



Inclusive Justice

Day 1

3 September 2025

Park Royal Parramatta

Time and Location	Topic	Speakers
8.15am	Registration, tea and coffee	
9.00am	Plenary sessions	
9.00am	Welcome to Country	Aunty Kerrie Kenton
9.05am	Welcome and housekeeping	Kirsty Harrison , Acting Deputy Director Civil, Legal Aid NSW
9.15am	Opening keynote address	Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts , Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People Commissioner (ACT), Lawyer, Writer and Storyteller
10.05am	Morning tea	
10.45am	<p>Panel discussion – Breaking down the barriers to inclusive justice</p> <p>This panel discussion will identify barriers to inclusivity and consider ways that we can work towards a more inclusive justice system and better outcomes for all.</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Facilitator: Merinda Dutton, Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Giancarlo de Vera, CEO, Being, Mental Health Consumers</p> <p>Giridharan Sivaraman, Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission</p> <p>Judge Nell Skinner, President of the Children's Court of NSW and District Court Judge</p>
12.00pm	Concurrent sessions	
Plenary	<p>Inclusive Justice – Building accessible legal services for clients with disability</p> <p>Learn how to work in a more inclusive way with clients with disability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the concept of inclusive justice and why it matters. • Identify barriers people with disabilities face in accessing justice. • Learn about adjustments that can be made to legal service delivery. • Develop practical strategies to make legal services more inclusive. <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Facilitator: Sally Deans, Managing Solicitor, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Danielle Santos, Solicitor, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Dr Scott Avery, Professor of Indigenous Disability, Health and Wellbeing, School of Public Health, University of Technology Sydney</p> <p>Tomas Rolfe, Caseworker, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW</p>

12.00pm Gidley- King	<p>Justice in every voice - Cultural competence across socio-legal work</p> <p>Join us for an interactive session designed to strengthen your cultural competence when working across diverse communities in socio-legal contexts. This session will feature:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal insights from experienced practitioners who have worked extensively with clients from culturally diverse communities. • Strategies for identifying and addressing blind spots in cross-cultural engagement. • Practical tools and professional skills to support inclusive, respectful, and effective client interactions. <p>This is an opportunity to reflect, learn, and grow in your practice, ensuring that every voice is heard and every client is served with cultural competence.</p>	<p>Facilitator: Gary Koh, Executive Assistant and Project Officer, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Nohara Odicho, Community Engagement Officer, Refugee Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Oliver Slewa, Founder, Shayna Humanitarian</p> <p>Sally McDonnell-Adams, Team Leader, Allied Professional Services Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW</p>
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CPD points: 1 Professional Skills

12.00pm Marsden	<p>What's new in consumer law? Buy Now Pay Later and Scams</p> <p>Learn about how recent changes to the regulation of Buy Now Pay Later products provide greater consumer protection for consumers. We also deep dive in into the emerging issue of scams, covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How AFCA are dealing with scam complaints • What issues AFCA will take into consideration in a consumer complaint against a bank • Changes expected under the new Scams Prevention Framework 	<p>Nerida Walker, Senior Solicitor Consumer, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Tami Sokol, Ombudsman, Australian Financial Complaints Authority</p>
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CPD points: 1 Substantive Law

1.00pm	Lunch	
2.00pm	Concurrent sessions:	

Plenary	<p>Invisible Chains – Confronting modern slavery with civil law</p> <p>Modern slavery isn't confined to overseas supply chains - it is present in communities across NSW, sometimes hidden in plain sight. This panel brings together leading experts, including the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, the lawyer behind landmark Federal Court cases, a Legal Aid lawyer leading a major coronial inquest into the death of a migrant worker, and the head of Anti-Slavery Australia experienced in spotting exploitation in unexpected contexts. Together, they will show why this is a pressing legal issue for all civil lawyers, how it can intersect with employment, migration, tenancy, and other civil law matters, and the practical steps civil lawyers can take to identify, support, and advocate for affected clients and communities.</p>	<p>Panel Facilitator: Giles Fryer, Senior Solicitor Workplace Rights Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>David Hillard, Pro Bono Partner, Clayton Utz</p> <p>Dr James Cockayne, NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, NSW Communities and Justice</p> <p>Professor Jennifer Burn AM, Founder, Anti-Slavery Australia</p> <p>Sheeza Naz, Senior Solicitor, Coronial Inquests Unit, Legal Aid NSW</p>
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CPD points: 1 Substantive law

2.00 Gidley- King 2.00pm Gidley- King	<p>HAC the hearing – Winning strategies for a rent subsidy cancellation</p> <p>This session is a practical session that explores ways to improve your advocacy and confidence in rent subsidy cancellation matters. It will show the interaction between NCAT proceedings and social housing appeals processes, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What exactly “rent” is for social housing tenants. • When and how to ask for an adjournment from NCAT. • How to manage internal appeals and HAC hearings concurrently with NCAT proceedings. • How to negotiate and draft a settlement agreement. 	<p>Amanda Brooker, Senior Solicitor Civil, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Jennifer Lee, Senior Solicitor Housing, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Olivia Todhunter, Housing Specialist Solicitor, Legal Aid NSW</p>
CPD points: 1 Substantive Law		
2.00pm Marsden	<p>Fines and fault lines – Fines law, remedies and Work and Development Orders</p> <p>In this session you will learn about fines law and remedies through an interactive workshop of case studies and hands on buzzers. The session will also cover the recently updated Work and Development Order Guidelines which have expanded the reach of the scheme.</p>	<p>Christine Harvey, Community Engagement Officer, Work and Development Order Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Karina Inostroza, Solicitor, Work and Development Order Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Linda Meyns, Senior Policy and Project Officer, NSW Communities and Justice</p>
CPD points: 1 Substantive Law		
3.00pm	Afternoon tea	
3.30pm	Plenary sessions	
	<p>At the intersections - Sisters inside and out</p> <p>The session will consider the intersections of criminal, family and civil law issues when working with clients facing a custodial sentence, in custody or leaving custody, and the effect that their incarceration can have on families and the broader community.</p>	<p>Panel facilitator: Bianca Dufty, Deputy Director Family Law, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Debbie Kilroy AOM, Founder, Sisters Inside</p> <p>Rachel Durmush, Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW</p>
CPD points: 1 Professional Skills		
4.35pm	Plenary address	<p>Katie Kiss, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission</p>
4.55pm	Close day 1	<p>Kirsty Harrison, Acting Deputy Director Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW</p>



Inclusive Justice

Day 2

4 September 2025

Park Royal Parramatta

Time and Location	Topic	Speaker
8.15am	Registration, tea and coffee	
9.00am	Plenary sessions	
9.00am	Opening	Kirsty Harrison , Acting Deputy Director Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW
9.05am	Keynote address	Jackie Finlay , Acting Executive Director Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW
9.30am	<p>The inclusivity of legal ethics</p> <p>A discussion of how our professional ethical obligations uphold the rule of law for all. "Omnium ius defendimus" – the motto of the Law Society. How does that work in the daily grind?</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Ethics</p>	Linden Barnes , Senior Ethics Solicitor, The Law Society of NSW
10.35am	Poetry performance	Rob Waters , Australian Poetry Slam Champion
10.45am	Morning tea	
11.15am	Concurrent sessions	
Plenary	<p>Inclusive justice for LGBTQIA+ communities</p> <p>LGBTQIA+ people in Australia experience legal need at rates significantly higher than the general population.</p> <p>This session will explore barriers to inclusive justice faced by LGBTQIA+ communities. We will hear about the findings and recommendations of a soon to be released report by the Inner City Legal Centre – <i>Blueprint for Equality</i> and consider ways that we can work in practice to make our services more inclusive and achieve better outcomes for clients.</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Panel Facilitator: Ammy Lewis, Solicitor in Charge, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Alastair Lawrie, Director of Policy and Advocacy, Justice and Equity Centre</p> <p>Olivia Ronan, Barrister and Chair, Inner City Legal Centre</p>

Gidley-King	<p>Understanding neurodiversity and neurodivergence</p> <p>This session will explore deep acceptance and support of neurotypes and needs within a regulatory and neuro affirming framework. The session will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive terminology and how to use language to create neuro affirming culture • The value in exploring neurotypes as a way of better understanding • The benefits of implementing processes steeped in modern neuroscience and to find ways to let go of behavioural based pedagogies <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Allison Davies, International speaker, Educator and Therapist, Founder - Music and the Brain</p>
Marsden	<p>Pursuing inclusive justice in visa cancellation matters</p> <p>This session will explore how the <i>Migration Act</i> affects the expedited merits review process at the Administrative Review Tribunal for those who have their visas cancelled or refused under the character provisions of the Act. It examines how relevant provisions of the Act operate together with the ART's purpose to ensure review processes are independent, fair, efficient, accessible and affordable. In this session, the speakers will explore reform they consider would enhance the quality of administrative decisions and facilitate meeting the objectives of the new ART.</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Substantive Law</p>	<p>Jessica Schulman, Senior Solicitor, Immigration and Refugee Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Checker McCarthy, Solicitor, Mental Health Advocacy Service, Legal Aid NSW</p>
12.15pm	Lunch	
1.15pm	Plenary sessions	
1.15pm	<p>Aboriginal cultural safety – A connected framework for inclusion</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Rowena Lawrie, Director and Founder, Yamurrah</p>
2.15pm	Poetry performance	<p>Samantha Bun, Poet, Learning Coordinator, Organisational Development, Legal Aid NSW</p>
2.25pm	<p>Better together – Inclusive justice through partnership</p> <p>This panel discussion explores partnership as an avenue for inclusive justice. Panellist will share their reflections on how working in partnership can transform how we work, what we do and create life changing outcome for our clients.</p> <p>CPD points: 1 Professional Skills</p>	<p>Panel facilitator: Rebekah Doran, Manager Strategy, Policy and Projects, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Denise Wireko-Brobby, Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Elizabeth Lehmann, Senior Solicitor, Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Natalie Bradshaw, Solicitor in Charge, Housing Specialist Team, Legal Aid NSW</p> <p>Taylah Gray, Solicitor in Charge, Newcastle (Bolton Street Office), Legal Aid NSW</p>
3.25pm	Conference close	

Keynote Speakers

Judge Nell Skinner



President of the Children's Court NSW and District Court Judge

Admitted to the legal profession in 2000, Judge Skinner practiced at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Legal Aid NSW, and the Aboriginal Legal Service. Her Honour was appointed as a Magistrate of the Local Court in 2009, and then as President of the Children's Court and a Judge of the District Court in November 2021.

Giridharan Sivaraman



Race Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

Giridharan Sivaraman commenced as Australia's Race Discrimination Commissioner in March 2024. Prior to becoming Commissioner, he was Principal Lawyer with Maurice Blackburn where he led the firm's Queensland Employment Law department. He also held the position of Chair of Multicultural Australia from 2021-2024 and was a member of the Queensland Multicultural Advisory Council from 2019-2024, where he was an advocate for the rights of victims of racial vilification.

Commissioner Sivaraman was born in India and migrated to Australia as a child. His anti-discrimination legal and advocacy work is based on his strong passion for human rights, as well as his moral conviction to speak truth, to empower and fight for the rights of the marginalised, oppressed, and vilified.

Katie Kiss

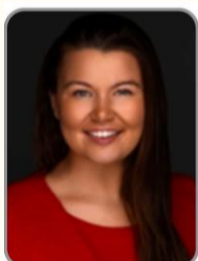


Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission

Katie Kiss commenced as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Commissioner on 3 April 2024. She is a proud Kaanju and Birri/Widi woman who grew up in Rockhampton, Central Queensland on the lands of the Darumbal People.

She was previously the Executive Director of the Interim Truth and Treaty Body supporting Queensland's Path to Treaty, and held senior positions in the Queensland Government, including Chief of Staff to the Minister for Seniors, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, and Senior Advisor to the Deputy Premier. Commissioner Kiss also worked for eight years at the Australian Human Rights Commission, where she was the Director of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Justice Team.

Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts



Commissioner, Lawyer, Writer and Storyteller

Vanessa Turnbull-Roberts is a passionate advocate driving national discourse on human rights, children's rights, and justice for Indigenous peoples. After escaping the child protection system at 18, Vanessa pursued studies in law and social work at the University of New South Wales. Her dedication to human rights advocacy earned her the Australian Human Rights Medal, awarded by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Vanessa is a Fulbright Scholar and has established significant national relationships in the human rights field and is a recognised leader, speaker and media commentator in Australia and worldwide. Currently, Vanessa is completing her PhD at the University of Technology, focusing her research on decolonizing child protection systems for First Nations peoples. Vanessa's critical perspective on the criminal justice and family policing / child removal systems is essential to promoting self-determination and healing for First Nations lives. In 2023, she was appointed as the inaugural Commissioner for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children and Young People.

Giancarlo de Vera



CEO, BEING – Mental Health Consumers

Giancarlo de Vera (they/them) is a respected disability, racial justice and LGBTQIA+ human rights advocate. They are a proud queer, non-binary intersectional leader with disability from a culturally and racially marginalised background, who has represented Australia at the United Nations on disability rights multiple times. Giancarlo is currently CEO of BEING – Mental Health Consumers, the NSW peak body for mental health consumers and psychosocial disability. They are also the Senior Co-Chair of the Disability Rights Committee for Australian Lawyers for Human Rights, Secretary of Disabled Australian Lawyers Association, Treasurer of the Australian Centre for Disability Law, and Chair of the City of Sydney's Inclusion (Disability) Panel.

Giancarlo sits on the boards of the NSW Ageing and Disability Commission, the NSW Mental Health Coordinating Council, the National Mental Health Consumer Alliance, the Tenants Union of NSW, and the Australian Government's National Disability Data Asset Council. Giancarlo is an Ambassador for Rainbow Giving Australia and for the Australian Human Rights Commission's Equality at Work and IncludeAbility project and was a previous Australian Government Ambassador for the United Nations International Day of People with Disability. They have also served as President of the Australian GLBTIQA+ Multicultural Council and has been recognised as one of the 40 Under 40 Most Influential Asian Australians, and as one of Pro Bono Australia's Impact 25, a publicly voted list of Australians making the most social impact in Australia and abroad.

Rowena Lawrie



Director and Founder, Yamurrah

Rowena Lawrie is mother, daughter, granddaughter, sister, Aunty, cousin, community member, friend and is the Director and Founder of Yamurrah, leading a Collective of over 35 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals in training, clinical services, and cultural consultancy. Rowena is a PhD Candidate with 30+ years' experience, and blends social work, law, and neuroscience to address complex systemic trauma and support healing. Deeply connected to Darkinjung Country, a descendant of Wakka Wakka, Wiradjuri nations; her matriarchal line stretches to North Leichardt River, Gulf of Carpenteria. Beyond her professional and personal roles, that keep her grounded and laughing, she finds joy in hiking, dance, theatre, the arts, and the magic of being on Country. In 2023, she was named AASW Aboriginal Social Worker of the Year in 2023 and in 2025, Rowena proudly became a kidney donor to her daughter battling chronic kidney disease.

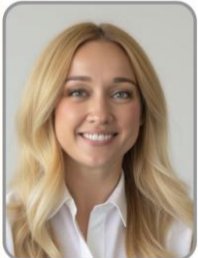
Jackie Finlay



Acting Executive Director Civil, Legal Aid NSW

Jackie Finlay is the Deputy Director Civil Law at Legal Aid NSW, leading teams delivering state-wide services for disadvantaged communities including the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Mental Health Advocacy Service, Prisoners Civil Law Service, Work and Development Order Service, Children's Civil Law Service, Elder Abuse Service and Disability Legal Support Service. Jackie practised as a lawyer for over 25 years, with a focus on administrative law. She established Legal Aid NSW's first specialist social security practice and the National Disability Insurance Scheme appeals service. She previously worked at community legal centres in NSW and the ACT, including as the Principal Solicitor at the Welfare Rights Centre, Sydney.

Kirsty Harrison



Acting Deputy Director Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW

Kirsty Harrison is the Associate Director Civil Law for Regional NSW, responsible for overseeing the Dubbo, Nowra, and Newcastle offices, and leading civil law service delivery across regional practices. With nearly two decades of experience in operational leadership, legal practice and policy reform, Kirsty has represented Legal Aid on governance and advisory bodies and is recognised for building strong relationships across government and the justice sector to deliver accessible, client-centred legal services.

Speakers – In Alphabetical Order

Alastair Lawrie



Director of Policy and Advocacy, Justice and Equity Centre

Alastair Lawrie (he/him) is the Director of Policy and Advocacy at the Justice and Equity Centre (formerly the Public Interest Advocacy Centre), where he works on a range of issues, including anti-discrimination law reform, with a particular focus on the issue of LGBTQ+ students and teachers in religious schools. He has previously worked at Hepatitis NSW, as a federal ministerial adviser to the Rudd and Gillard Governments and in the Victorian state public service, including Victoria Legal Aid.

Alastair is a long-term advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and has been involved in a large number of community organisations. He currently serves on the boards of LGBTQ+ Health Australia and Twenty10, is on the LGBTI sub-committee of Australian Lawyers for Human Rights and is Co-Chair of the Tennis Australia LGBTQIA+ Advisory Group.

Allison Davies



International Speaker, Educator and Therapist. Founder – Music and the Brain.

Allison Davies is an international speaker renowned for her ability to entertain a room with her unique 'storytelling mixed with science' approach to education, as well as sharing enlightening excerpts of her lived experience of autism/ADHD and raising a neurodivergent family. Allison creates online resources for parents, educators and support staff, and works with schools to deliver professional development around the topics of childhood brain development and the use of music as a regulatory tool. She is an independent liberatory scholar currently exploring the gatekeeping and classism of the social construct 'musical vs non musical'. Allison holds a Bachelor of Music and Bachelor of Teaching (University of New England, 2003), a Master of Music Therapy (University of Queensland, 2005) and Neurologic Music Therapy training (Academy of Neurologic Music Therapy, 2016).

Amanda Brooker



Senior Solicitor, Civil Law, Parramatta, Legal Aid NSW

Amanda Brooker is a senior solicitor in the Combined Civil Specialist – Housing Team. Amanda joined Legal Aid in 2023 from the Inner-City Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service at Redfern Legal Centre where she had worked as a Tenants Advocate and Solicitor since 2017. Amanda has particular interest in the mandatory termination provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act 2010* (NSW) and how they're applied by the Tribunal and enjoys the unique challenges (aka. Chaos) that advocacy in both NCAT and its Appeal Panel provides. Outside of work Amanda is a keen hiker, lover of the ocean and doting dog mum to a blue staffy called Frog.

Ammy Lewis



Solicitor in Charge, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW

Ammy Lewis is a proud Guringai woman, and lifelong member of the LGTBQIA+ community. Prior to joining the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities as the Solicitor in Charge, Ammy led the newly established Respectful Workplace Support Team at Legal Aid. Ammy is passionate about breaking down barriers to workplace inclusion and unleashing the power of diversity. In 2023 Ammy was the first queer, Aboriginal woman to lead out the Deloitte contingent at the World Pride march in Sydney.

Bianca Duffy



Deputy Director, Family Law, Legal Aid NSW

Bianca was appointed as the Deputy Director, Family Law in April 2025. She is a proud Ngemba and Gamilaraay woman, living on unceded Dharawal country. Bianca previously held roles in Legal Aid including Associate Director Greater Sydney, Family Law and was the founding Solicitor in Charge of the Family Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, which focuses the provision of culturally appropriate and holistic legal assistance and early intervention for families involved in the family law and child protection jurisdictions.

Bianca is a member of the Closing the Gap Steering Committee at Legal Aid and is Co-Chair of the Legally Queer network. In addition to her Legal Aid work, Bianca is a member of the Law Society's Indigenous Issues Committee and a Co-Chair of the Football NSW Indigenous Advisory Group, which focusses on grassroots participation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids in football.

Checker McCarthy



Solicitor, Immigration, Legal Aid NSW

Checker McCarthy is a civil lawyer at Legal Aid NSW Central Sydney focusing on administrative detention. Checker was previously a legal research trainer at BarNet JADE, delivering personalised legal research seminars for firms, chambers, and NSW State government offices. Checker is interested in the nexus between technology and the law and has published work on automated administrative decision-making and surveillance technology in Australia.

Christine Harvey



Community Engagement Officer, Work and Development Order Service, Legal Aid NSW

Christine Harvey is a Community Engagement Officer in the Work and Development Order (WDO) Service, servicing the northern NSW region (and Queensland clients and sponsors). Her work includes working with stakeholders and sponsors to promote the WDO scheme and increase opportunities for clients to participate in WDOs to reduce their NSW fines debt. She supports and trains sponsors in sponsoring WDOs and meeting their compliance requirements. Christine also works with clients with NSW fines debt referred from Revenue NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service and community organisations to find WDO placement, to submit fines debt write off applications or develop dual strategies for managing their fines debt.

Danielle Santos



Solicitor, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW

Danielle Santos is a disabled, queer, and mixed-race lawyer, researcher, and disability advocate with a decade of experience in disability policy, research, and direct support. She joined Legal Aid NSW's Disability Legal Support Service in 2024 and has previously worked with the Social Policy Research Centre, People with Disability Australia, and Intellectual Disability Rights Service, supporting clients across education, justice, and human rights contexts. Her independent research explores the impact of climate disasters on disabled communities in Australia and the Philippines, funded by a 2024 Disability Human Rights Seed Grant. Danielle's work is grounded in lived experience and shaped by co-design, disability justice, and access intimacy.

David Hillard



Pro Bono Partner, Clayton Utz

Appointed as the firm's first Pro Bono Partner in 2005, David has built Clayton Utz to become one of the world's leading pro bono firms, where advice and representation for low-income people who cannot obtain Legal Aid, and for the not-for-profit organisations which support them, is part of every lawyer's everyday practice.

Debbie Kilroy OAM



Founder - Sisters Inside

Debbie Kilroy OAM was first criminalised at the age of 13 and spent over two decades in and out of women's and children's prisons. Driven to end the criminalisation and imprisonment of girls and women, Debbie established Sisters Inside, as well as her law firm, Kilroy & Callaghan Lawyers. An unapologetic abolitionist, Debbie's activism work centres on dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex and all forms of carceral control and exile. With a firm belief that there should be 'nothing about us without us', Debbie established the National Network of Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls to centre the voices, experiences and aspirations of criminalised and imprisoned women and girls in order to change the face of justice in this country.

Denise Wireko-Brobby



Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW

Denise Wireko-Brobby began her legal career as a refugee lawyer in Nauru, an experience that shaped her passion for advocacy and supporting marginalised communities. She went on to serve as Policy & Advocacy Manager at the Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT), where she collaborated with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, government, and peak bodies to drive systemic change in youth justice, child protection, coercive control, and the Raising the Age campaign. Denise is now a Senior Solicitor with the Aboriginal Women Leaving Custody Service at Legal Aid NSW, working closely with Corrective Services and support services to provide holistic assistance to women in custody. She is committed to systemic advocacy and reform that amplifies the voices of those most affected.

Elizabeth Lehmann



Senior Solicitor, Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal Aid NSW

Elizabeth Lehmann is a Senior Solicitor in the Disaster Response Legal Service at Legal Aid NSW. A Northern Rivers local living on Bunjalung Country, she joined Legal Aid around the time of the 2022 Northern Rivers flood event and has since responded to several disasters across the state. She previously worked at the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Aboriginal Legal Service.

When not attending to disasters, you can usually find her surfing waves or hiking trails.

Gary Koh



Executive Assistant and Project Officer, Legal Aid NSW

Gary Koh was born in Singapore and moved reluctantly to Canberra in his teens. He came to Legal Aid NSW in 2021 after a long stint in community development, spending years supporting vulnerable populations through frontline service delivery, project leadership, and cross-sector collaboration. His smorgasbord career spans both government and non-profit sectors, including extensive work in Hong Kong leading residential rehabilitation programs and multi-year, cross-cultural community development projects. More recently, he worked on implementing Legal Aid NSW's Cultural Competence & Diversity Framework.

Giles Fryer



Senior Solicitor, Workplace Rights Service, Legal Aid NSW

Giles Fryer is a Senior Solicitor in the Workplace Rights Service at Legal Aid NSW. He has worked in employment law for nearly a decade with previous roles at the Fair Work Commission and as a Judge's Associate in the Federal Circuit and Family Court.

Dr James Cockayne



NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner

James Cockayne is NSW's inaugural Anti-slavery Commissioner. Prior to his appointment, Dr Cockayne was an international lawyer, professor of global politics and antislavery leader. A former member of the World Economic Forum Global Futures Council for Equity and Social Justice, Dr Cockayne was a founder of Code 8.7, Finance Against Slavery and Trafficking (FAST) and the United Nations' anti-slavery knowledge platform, Delta 8.7. Dr Cockayne has previously led the United Nations University Centre for Policy Research, the US Council on Foreign Relations Study Group on Human Trafficking, the Center for Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, and the Transnational Crime Unit of the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department.

Jen Lee

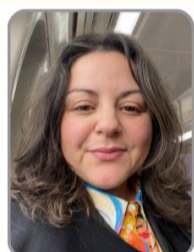


Senior Solicitor Housing, Legal Aid NSW

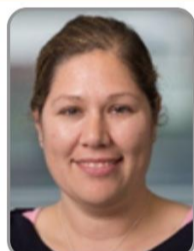
Jen Lee started in the Combined Civil Law Specialists Team at Legal Aid NSW as a paralegal over 10 years ago. She's worked in various teams and offices since then and is currently a senior solicitor in the Housing team. The team's focus is on providing legal services to prevent homelessness and specialises in appealing decisions made by NCAT's Consumer and Commercial Division, terminating social housing tenancies, to the NCAT Appeal Panel. Jen is currently working alongside others on a project with Legal Aid's Strategic Law Reform Unit that's aimed at improving transparency and consistency of decisions made by social housing landlords throughout the sector.

Professor Jennifer Burn**Director of Anti-Slavery Australia, University of Technology Sydney**

Jennifer Burn is the Director of Anti-Slavery Australia at the University of Technology Sydney. Through her research, advocacy and practice she has pursued legislative amendments and policy developments to promote best practice responses for the prevention of modern slavery and to ensure survivors have access to the protection and support they need. Jennifer is nationally recognised as a leader in the field of modern slavery, particularly for her work on prevention and victim support. Jennifer was appointed to the inaugural Australian Government National Roundtable on Human Trafficking in 2008 and continues to serve. Jennifer served as the Interim Anti-Slavery Commissioner for NSW, 2018 - 2020. She is a member of the NSW Police Commissioner's Police Multicultural Advisory Council, a Board Member of the Mercy Foundation, an external member on the Commonwealth Bank Modern Slavery Advisory Council and an oversight member of the NZ University of Auckland Centre for Research on Modern Slavery. She has been recognised for her significant service to the law in the field of anti-slavery and migration as a Member of the Order of Australia. Recently, Jennifer chaired the working group of the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery to update the NGO Guidelines for Working with Trafficked People, and the new 4th edition Practice Guidelines for Organisations: Working with People in or at Risk of Modern Slavery were published in 2025.

Jessica Schulman**Senior Solicitor, Immigration, Legal Aid NSW**

Jessica Schulman has been working in immigration law since 2012. Jessica has worked as a solicitor in the immigration team at Legal Aid NSW since 2022. Prior to this she worked as a solicitor at the Immigration Advice and Rights Centre, and the AAT. She is vocationally passionate about advocating for vulnerable migrants and for better access to legal services, support and justice. Jessica lives in the Blue Mountains and regularly shares her caravan office with a little old dog and a very feisty free-range rabbit (who are surprisingly good friends).

Karina Inostroza**Solicitor, Work and Development Order Service, Legal Aid NSW**

Karina Inostroza is a solicitor in the Fines and WDO Service team within Legal Aid NSW. Her role is to advise, assist and represent clients with fines debt. Also to expand and broaden the WDO scheme. Karina has over 8 years' experience in delivering education, building awareness and capability about Work & Development Orders to not for profit organisations, government agencies, youth workers, school support officers and young people, to help them clear fines debt.

Linda Meyns**Senior Policy and Project Officer, Department of Communities and Justice**

Linda Meyns started working as a solicitor at Legal Aid NSW in the Work and Development Order (WDO) Service in 2012 as part of the inaugural WDO team. She played an integral role in establishing the infrastructure of WDO sponsors across Southern and Far West NSW and was the manager of the WDO Service from 2019 to 2021. Since 2022 she has worked as the WDO project lead at the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) responsible for supporting the tri-agency governance of the WDO scheme and updating the WDO Guidelines. In early 2025, she was very proud to finalise and publish the new re-branded WDO Guidelines 2024 and Resource Kit.

Linden Barnes**Senior Ethics Solicitor, NSW Law Society**

Linden Barnes has been an ethics solicitor at the Law Society for 15 years providing guidance and education to the NSW legal profession as well as other professions and students, about legal professional ethics. This includes the ethics hotline, Continued Professional Development sessions and articles in the Law Society's publications.

Linden helps run the Ethics and Costs Committees of the Law Society, as well as the Professional Conduct Advisory Panel (which provides support to solicitors who are being investigated). Linden also provides one-on-one education sessions with solicitors who have been ordered by the regulator to do further ethics education. Outside of work, Linden enjoys walking, canoeing, building and gardening.

Merinda Dutton



Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW

Merinda Dutton is a Gumbaynggirr and Barkindji woman and is a senior solicitor in the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW. Merinda is the co-founder of [Blackfulla Bookclub](#), an online community for First Nations stories. In 2019 Merinda was recognised for her legal aid work with Aboriginal communities and awarded the National Indigenous Legal Professional of the Year.

Merinda is also an author and has been published in the Griffith Review, Sydney Review of Books, Australian Poetry Journal and was a contributor to book Words to Sing the World Alive.

Natalie Bradshaw



Solicitor in Charge, Housing Specialist Team, Legal Aid NSW

Natalie Bradshaw has over 15 years of social justice experience, working much of her legal career providing legal services in the area of housing and homelessness. She is the senior solicitor of the Legal Aid NSW Housing specialist team. The specialist team focuses on providing legal services to prevent homelessness, prioritising people that are more vulnerable to homelessness, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people exiting prison, people with mental illness and people experiencing domestic and family violence. She also manages the Legal Aid NSW Homelessness Program, which is a jointly funded program with the Department of Communities and Justice, to provide legal services to people that are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The focus of the work is to remove barriers to re-entry into housing or to prevent homelessness, in particular civil law problems that are known to contribute to homelessness.

Nerida Walker



Senior Solicitor, Consumer, Legal Aid NSW

Nerida is a senior solicitor in the Consumer Law team. She has over 30 years experience as a Legal Aid NSW solicitor in the areas of family law and civil law, where she has undertaken complex litigation in the District Court and Supreme Court. Nerida represents Legal Aid NSW and National Legal Aid in stakeholder engagement with federal and state regulators; and with the Australian Financial Complaints Authority.

Nohara Odicho



Community Engagement Officer, Refugee Service, Legal Aid NSW

Nohara Odicho has been a Community Engagement Officer in the Refugee Service of Legal Aid NSW since 2017. Her contributions were recognised with the 2019 NSW Humanitarian Award for outstanding achievement in the Community Worker from a Refugee Background category. Nohara has been involved in numerous community engagement projects, including the 'Refugees in Town' initiative with Tufts University (USA), which produced a significant report on young refugees and the law. She also initiated "The Ribbon," an illustrated bilingual children's book designed to inform refugee children and their families about legal assistance in Australia. Additionally, Nohara organises annual Court Open Days, aiming to strengthen community ties, improve referral pathways, and deepen cultural understanding among the diverse communities of Western Sydney.

Oliver Slewa



Founder - Shayna Humanitarian

Oliver Slewa is a legal practitioner and dedicated advocate with 14 years' experience across government and non-government sectors, specialising in policy, advocacy, and community engagement. He has led initiatives on refugee rights, social justice, and domestic and family violence, with extensive expertise in Domestic Violence Policy through roles in both NSW Government and the not-for-profit sector. As an Ambassador of the Refugee Council of Australia, Oliver champions the protection and inclusion of displaced people. His service has been recognised with the NSW Humanitarian Award (Government and Legal sector) and the 2025 Global Peace Award. A committed voice for human dignity, justice, and interfaith collaboration, he also serves as a board member and advisor to several organisations. Fluent in Assyrian and Arabic, Oliver brings both lived experience and professional expertise to his advocacy and leadership.

Olivia Ronan



Barrister, Director, and Chair of Inner City Legal Centre

Olivia Ronan is a barrister at Eleven Wentworth, who practises primarily in public and commercial law. Olivia has also been a director of the Inner City Legal Centre (ICLC) since 2016, and the chair of its board since 2020. ICLC is the community legal centre for Sydney's inner city and eastern suburbs and provides the statewide legal service for the LGBTIQ and sex worker communities. Prior to being called to the Bar, Olivia was counsel assisting the Solicitor-General of the Commonwealth, an associate to judges of the High Court of Australia and the Federal Court of Australia, and counsel at the Australian Government Solicitor. She also has research expertise in legal issues affecting the LGBTIQ community.

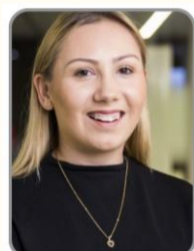
Olivia Todhunter



Solicitor, Specialist Housing team, Legal Aid NSW

Olivia Todhunter (she/her) is a solicitor with the specialist housing team, living in Dharawal Country. As a former tenants advocate and homeless outreach solicitor, her work is shaped by feminist and decolonial practices, and an understanding of the importance of non-legal work when it comes to achieving good housing outcomes. A lover of a good yap, she is keen on training other solicitors to do complex housing casework, upskilling support workers to identify housing issues, and enhancing the overall capacity of community members to self-advocate and come together. In her free time she sews, climbs, boardgames and longs for more garden time in the sun with her dog.

Rachel Durmush



Senior Solicitor, Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, Legal Aid NSW

Rachel Durmush is a Weilwan and Gomeroi woman and is currently a senior solicitor with the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities. Rachel began her legal career at the Aboriginal Legal Service advocating for our mob in 2019. In 2022, Rachel joined as a criminal law solicitor in the Prisoners Legal Service team, appearing for clients before the State Parole Authority in parole hearings. In 2024, Rachel joined the Indictable team in head office, defending clients charged with serious and strictly indictable charges across the Sydney Metropolitan area. Most recently Rachel joined the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities, specifically working with Aboriginal women in custody and she now works in the broader outreach team. In Rachel's spare time she enjoys exploring new cafes with her rottweiler Pearl and Golden Retriever Ollie.

Rebekah Doran



Manager Strategy, Policy and Projects, Civil Projects team, Legal Aid NSW

Rebekah Doran has almost 20 years' experience in the legal assistance sector and is passionate about building targeted, client centred and high-quality legal assistance services. Rebekah spent her formative, early career in student unions and as volunteer in community legal centres in Australia and the United States. This period strengthened a commitment to social justice and taking a collaborative, grassroots approach to organising.

During her time at Legal Aid NSW Rebekah has led a range of services and strategic projects, including the Mortgage Hardship Service in response to the global financial crisis and establishing the *Money Counts* project, which later transformed into the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities. In 2018 Rebekah led the creation of a single, civil law team for the large Western Sydney catchment and coordinated the legal assistance sector response to the Hawkesbury floods in 2021 and 2022. Most recently, Rebekah has been instrumental in reshaping Civil Law at Legal Aid NSW through the Civil Law Blueprint.

Rebekah is also specialist consumer lawyer, having led the Consumer Law Team for several years, including through the Banking Royal Commission. She is a trained facilitator, teacher of Primary Ethics and lives on Dharug Country in Western Sydney with her partner and two kids.

Rob Waters



Poet and Australian Poetry Slam Champion

Rob Waters is a past Australian Poetry Slam Champion (2023) originally hailing from Tamworth in the North-West of NSW on the unceded lands of the Gomeroi People. Rob is currently based on the Central Coast of New South Wales where he continues his artistic practice.

With over 20 years' experience, Rob has been working closely with grassroots communities, helping them to utilise culturally informed storytelling practice and spoken word poetry to spread their message locally, regionally and around the globe. His works have been described as powerful, moving, at times unsettling, but always deeply rooted in culture, education and activism.

Sally Deans



Managing Solicitor, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW

Sally Deans is the Managing Solicitor of the Disability Legal Support Service (DLSS) at Legal Aid NSW, where she leads an interdisciplinary team delivering client-centred services for people with disability. The DLSS operates under a service model grounded in inclusive practice, ensuring that accessibility and equity are embedded in every aspect of its design and delivery. Drawing from her own lived experience of hearing impairment – and as the proud mother of four children who also live with hearing impairment – she brings a personal understanding of the barriers many clients face. This perspective shapes her unwavering commitment to building accessible, inclusive, and empowering legal services.

Sally McDonnell-Adams



Team Leader, Allied Professional Services, Civil Law, Legal Aid NSW

Sally McDonnell-Adams is the Team Leader for Allied Professional Services in Civil Law at Legal Aid NSW, where she leads a multidisciplinary team of senior caseworkers, caseworkers, financial counsellors, lay advocates, and community engagement officers. In this strategic leadership role, Sally oversees service delivery planning, professional supervision, and capability development across the APS workforce, ensuring high-quality, culturally safe, and trauma-informed support for clients. An accredited Mental Health Social Worker, Sally brings over a decade of experience within the intersections of forced migration, domestic and family violence and youth mental health. She is deeply committed to embedding interdisciplinary practice and strengthening collaborative models across Civil Law.

Samantha Bun



Poet and Learning Coordinator, Organisational Development, Legal Aid NSW

Samantha Bun is an Australian-Cambodian poet residing on Dharug land in Western Sydney. She has completed a Master of Creative Writing at Sydney University and is part of the 2025 WestWords Academy. Samantha was a finalist in the 2024 Australian Poetry Slam Sydney heats and performed at the Opera House earlier this year as a finalist in the Bankstown Poetry Grand Slam. Her poetry explores themes of culture, identity, generational trauma, love and sexuality. She hopes her words touch as many hearts with healing and empowers others to boldly express themselves in the same way.

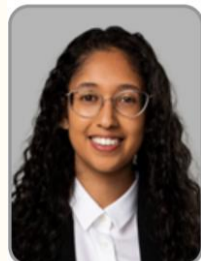
Dr Scott Avery



Professor of Indigenous Disability Health and Wellbeing, School of Public Health, University of Technology Sydney

Dr Scott Avery is a professor of Indigenous Disability Health and Wellbeing in the School of Public Health, University of Technology Sydney. He is an Aboriginal man descendant from the Worimi people and is profoundly deaf. Dr Scott (as he prefers to be known) is a recognised educator, researcher and policy adviser on Indigenous cultural approaches for the inclusion of people with disability. He has extensive experience in conducting community-based research and policy in Indigenous and disability organisations and is the 'Professor in Residence' at the First Peoples Disability Network, an Indigenous Disabled Peoples Organisation. His publication '*Culture is Inclusion: A narrative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability*' has influenced national policy across Closing the Gap, Australia's Disability Strategy, and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. He has been appointed as an expert advisor to numerous Government bodies and has advocated on Indigenous and disability rights at the United Nations. He was appointed by the Australian Government as an Ambassador for the International Day of People with Disability in 2023.

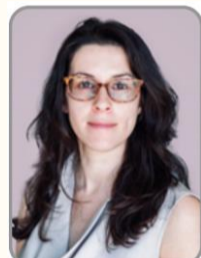
Sheeza Naz



Senior Solicitor, Coronial Inquest Unit, Legal Aid NSW

Sheeza Naz is a solicitor specialising in coronial and human rights law. She is currently with the Coronial Inquest Unit at Legal Aid NSW, representing families statewide. Previously, she was a Human Rights Lawyer at the National Justice Project and criminal law Associate at Streeton Lawyers. Sheeza holds a Juris Doctor and a Bachelor of Psychological Science (Criminology) from UNSW and will commence her MSc in International Human Rights Law at the University of Oxford in 2025. Last year, Sheeza represented the family in Australia's first coronial inquest looking at issues of modern slavery.

Tami Sokol



Ombudsman, Australian Financial Complaints Authority

Tami Sokol is a Banking and Finance Ombudsman at the Australian Financial Complaints Authority specialising in scams and transaction disputes. Tami is a lawyer with extensive experience in regulatory policy and working in consumer legal practice. Tami commenced at a top-tier commercial law firm before moving into the public sector in civil litigation. Most recently, Tami worked as a senior regulatory lawyer at the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and prior to that as a consumer and financial services specialist lawyer at Legal Aid NSW. Tami has particular expertise in representing vulnerable consumers in complex and sensitive disputes. Tami has a Bachelor of International Studies and a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) from the University of Sydney.

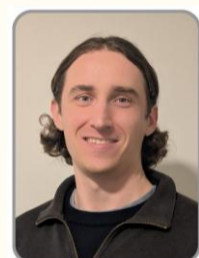
Taylah Gray



Solicitor in Charge, Newcastle (Bolton Street Officer) Legal Aid

Taylah Gray is a proud Wiradjuri woman from Dubbo, NSW and Solicitor in Charge of the Newcastle Legal Aid Office. She is the first identified Aboriginal person to undertake a PhD in Law at the University of Newcastle, where she also worked as a sessional academic teaching Aboriginal People and the Law through an undergraduate program. Taylah has practiced in crime with the Aboriginal Legal Service and has civil law experience with Legal Aid NSW. She previously worked as the Senior Project Officer in the Criminal Law Division, which solely focused on Closing the Gap targets 10 and 11. She rose to public attention in July 2020, after successfully challenging a prohibition order in the Supreme Court of NSW sought by the Commissioner of Police to ban a Black Lives Matter march in Newcastle. In 2024, she became the recent recipient of the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) to undertake three weeks of her doctoral study in Washington D.C. Her thesis takes a focus on Native Title law and economic theories to increase economic growth and land reform for First Nations communities.

Tomas Rolfe



Caseworker, Disability Legal Support Service, Legal Aid NSW

Tomas Rolfe is a caseworker in the Disability Legal Support Service at Legal Aid NSW. He has extensive experience working in the disability sector, with previous roles including working directly with young people in the Out of Home Care System. More recently he has worked within the Justice Advocacy Service's court-based diversion program providing case coordination and preparing treatment plans for defendants identified as suitable for diversion under Section 14 of the Mental Health and Cognitive Impairment Forensic Provisions Act.

Civil Conference Organising Committee



Jennifer Henstock, Nohara Odicho, Walter Hill, Christopher Carter, Dewi Nugrahaeni, Gary Koh, Amanda Bolin, Bridget Barker, Suryanti Suwardi, Kirstern Lam, Sally McDonnell-Adams, Rebekah Doran, Merinda Dutton, Shannon Gossip, Melanie Becketl, Jennifer Motha (Not pictured – Omar Stephan)
