101	5.77%
Wills/probate power of attorney	58	3.31%
Property in marriage	50	2.86%
Divorce	42	2.40%

Programs and services accessed by vulnerable and disadvantaged people

The below table captures the age data sets considered the most vulnerable according to National Partnership Agreement (NPA).¹

Note, some clients experience more than one indicator of disadvantage / vulnerability.

1,096 Total clients



95

Young people



169

Older people



35

First Nations People



646

Family violence

36

Culturally and linguistically diverse



87

Disability / mental health



705

Financial disadvantage



113

Homeless



134

Remote and rural clients

479 males
615 females



1. National Partnership Agreement <https://www.ag.gov.au/LegalSystem/Legalaidprogrammes/Pages/National-Partnership-Agreement-on-Legal-Assistance-Services.aspx>

Client stories

*Names have been changed



Our lawyers assisted our client and her children with family violence intervention orders and the court system.

In early 2023 we were referred Mandy*, a vulnerable Aboriginal woman seeking to extend her 5-year family violence intervention order against her ex-partner.

Mandy had escaped a violent relationship in 2017 where she had experienced physical, emotional and financial abuse. Mandy had five children aged 11–18, with her ex-partner, as well as two young children with her current partner. After the separation the respondent had engaged in stalking-type behaviour and Mandy continued to be severely traumatised. This was demonstrated by high levels of fatigue, stress, anxiety and continuing fear for her safety and that of her children.

The respondent vigorously opposed Mandy's application and was represented by a private lawyer.

We worked closely with Victoria Police and Mandy's medical and support services to provide the Court with further and better particulars of her allegations and the trauma-related impacts. We also obtained her medical records and subpoenaed her children's primary school to provide relevant documents. The respondent refused to accept our evidence and the matter was scheduled for a contested hearing in November 2023. With funding secured by Mandy's support worker from a family violence flexible support package we were able to brief a barrister to represent Mandy. Finally, the respondent withdrew his opposition to the application and we were able to secure a further 2.5 year extension to the intervention order to protect Mandy and her children. She was relieved with this outcome and incredibly grateful for our support.



Providing legal support for our client to help her navigate and manage mounting debt and find a way forward.

Mary* lives alone and is in her mid-60s. She gets by on a very modest pension. She owns a small unit in town. Unfortunately, she has got behind on her strata fees which are issued four times a year. Mental health and post covid issues means that the bills have grown, and she has not done anything about it. She is worried about being made homeless. There is a new strata manager, and they are pressuring Mary for immediate payment. She came to BGCLS to seek legal support and advice to find a way forward.

Our lawyer had a face-to-face appointment with Mary to hear her story. We realize that no one has listened to her for several years and that her dignity and pride has been badly damaged. Our Lawyer goes through the figures with her to better understand the extra fees and charges. We negotiated a payment plan with the strata manager, to avoid future legal proceedings against Mary.

We suggest that Mary attends the strata meetings and becomes an active participant in the strata process. She has a plan, she is empowered, and she is grateful for our assistance.

“ The service from my lawyer was compassionate and understanding, and his directions were clear. ”



When Family Violence Laws are used as an extension of violence.

The courts present BGCLS with many cases of men misusing a position of advantage against women with whom they have separated. In its most common form, the man retains the family income and applies for an IVO against the woman, engaging private solicitors and counsel to prosecute it. This situation is exacerbated when the woman is a new arrival in Australia.

Tom* sought an IVO against Yvonne*, his wife. In tears in the waiting room of the courthouse, Yvonne advised that she and her husband were married in the Philippines, and the request for money from Tom was to be used to visit her mother in the Phillipines.

BGCLS made an immediate application to strike out the proceeding on the grounds that it was brought as an abuse of the process of the court.

Our Lawyers advised the court that a further application would be brought on the return date, with an affidavit prepared by us and filed in support of a fresh application.

Further particulars were requested to be provided by the husband.

Written submissions for the fresh Abuse of Process application were filed with the court and served upon the other party. At the next hearing, counsel and his instructing solicitor appeared and withdrew the application without obliging the submission to be heard at all.

This case demonstrates the need for careful and sustained work by BGCLS to avoid further injustice.

Projects, partnerships & stakeholders

“When it comes to family violence, it is such an ongoing issue in the broader community elsewhere and throughout Victoria and throughout Australia as well, so I am very grateful to the Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service for being able to step in and assist the courts in this particular space, in this particular region.”

HER HONOR MAGISTRATE MICHELLE MYKYTOWYCZ
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE HORSHAM OFFICE.



Throughout the year, our team has been involved in activities and information sessions in the communities in which we serve.

2024 Legal Laneway Breakfast

After the success of the first regional Legal Laneway Breakfast in 2023, the event returned to Ballarat in February 2024 to celebrate the beginning of the legal year, in partnership with the Victorian Law Foundation and with local support from the Ballarat and District Law Association.

Legal professionals from around the region gathered at The Lane at The George Hotel to hear from guest speakers, including Magistrate Guillaume Bailin from the Assessment and Referral Court and Victoria Law Foundation Executive Director Lynne Haultain.

Chief Magistrate Lisa Hannan attended the event and said, "It's always wonderful to be at a community event. What's important is that people are willing to get together, not just the lawyers, but the whole legal community, because it doesn't work unless you're part of an ecosystem. It was very clear to me today that Ballarat is a flourishing ecosystem and one that they should be very proud of."



From left: Magistrate Guillaume Bailin, Lynne Haultain and BGCLS Principal Lawyer, Adrian Tinetti.

Bushfires and disaster preparedness at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days

Staff from BGCLS joined Wimmera Emergency Management, CFA and Disaster Legal Help Victoria to attend the Annual Wimmera Machinery Field Days in Longeron outside Horsham.

The three-day event was a great opportunity to not only engage with members of the public, but to network with key stakeholders in the region.

As part of the BGCLS catchment area, the residents in the Wimmera region had been affected by two Grampians National Park bushfires in February.

BGCLS staff had the opportunity to speak with local and state government representatives, service providers and businesses. These discussions certainly highlighted the needs of small communities in the region and the opportunity for BGCLS to engage and support individuals and townships in addressing and assisting with legal needs resulting from natural disasters.



BGCLS staff provided disaster recovery and legal rights information at the Wimmera Machinery Field Days in Horsham

Law Week Events – May

As part of our commitment to community legal education our team was active during the Victorian Law Foundation's Law Week in May.

Free legal sessions on "Future Life Planning: Wills and Power of Attorney" were delivered at the Stawell Neighbourhood House while Horsham hosted a presentation entitled "Securing their future." A presentation to the Carer's Network in partnership with Mind Australia and Horsham Neighbourhood House.

St Arnaud Secondary College hosted a presentation from our lawyer Jodi on "Sexting, Young People and the Law (SYPL)."

Community Legal Education

BGCLS staff have been active in the community with visits and presentations to neighbourhood houses, community groups, maternal and child health centres and local stakeholder groups.

In a collaboration with Ballarat Community Health and the City of Ballarat, Andrew, Adrian and Matt presented community legal education sessions to three community groups as part of a series entitled "Every Age Matters," covering topics including end of life preparations and legal considerations.



We celebrate the launch of BGCLS Horsham Office

Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service has unveiled its new office in Horsham, marking a significant expansion of its services into the Wimmera area. The office, located in Wilson St will focus on providing support to young families grappling with family violence.

The expansion has been made possible through funding from the Victorian State Government, with the goal of establishing a health justice partnership to assist families affected by family violence. This innovative model will connect BGCLS with maternal and child health services, enabling early intervention and seamless referrals for individuals facing family violence in the Grampian region.

The funding has facilitated the creation of new roles, including two lawyers, a Referral & Engagement Practitioner, and a Community Engagement Officer.

We were honoured to have Magistrate Michelle Mykytowycz as guest speaker. She spoke of the importance of access to Community Legal Services in Regional areas.



Maternal Child Health Service Health Justice Partnerships

Health Justice Partnerships (HJPs) are an established model that enables legal and health services to provide collaborative responses to the interrelated issues people can face. New parenthood in particular is a time when families are vulnerable to complex pressures such as debt, tenancy disputes, separation and family violence. Working in partnership with Maternal Child Health (MCH) services to provide early identification and intervention in family legal issues is a key opportunity to stabilise family circumstances and support safe and secure futures for women and children.

This past year BGCLS has been focused on enhancing our existing MCH partnerships and building new relationships. By the end of next financial year the aim is to have established partnerships in place with MCH services in the Ballarat, Moorabool, Horsham, Northern Grampians, Ararat, Pyrenees and Hepburn LGAs.

The partnerships will provide MCH nurses and other staff supporting families with access to referral pathways and professional development opportunities that increase their capacity to respond to the legal needs of families. While in key areas, we are also establishing new legal and non-legal clinics to provide outreach services that make it easier and safer for regional, rural and remote families to access the information, advice and referrals they need.

Skye Mannix-McCann | Project Manager



The Hon. Jaclyn Symes, Attorney-General of Victoria (centre) flanked by BGCLS staff and board members on her visit to the Ballarat office.

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our funding partners and stakeholders in the delivery of these projects and services to our community.



Ballarat Regional
Multicultural Council

Ballarat & District
Law Association

CAFS

Catholic Care

Corrections Victoria

CORE

Disaster Legal Help Victoria

FASS

Greater Ararat Business Network

Grampians Disability Advocacy

Grampians Community Health

Impact for Women

Law Institute of Victoria

The Orange Door

Victoria Law Foundation

Wimmera Law Association

Women's Legal Service



Our people

“ They assisted me to finalise my divorce
and move on with my life. ”

Thank you to our Board, staff and volunteers who have made an incredible contribution to our work and our community in 2023-2024.

Our board

BGCLS is governed by a Board that provides governance and strategic direction for BGCLS.



Paul Ryan | Board Chair

Dip T (Primary), BTheol, Grad Dip PsychStud, BSci (Hons – Psychology), GAICD

With 30 years of experience in for purpose organisations as well as at senior executive, non-executive director and Board Chair level, Paul joined the BGCLS Board in July 2022 and became

Board Chair in November 2022. He has a background in education, theology, and psychology. Paul's career path has been diverse with roles as a catholic priest, research fellow, and senior executive in education and for purpose organisations. Paul is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Director's course and currently sits on several other for purpose boards across a range sectors.



Peter Newsome | Deputy Chair/Board Director & Chair of Finance & Audit Committee

BApplied Science – Disability Studies, Grad Dip Business Administration, Grad Cert Catholic Leadership

Peter joined the BGCLS Board in February 2023 with over 13 years in

senior leadership and executive positions in both health and community services that has included merger and acquisitions activity and the successful implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) roll out at St John of God Health Care. Peter relocated to Ballarat in 2021, following his appointment as Chief Executive Officer of Pinarc Disability Support. Peter brings his experience, and strong NFP sector capabilities to BGCLS and is currently undertaking study to complete his Master of Business Administration (MBA).



Susan Crebbin | Director

BA, MCommun

Susan joined the board in late 2023, bringing her extensive experience of communications and public policy. She has worked in senior positions within government and not for profit, and is excited to bring her skill set in serving our community.



Mark Karlovic | Director

BA, MCom, LLB

Mark has over 20 years of experience working in senior executive Human Resource roles in multiple industries. Mark is also a Military Lawyer and serves in the Navy Reserve and has extensive Industrial Relations

experience working for a Trade Union. Mark sits on the Law Institute of Victoria's Workplace Relations Law Committee.



Kelly Rolfe | Director

MPA, MIPA, GradCertBusAdm

Kelly has over 20 years' experience in accounting and finance, with over half her career being in the not-for-profit sector. Leading and directing at an executive level, Kelly's current role is as CFO of a large not for profit in Ballarat

with a key focus on education and early years development and community and youth engagement. Being a Justice of the Peace, Kelly has a keen interest in legal and community service and joined the BGCLS Board in November 2022.



Brooke Tamanika | Director

LLB, BOH, Cert III BAL, Cert IV SBM

Brooke Tamanika, a solicitor and co-founder at David Tamanika Solicitors in Ballarat, brings extensive legal expertise and a strong commitment to community service to her role as a board director at the BGCLS. With

a background in establishing and expanding her own firm, Brooke's leadership skills, strategic mindset, and dedication to advocacy make her well-suited to advance BGCLS's mission of providing equitable access to legal assistance. Brooke's firsthand understanding of regional challenges, coupled with her client-focused approach, positions her to empower vulnerable community members and foster social justice within the Grampians region.



Angela Morrison | Director

BCom, BA, GradDipICAA

Angela Morrison, a seasoned professional with a diverse background spanning finance, health, and professional services, currently serves as Chief Financial Officer at The Sovereign Hill Museums Association.

Angela's career is marked by exemplary leadership in operational and financial management, governance, risk management, and process improvement. She excels in establishing robust relationships and applying data-driven strategies to drive business excellence. Angela is adept at navigating complex regulatory landscapes and enhancing organisational performance through strategic ICT projects. Her extensive expertise ensures she brings an intrinsic perspective to BGCLS's goals and growth.



Kate Astbury | Director

Bmgt, DipGov

Kate has over 23 years of experience working in community health delivering psychosocial services. She is experienced in NFP executive leadership, strategic planning, and corporate governance. Her background

in a range of General Manager positions across Grampians Community Health has given her extensive knowledge across Business, People, Community and Disability sectors. Kate previously sat as a Community Representative within the Department of Justice / Hopkins Prison Advisory Group.

Thank you to outgoing board members: Russell Bennett – Director (November 2022–February 2024); Pauline Fay (November 2021 – November 2023); Clare Moss (November 2022 – November 2023); and Sharon Hope (November 2021 – December 2023).

Our staff

Executive

Narelle Laing | Chief Executive Officer

Adrian Tinetti | Principal Lawyer

James McDonnell | Practice Manager

Legal

Andrew Clarke | Senior Lawyer

Christopher Howse | Senior Lawyer

Jodianne Morgan | Lawyer

Adele Thielke | Senior Lawyer

Matthew Wilson | Senior Lawyer

Junyi Wang | Lawyer

Helen Matthews | Consulting Lawyer

Corey Lay | Paralegal

Saxon Speed | Paralegal

Madeleine Watkins | Paralegal

Laveenyah Yuvarajah | Paralegal

Yanyi Zhang | Paralegal

We thank Toni Thomas – Principal Lawyer and Helen Matthews OAM – Interim Principal Lawyer who provided support and guidance during the 2023–2024 reporting period.

Our volunteers

We rely on our team of volunteer lawyers to provide a valuable after-hours legal service.

We thank the following lawyers who assisted with the delivery of free legal advice and referrals to eligible members of our community.

Cindy Halliwell

Rachel Jones

Paul Thomas

Janet Feeny

Rebecca Van Oirschot

Bianca Brown

Integrated Services

Romy Moclair | Digital Content & Social Media Coordinator

Skye Mannix-McCann | Project Manager – Health Justice Partnerships

Angela Murphy | Community Engagement Officer

Operations

Stacey Bunn | Executive Assistant

Paula Sharry-Pierce | Stakeholder Engagement Manager

Maryanne Alcorn | Law Clerk

Rennae Schultz | Administration Assistant



Financials

Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc.
Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2024

Contents

Finance Report	20
Statement of Comprehensive Income	21
Statement of Financial Position	22
Statement of Changes in Equity	23
Statement of Cash Flows	23
Notes to the Financial Statements	24
Committee Declaration	30
Independent Audit Report	31

Finance report



Peter Newsome
Chair, Finance and Audit Committee

As Chair of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee for the Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service, I am pleased to report, the organisation continues to show improved financial performance.

This year, the team has delivered increased revenue and expense management controls. The surplus will support future initiatives with sustainable operations a core focus. The growth in reserves positions the organisation well to meet community needs in the coming year.

Our organisation achieved a notable financial outcome, recording a surplus of \$727k and the auditor's report for FY24, confirms that the financial statements provide a true and fair view in compliance with accounting standards.

With revenue streams of \$2.5 million primarily derived from government funding and grants, our reliance on these sources highlights the need for continued advocacy to maintain and expand financial support. The strategic use of retained funds will further support future growth and enhance service delivery.

The Board of Directors was very pleased to see the team grow in revenue and in turn our impact across programs, notably with our expansion in Horsham as the financial year concluded. The success of our operations and sector engagement has meant we have also been able to take advantage of greater investment across the organisation.

Looking ahead to FY25, we remain committed to purpose and continuing our important role in delivering high-quality legal supports and services to the community. I encourage you to review our audited financial statements for a complete understanding of our financial position and performance.

Peter Newsome

Chair of the Finance & Audit Sub-Committee

Statement of Comprehensive Income

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	2024 \$	2023 \$
INCOME		
Revenue	2,546,285	2,093,904
Donations	50	2,185
Other income	32,121	48,344
	2,578,456	2,144,434
EXPENSES		
Audit and accounting fees	20,361	22,209
Communication	9,657	6,508
Depreciation expense	106,376	77,501
Insurance	9,526	8,733
Interest expense on lease liability	58,573	60,302
Library and subscriptions	1,127	1,093
Minor equipment	3,807	1,259
Other employment expense	(57,318)	(25,626)
Occupancy costs	14,913	20,720
Overheads	32,393	16,043
Programming expense	33,147	9,304
Recruitment costs	20,036	1,792
Repairs and maintenance	8,279	3,628
Salaries	1,437,307	1,251,397
Staff training	12,567	7,138
Superannuation	128,518	72,479
Travel	15,340	3,799
Other expenses	(3,292)	84,776
	1,851,315	1,623,056
Net surplus / (deficit) before income tax	727,141	521,378
Income Tax expense	-	-
Surplus / (deficit) for the year	727,141	521,378
Other comprehensive income, net of income tax		
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	727,141	521,378

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Position

AS AT 30 JUNE 2024

	NOTE	2024 \$	2023 \$
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,870,882	1,169,575
Trade and other receivables	4	628,460	120,665
Other assets	5	24,586	16,921
		2,523,928	1,307,161
Non-current assets			
Property, plant and equipment	6	77,439	59,789
Right of Use of Assets	7	1,167,541	1,172,434
		1,244,980	1,232,223
Total assets		3,768,908	2,539,384
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Trade and other payables	8	102,925	79,626
Income in advance	9	902,140	307,750
Lease liabilities	7	54,348	39,774
Employee Benefits	10	50,232	117,272
		1,109,643	544,423
Non-current liabilities			
Lease liabilities	7	1,169,041	1,230,170
Employee Benefits	10	2,578	4,287
		1,171,619	1,234,457
Total Liabilities		2,281,262	1,778,880
Net Assets		1,487,646	760,505
EQUITY			
Retained Suplus		63,864	63,864
Program Reserves	11	1,423,782	696,641
Total Equity		1,487,646	760,505

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	RETAINED SURPLUS \$	PROGRAM RESERVES \$	TOTAL \$
2024			
Balance at 1 July 2023	63,864	696,641	760,505
Surplus for the year	727,141	-	727,141
Transfer to program reserves	(727,141)	727,141	-
Balance at 30 June 2024	63,864	1,423,782	1,487,646
2023			
Balance at 1 July 2022	63,864	175,264	239,128
Surplus for the year	521,377	-	521,377
Transfer to program reserves	(521,377)	521,377	-
Balance at 30 June 2023	63,864	696,641	760,505

Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

	NOTE	2024 \$	2023 \$
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Receipts from Contracts		2,578,456	2,334,797
Payments to suppliers and employees		(1,720,433)	(1,574,510)
Interest paid		(58,573)	(60,303)
Net cash (used in) / provided by operating activities		799,450	699,984
Cash flows from investing activities:			
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		(49,561)	(8,479)
Net cash used in investing activities		(49,561)	(8,479)
Cash flows from financing activities:			
Repayments of lease liabilities		(48,582)	(34,640)
Net cash used in financing activities		(48,582)	(34,640)
Net increase/ (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents held		701,307	656,865
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year		1,169,575	512,710
Cash and cash equivalents at end of year	3	1,870,882	1,169,575

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2024

The financial report covers Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc. as an individual entity. Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc. is a not-for-profit Association incorporated in Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* and registered as a charity under the *Australian Charities and Non-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

1 Basis of preparation

In the opinion of the Committee the Association is not a reporting entity since there are no users dependent on general purpose financial statements. These special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and the needs of members.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows, AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors, AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures and AASB 1048 Interpretation of Standards.

2 Summary of material accounting policies

(a) Income tax

The Association is exempt from income tax under Division 50 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

(b) Revenue and other income

Revenue

The Association's main revenue stream relates to Government and other grants. Where there are performance obligations attached to these grants, revenue is recognised as the performance obligations are achieved. Where there are no obligations attached, grant monies are recognised when the right to receive the funds has been established.

Other income is recognised when the right to receive the income has been established. In most cases, this is on receipt.

(c) Property, plant and equipment

Each class of plant and equipment is carried at cost less any accumulated depreciation and impairment.

Items of plant and equipment acquired for nil or nominal consideration have been recorded at the acquisition date fair value.

Depreciation

Plant and equipment is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the assets useful life to the Association, commencing when the asset is ready for use.

Leased assets and leasehold improvements are amortised over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or their estimated useful life.

The depreciation rates used for each class of depreciable asset are shown below::

Fixed asset class	Depreciation rate
Plant and Equipment	10% - 25%
Leasehold improvements	10%

At the end of each annual reporting period, the depreciation method, useful life and residual value of each asset is reviewed. Any revisions are accounted for prospectively as a change in estimate.

(d) Employee benefits

The liability for long service leave is recognised and measured as the present value of expected future payments to be made in respect of services provided by employees up to the reporting date. The liability is calculated using employee wage increases and adjusted for the probability of employee remaining in the entity's employment until the leave is expected to be taken. The liability is discounted using discount rates published by the Department of Treasury and Finance as at the reporting date. The liability includes on-costs such as superannuation and payroll tax where applicable.

Annual leave is recorded at the undiscounted amount expected to be paid based on current pay rates. The full liability for unused annual leave is recognised, as employees are entitled to cash payment for unused leave on termination of employment.

(e) Comparative amounts

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated.

(f) Economic dependency

The Association is dependant on Victoria Legal Aid for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business.

At the date of this report the Committee has no reason to believe that Victoria Legal Aid will not continue to support the Association for the next three years.

	2024 \$	2023 \$
--	------------	------------

3 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash on hand	-	196
Bank balances	1,870,882	1,169,379
	1,870,882	1,169,575

4 Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables	580,016	109,445
Other receivables	48,444	11,220
	628,460	120,665

5 Other assets

Prepayments	24,586	16,921
	24,586	16,921

6 Property, plant and equipment

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Furniture and equipment At cost	162,110	135,139
Accumulated depreciation	(119,940)	(93,879)
	42,169	41,260
Motor Vehicles At cost	22,998	22,998
Accumulated depreciation	(12,329)	(8,773)
	10,669	14,225
Computer Software At cost	22,590	-
Accumulated depreciation	(1,506)	-
	21,084	-
Leasehold improvements At cost	24,687	24,687
Accumulated depreciation	(21,170)	(20,382)
	3,517	4,305
Total property, plant and equipment	77,439	59,790

(a) Movements in carrying amounts of property, plant and equipment

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of property, plant and equipment between the beginning and the end of the current financial year:

	FURNITURE & EQUIPMENT \$	MOTOR VEHICLES \$	LEASEHOLD IMPROVEMENTS \$	COMPUTER SOFTWARE \$	TOTAL \$
Year ended 30 June 2024					
Balance at the beginning of year	41,260	14,225	4,305	-	59,790
Additions	26,970	-	-	22,590	49,560
Depreciation expense	(26,061)	(3,556)	(788)	(1,506)	(31,911)
Balance at the end of the year	42,169	10,669	3,517	21,084	77,439

7 Leases

Association as a lessee

The Association has a lease over the building at 5 Chancery Lane, Ballarat which commenced on 1 November 2018 for a term of five years. The lease has options for four further terms of five years each. The lease option for an additional 5 years was exercised in 2023.

	2024 \$	2023 \$
(a) Right-of-use assets		
Right-of-use asset over buildings	1,310,428	1,397,692
Less accumulated depreciation	(145,603)	(229,603)
	1,164,825	1,168,089
Right-of-use asset over plant and equipment	8,147	8,147
Less accumulated depreciation	(5,432)	(3,802)
	2,716	4,345
Total right-of-use assets	1,167,541	1,172,434

Movement in the carrying amounts for each class of Right of Use Asset between the beginning and the end of the financial year:

	BUILDINGS \$	PLANT AND EQUIPMENT \$	TOTAL \$
Year ended 30 June 2024			
Balance at beginning of year	1,168,089	4,345	1,172,434
Carrying value adjustment	69,538	34	69,572
Depreciation expense	(72,802)	(1,663)	(74,465)
Balance at end of year	1,164,825	2,716	1,167,541

Maturity analysis of lease liabilities

The maturity analysis of lease liabilities based on contractual undiscounted cash flows is shown in the table below:

Lease liabilities	< 1 YEAR \$	1-5 YEARS \$	> 5 YEARS \$	TOTAL UNDISCOUNTED LEASE LIABILITIES \$	LEASE LIABILITIES INCLUDED IN THIS STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION \$
2024					
Lease liabilities	110,220	326,542	1,553,659	1,990,420	1,223,388
2023					
Lease liabilities	97,897	291,786	1,475,601	1,865,284	1,269,944

7 Leases (continued)**(c) Lease amounts in Statement of Comprehensive Income**

The amounts recognised in the statement of comprehensive income relating to leases where the Association is a lessee are shown below:

	2024 \$	2023 \$
Interest expense on lease liability	58,573	60,303
Depreciation of right-of-use assets	74,465	59,076
	133,038	119,379

8 Trade and other payables

Trade payables	47,829	31,444
Accrued expenses	47,325	21,654
GST payable	7,771	25,169
	102,925	78,267

9 Income in advance

Department of Justice	136,040	-
Victoria Legal Aid	150,000	-
Federation of CLCs Victoria	559,768	307,750
Victoria Law Foundation	18,000	-
Women's Legal Service Victoria	38,332	-
	902,140	307,750

10 Employee Benefits

CURRENT		
Annual leave	48,145	73,044
Long service leave	-	35,702
Time in lieu	2,087	8,526
	50,232	117,272
NON-CURRENT		
Long service leave	2,578	4,287
	2,578	4,287
	52,810	121,559

11 Program reserves

	2024 \$	2023 \$
CLSP funding		
Opening balance	354,874	93,602
Income	870,524	875,613
Transfer from COVID	-	32,448
Transfer from CLCFVA	(163,037)	-
Expenses	(830,456)	(646,790)
	231,906	354,874
CLCFVA funding		
Opening balance	(156,129)	(149,469)
Income	130,054	122,844
Transfer from CLSP	163,037	-
Expenses	(109,150)	(129,504)
	27,812	(156,129)
VLS funding		
Opening balance	57,616	-
Income	187,067	60,000
Expenses	(119,296)	(2,384)
	125,387	57,616
FASS funding		
Opening balance	64,799	-
Income	144,365	139,333
Expenses	(120,273)	(74,534)
	88,891	64,799
SFVC funding		
Opening balance	78,376	76,989
Income	294,431	280,892
Expenses	(286,629)	(279,505)
	86,178	78,376
DOJ Integrated Services funding		
Opening balance	297,104	88,928
Income	952,043	665,751
Expenses	(385,538)	(457,575)
	863,609	297,104
	1,423,782	696,641

12 Events after the end of the reporting period

Subsequent to the end of the reporting period no matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or could significantly affect the operations of the Association, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the Association in future financial years.

13 Association details

The registered office of the Association is:


Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc. 5 Chancery Lane BALLARAT VIC 3350

Committee Declaration

The committee declares in their opinion:

- (i) there are reasonable grounds to believe that the registered entity is able to pay all of its debts, as and when they become due and payable; and
- (ii) the financial statements and notes satisfy requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*.

Signed in accordance with subsection 60.15(2) of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013.



Paul Ryan
Chair, Board
14 November 2024



Peter Newsome
Chair, Finance and Audit Committee,
acting Treasurer
14 November 2024

AUDITORS INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
UNDER 60-40 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION ACT 2012
TO THE BOARD OF BALLARAT & GRAMPIANS COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.

As auditor for Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2024, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- a) No contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 in relation to the audit; and
- b) No contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

This declaration is in respect of Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc.



Stephen Kirtley

Director

Dated this 18th day of November, 2024

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd
101 West Fyans Street
Geelong, Victoria 3220

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**TO THE MEMBERS OF BALLARAT & GRAMPIANS COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.****Opinion**

We have audited the financial report of Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2024, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the declaration by those charged with governance.

In our opinion the financial report of Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service Inc. has been prepared in accordance with Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act), including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June 2024 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extend described in Note 1 and Division 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ACNC Act, the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We confirm that the independence declaration required by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, which has been given to the directors of the company, would be in the same terms if given to the directors as at the time of this auditor's report.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purposes of fulfilling the Company's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our report is not modified in respect of this matter.



Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report in accordance with the ACNC Act, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial report.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial report is located at the Auditing and Assurance Standards Board website at: <http://www.auasb.gov.au/Home.aspx>. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Stephen Kirtley
Director

Dated this 18th day of November, 2024

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd
101 West Fyans Street
Geelong, Victoria 3220



BALLARAT & GRAMPIANS COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE



Contact BGCLS

Our office can be contacted between 9.00am - 5.00pm, Monday to Friday.

IN PERSON

5 Chancery Lane, Ballarat 3350
91A Wilson Street, Horsham 3400

BY POST

PO Box 547 Ballarat 3353

BY PHONE OR EMAIL OR TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT

(03) 5331 5999 | 1800 466 488 (freecall)
reception@bgcls.org.au | Fax: (03) 5331 8239

www.bgcls.org.au

HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday to Friday 9.00am - 5.00pm (Wednesday evening by appointment)
Closed Victorian and Local Public Holidays

TELEPHONE INTERPRETER SERVICE

Phone: 131 450 (within Australia), ask them to call (03) 5331 5999