

Community Law **Waikato**

Te Tari Ture aa-Hapori o Waikato

Part of the National Community Law Movement

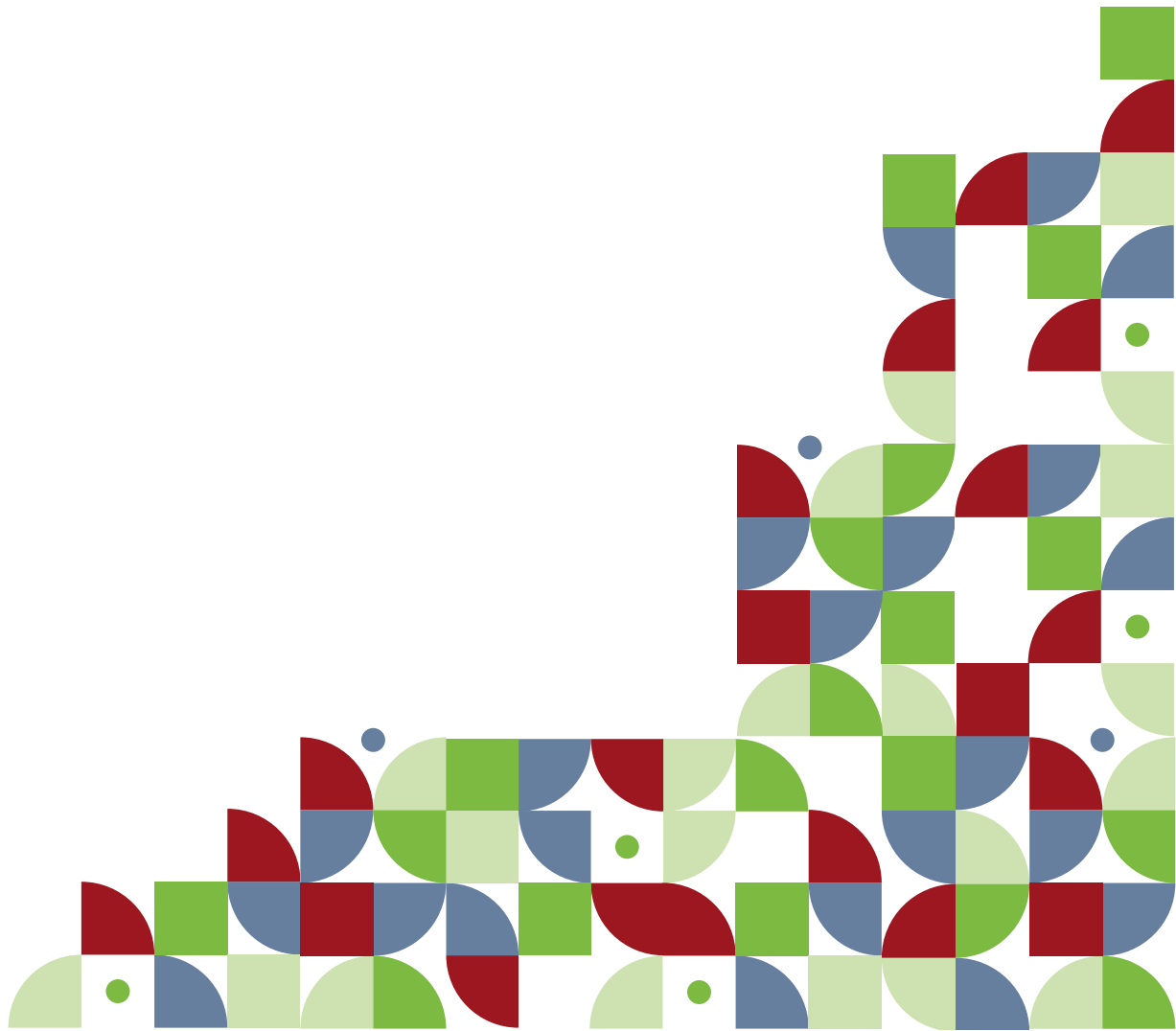


ANNUAL REPORT

2023 / 2024

Maa whero, maa pango ka oti ai te mahi

With red and black the work will be complete



TE PUURONGO A TE TIAMANA CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Teena koutou e ngaa rau o te kootuku. Welcome to the annual report of Community Law Waikato.

Maa whero, maa pango, ka oti ai te mahi. By red and black together the work will be completed.

This year our report begins with a whakataukii affirming the importance of different groups working together in partnership. This seems especially timely given recent attempts to undermine the covenantal partnership promised by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

As a Centre we are strongly committed to upholding those promises and to working in partnership with iwi, community groups, stakeholders, our staff and volunteers and those who access our service. Together we seek to improve people's access to justice, the kaupapa at the heart of our work.

In this report you will read about our work in a wide variety of areas, new initiatives and longstanding projects, the vital support we receive from donations and supporters, our connections with other community agencies and the Community Law movement as a whole and the comings and goings of our staff.

You will also read words of thanks from some of the people we have helped. These are heartfelt and remind us of the real lives affected by inequalities in our justice system. Every year an average of 6024 people benefit from our service, the majority of whom are unemployed or working part-time.

Over the year our partnership with iwi has continued to develop through the provision of legal advice in our Maaori Land Clinic and monthly clinic at Mangatoatoa Marae. A new focus in 2024 has been assisting kaumaatua to create and sign their Enduring Powers of Attorney (EPOAs), essential as they age.

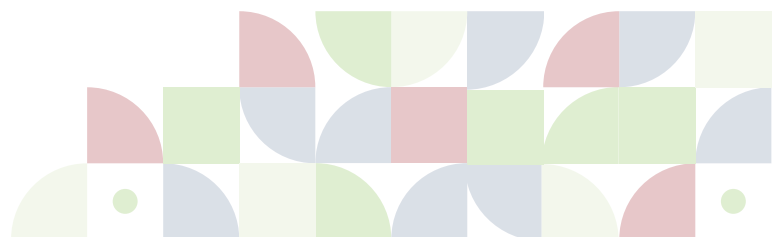
As a Board we take this opportunity to express our appreciation to all of our staff for their professional and compassionate work. We also express our deep gratitude to Juanita Bennett (General Manager) and Angela Smith (Legal Services Manager) who provide the Law Centre with outstanding leadership.

We are also grateful to Cheryl Green who has retired from the Board after many years. Cheryl is a good friend of Community Law and we miss her warm and thoughtful contributions. At the beginning of the year we were very pleased to welcome two new Trustees, Kylee Katipo and Truc Tran.

Many thanks to all of our supporters, community funders and volunteers for your continued support and friendship. Teena koutou katoa.

Ngaa manaakitanga,

Dr Susan Thompson, Chairperson, Trust Board



02

NGAA MIHI

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari kee he toa takitini

My success should not be bestowed onto me alone, it was not individual success but the success of a collective

We draw support from and collaborate with a range of stakeholders including the organisations that host our outreach services, community funders, fellow community law centres, community agencies / NGOs, service providers, the general public, and our team of employees and volunteers.

The support comes in many shapes and forms including time, donated equipment, grants and donations, discounts, partnerships - it all contributes enormously to our mahi.

Community Law Waikato is funded through a variety of streams with one of the main sources being a public fund. The Lawyers and Conveyancers Special Fund is derived from interest accrued in firms' Trust Accounts. Banks retain 40% of the interest (except those banks who donate another 20% to Community Law which aids enormously). The remaining 60% is legislated to fund community legal services.

Nationally, the monthly donations from BNZ, TSB, Westpac and ASB banks continued to be the second-largest source of funding for Community Law services in 2023/24. This funding added \$6,888,134 in free legal services to the community for the year.

thank you

“

I want to express my gratitude for your continuous support and advice



”

“

Your support has brought immense joy and happiness to my family



”

“

Very much appreciate this service, I learnt lots and we had a great presenter



”

03

OUR KAUPAPA

Access to Justice is the shared kaupapa that binds the 24 community law centres across Aotearoa.

Access to justice is commonly associated with access to courts and lawyers. In fact, it is much broader than that. It incorporates everything people do to try resolve disputes...including accessing information and support to prevent, identify and resolve the disputes...it recognises that many people resolve disputes without going to court and sometimes without professional assistance.

Access to justice is a fundamental principle of the rule of law – we are all bound by the law and should benefit equally from it...It only makes sense that, in order to benefit from it or engage with the myriad of legal systems and processes, individuals should have access to law related help.

The law surrounds our everyday lives...housing, welfare, education, health, employment – just to name a few.

The law underpins the way in which society operates and in an ideal state promotes fairness, protections of human rights, economic security, and social cohesion. A state without access to justice renders the complete opposite.

Community Law adopts a people-centered approach. Most barriers to access exist due to individual circumstances such as financial means, location, education, disability, age, ethnicity, language, and fear. At the forefront of our daily operations and strategic direction towards a Fair and Just Aotearoa, is the constant mahi towards reducing barriers and providing legal help to those who need it.

**Whakapono tatou i roto i te hapori matatika,
me kotahitanga**

We believe in fair and inclusive communities

“

You gave me the confidence to pursue what I needed to and got the outcome I set out for



”

“

My lawyer was absolutely wonderful to work with, very caring and attentive, great attention to detail



”

“

My lawyer was amazing, so accommodating and supportive



”

Community Law Waikato – Te Tari Ture aa-Hapori o Waikato

Our Strategic Goals and Priorities

A Fair and Just Aotearoa
OUR VISION



IMPROVE ACCESS TO JUSTICE

- Maintain quality legal services
- Understand access to justice
- Identify specific community need and service gaps
- Remove barriers to access
- Maintain a people centric model to ensure equitable access
- Expand services & deliver an appropriate mix
- Recognise the importance of law related information and education and improve this service

- Greater access to justice.
- Offer & deliver an expanded range of services.
- Informed communities.
- Positive systemic & intergenerational change.

HONOUR TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

- Foster an understanding and commitment at all levels within CLW
- Develop & implement kaupapa maaori service strategy
- Focus on community need and co-design
- Build te Ao Maaori and tikanga based practice throughout CLW.

- Kaupapa Maaori services specific to law related community need.
- A dedicated team for Kaupapa Maaori services.
- In integrated te Ao Maaori and tikanga lens within our vision, mission and values.

OUR COMMITMENTS

BUILD CAPACITY & CAPABILITY

- Protect fiscal stability & sustainability.
- Strengthen our foundations to support growth & resilience.
- Grow & nurture a diverse team.
- Lead & foster an organisational culture that aligns with our values throughout CLW.
- Look ahead with a succession plan to ensure sustainability.

- An expanded diverse team.
- Improved operational foundations to support change & growth.
- Values based organisational culture.
- Sustainability.

Access to Justice. We provide funded legal help to people in the Waikato who may otherwise not have access

OUR MISSION / KAUPAPA

PROMOTE & ENGAGE

- Build & foster relationships that support strategic priorities
- Promote & build awareness about our kaupapa
- Seek and seize opportunities for partnerships & collaboration

- Better community awareness about CLW.
- Strong networks and partnerships.
- Successful collaboration with various stakeholders.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

04

OUR MAHI

We provide help with, but not limited to, the following areas of law:

ACC

E.g. Entitlements, lump sum payments, sensitive claims, impairment assessments, mediations and review hearings.

CONSUMER

E.g. Faulty items (incl. motor vehicles), contract disputes, reposessions, Fair Trading Act breaches/complaints

CRIMINAL & TRAFFIC

E.g. Driving offences, boy racer charges, disorderly behaviour and theft. Sentencing, Judge Alone Trial, & special applications

DEBT ISSUES

E.g. Creditor claims, credit contracts, insolvencies, and debt disputes.

DISPUTES TRIBUNAL

E.g. Assistance with application and response to applications if required.

EMPLOYMENT LAW

E.g. Pay issues, minimum entitlements, disputes, harassment & discrimination, personal grievances, and mediation.

HUMAN RIGHTS

E.g. Harrassment & discrimination, restraining orders, trespass orders, health & disability complaints.

IMMIGRATION

E.g. Refugee Family Support Category, 'over staying', visa applications, deportation, migrant exploitation, Immigration Protection Tribunal, and special circumstance applications.

INSURANCE

E.g. Claim disputes and Insurance and Financial Services Ombudsman complaints.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DISPUTES

E.g. Fencing notices and disputes, trees, nuisance, damage, noise, and disputes.

TENANCY

E.g. Flatmate disputes, rent disputes, tenancy agreements, early termination, tenancy breaches, evictions, repair orders, and Tenancy Tribunal hearings.

WORK AND INCOME NZ

E.g. Entitlements, investigations, benefit review hearings, Social Security Appeal Authority.

ACC

E.g. Entitlements, investigations, disputes, and review hearings.

ADDITIONAL AREAS

E.g. Fines, Waka Kotahi (LTSA), affidavits, Local Government. We can offer initial advice in the areas of family law, and wills and power of attorney.

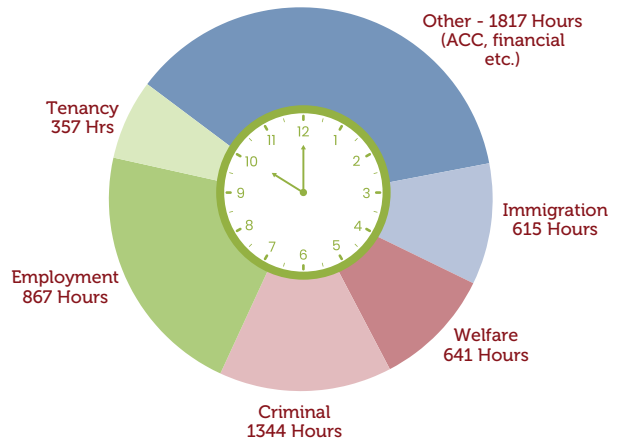
SNAPSHOT OF OUR MAHI 2023/2024

Our service covers the third largest region in New Zealand, with some of the most deprived areas and a high proportion of the region's population living in these pockets.

On average, 6024 individuals benefit from our service every year, and 70% of those who receive our services are unemployed or work part-time.

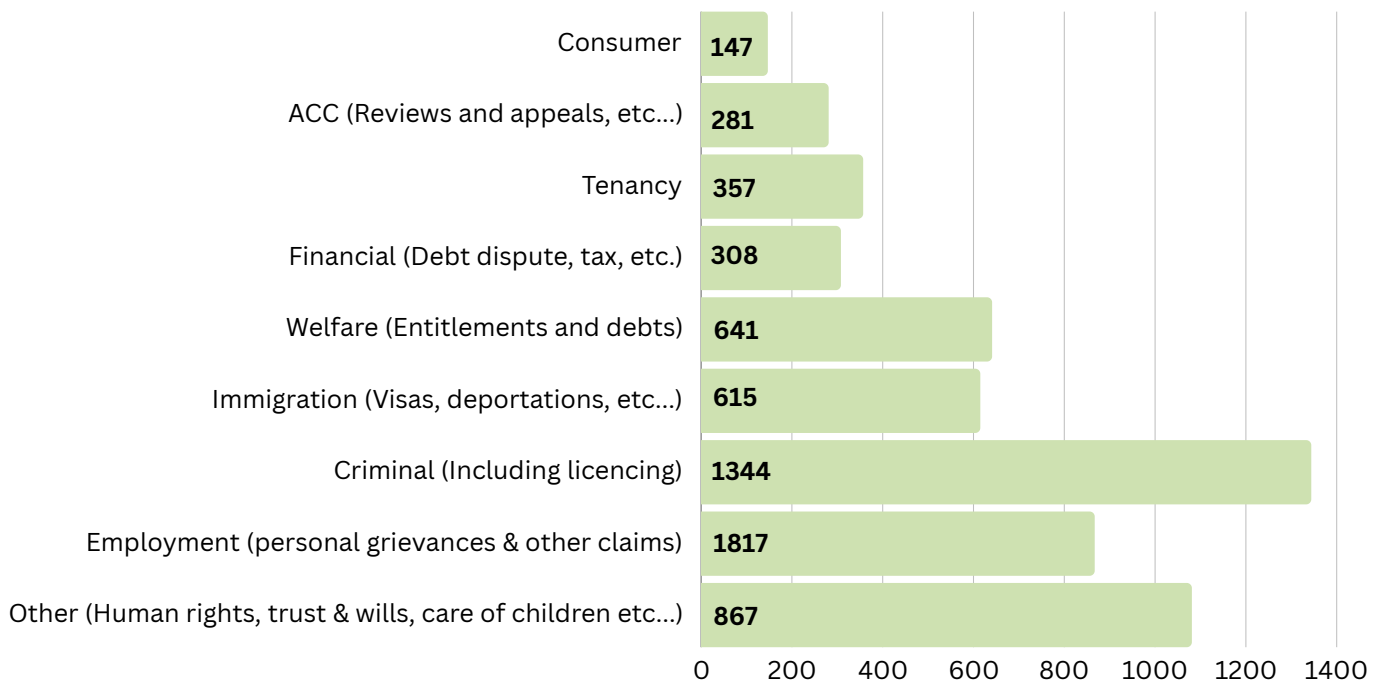
Our reception team provide information, referrals, and schedule appointments.

Time spent on legal matters (hours) 2023/2024



He iti te mokoroa naana te kahikatea i kakati
Even the small can make an impact on the big

Areas of law by numbers 2023 / 2024



OUR MAHI SUMMARY

56%

of the people who accessed our services in 2023 / 2024 were women

1759

New Clients in 2023/2024

We provided our services to

83

different ethnic groups in 2023 / 2024

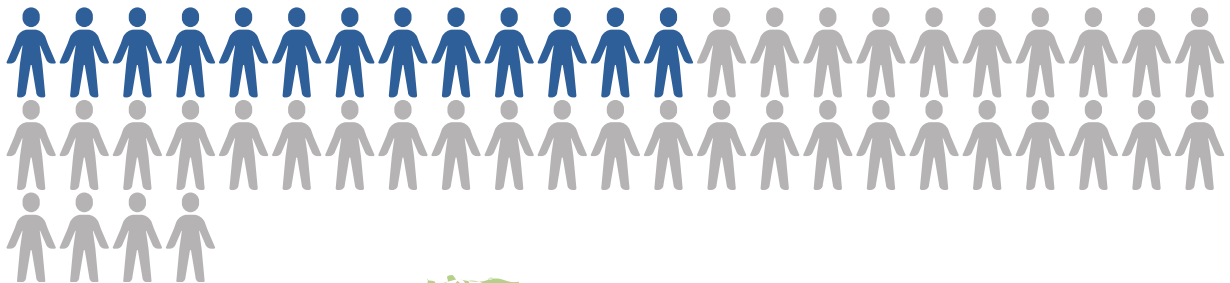
8210
hours

spent supporting clients 2023/2024

59%

of the people who accessed our services in 2023 / 2024 received support from MSD

The majority of our clients are unemployed



2493

Received legal information from us

5665
PEOPLE
REACHED

We worked on

1759
Legal matters

1413

People attended our legal education sessions



Law Related Education



Wonderful presentation, looking forward to the next education session



Delivering law related education is another aspect of our kaupapa that contributes to wellbeing for whaanau. We delivered 50 Legal Education sessions during the year! Online learning platforms allow us to offer our sessions to anyone with an internet connection, in addition to any face-to-face sessions.

Our focus is to continue to provide education to as many people as we possibly can. We believe education enables everyone to participate in and contribute to positive intergenerational social change.

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPoA)

A focus for our team in the last year has been teaching kaumaatua in our community about EPoA so that they can feel comfortable and confident to make decisions about their future for themselves.

We travelled to many community houses and marae across the rohe in the last year to explain about EPoA and the importance of these documents. We are also really pleased to have extended service in this space to include advising and helping individuals with creating their EPoAs.

We explain in more detail below about our EPoA outreach clinics.



Thank you, this is such a valuable service and the presentation was incredibly beneficial



K'aute Pasifika

In March we held legal education at K'aute Pasifika's new Pan Pacific Community Hub.

The new Fale provides a base for K'aute Pasifika, who work with our communities toward a shared vision of improved health and wellbeing, and it is where K'aute Pasifika provide their health, education and social services to their community.



Community Law Waikato collaborated with Youth Law and Disability Law to present on multiple areas of law. Topics covered were Immigration, Human Rights, Mental Health, PPPR, and Youth law and the police.

In 2023/2024 we hosted a 'Learn about your legal rights' webinar series with the following topics presented:

Drink / Drunk / Drugged driving

WORK & INCOME - Entitlements

IMMIGRATION LAW

CONSUMER GUARANTEES ACT

HEALTH & DISABILITY RIGHTS

MENTAL HEALTH ACT

WORK & INCOME - Studylink

DEBT & INSOLVENCY

EDUCATION LAW

PPPR, EPOA, wills & estates

CRIMINAL LAW - including sentencing

FAMILY LAW - separation, divorce., etc.

FAMILY - Domestic Violence Act

MAORI LAND

EMPLOYMENT - Min. rights

WORK & INCOME - rights & responsibilities

PRIVACY LAW

FAMILY LAW recognising family harm

CREDIT CONTRACTS

EMPLOYMENT - redundancy & remedies

FAMILY LAW - care of children

TENANCY LAW

EMPLOYMENT - early dispute resolution

PROPERTY - lending money, and gifting

Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (AHRP)

160+ hours

spent on Regulatory
Sale of Alcohol matters
2023/2024

Community Law Waikato has been involved in an Alcohol Harm Reduction Project which aims to support members of the community to object to alcohol licence applications or renewals in their rohe.

Over the last year, Community Law Waikato has been actively promoting the AHRP in the rohe at Community Centres, health organisations and the NZ Police.

“

I received great advice that would help me towards my future



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“

We had an awesome lawyer who helped us throughout the process



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“

I would like to really thank you for the time and effort you put into my case to get the best possible result, I will be forever thankful!



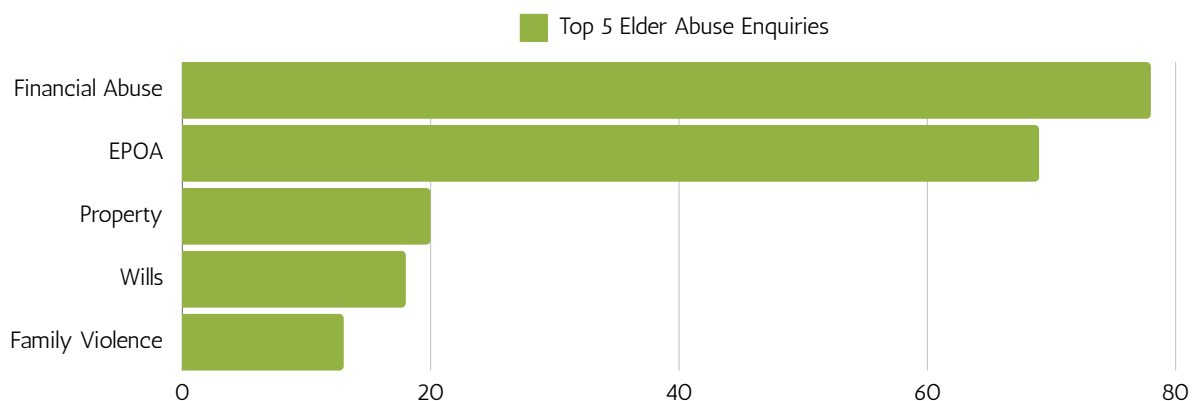
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Elder Abuse Response Service (EARS)

Since 2018 Community Law Waikato has supported EARS providers such as Age Concern, as well as smaller community based organisations throughout Aotearoa by providing legal advice via a helpline.

It has been estimated that by 2026 people aged 65 and over will make up approximately 20% of the population. Elder Abuse is a serious and growing problem, causing considerable harm. As many as one in 10 older people in New Zealand will experience some kind of elder abuse. Most abuse isn't recognised or is ignored.

In 2023/2024 we provided legal support with the following elder abuse concerns:



Work and Income advocacy

Our Kaupapa is to be a voice for those who need it. Our lawyers and advocates have specialist knowledge about benefit rights, and support their clients when they deal with Work and Income.

We restored
\$162,000
In MSD entitlements for
our clients

Our lawyers and advocates work very hard on behalf of their clients to make sure they receive the correct entitlements. Advocates also support their clients when there is a dispute over entitlements, sanctions have been applied, or navigating a fraud accusation.

During the 2023/2024 financial year our advocates have successfully negotiated on the behalf of their clients to the sum of \$162,000.



Thank you so much for your time and help during my court meeting. I really appreciate it



Thank you very much for an outstanding result. I did not expect to keep my license and I am truly grateful



Thanks again for all your help and support of this very difficult time in life



Young Adults List

Launched at the District Court in Porirua in 2020 the Young Adult List aims to address underlying causes of criminal behaviour and offers extra support for people with neuro-disabilities aged 18 - 25 years.

There is a high prevalence of neurodiversity, including acquired brain injury, mental health challenges and alcohol and other drug dependency affecting those before the courts (up to 40%).

The initiative separates those aged 18-25 from others appearing in court and provides extra support to identify any particular health needs or disabilities they may have. Language used in the court is simplified and legal jargon is avoided to enable all participants to understand what is going on in the courtroom.

Community Law Waikato assists with clients of the young adult court on various matters such as limited licences and s106 applications.

Kaupapa Maaori Services

Enduring Power of Attorney (EPoA) clinics

As part of our commitment to accessible legal services and Te Tiriti, we collaborated with several community groups throughout 2023 / 2024 to assist kaumatua with creating and signing their EPoA's.

With the elderly population growing, the demand for EPoA increases. The current cost of living has a huge impact on the ability of the elderly to afford legal services. Travel is also a barrier as many elderly are not physically able to travel. We've brought the service to them (whether at home, at a hospital or at a community clinic).

An EPoA gives peace of mind for the future – you've decided ahead of time who you trust to make decisions for you if you can't decide for yourself.



“

Thank you, this is such a valuable service



”

“

My deepest gratitude and appreciation for your unwavering support and dedication



”

“

Thank you, Thank you and Thank you again. Really appreciate your help.



”

Maaori Land Clinic

Our Maaori Land clinic has proven popular and is steadily growing. We now have a dedicated lawyer on our team working with Maaori land owners, whaanau, hapuu and iwi wishing to better understand the unique and special circumstances of Maaori land.

McCaw Lewis generously supports this kaupapa by providing Maaori land law advice once a month.

Mangatoatoa marae

We offer a funded legal clinic once a month at Mangatoatoa Marae where our lawyers provide advice and guidance on a range of legal issues.

Our Mangatoatoa clinic has been running for over 12 months now.

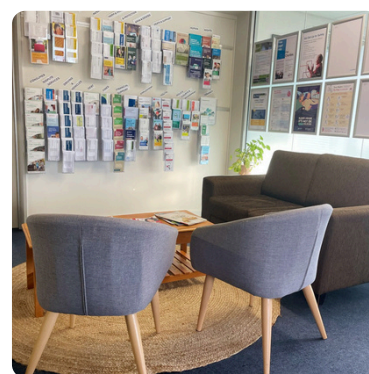
Law Related Information (LRI)



One of our strategic priorities is to extend our reach with law related information and education - Knowledge is power! - and a major focus over the last 12 months has been revamping the law related information we have available.

We've been beavering away at sifting and sorting the mountain of LRI ascertaining what is accurate and useful for our community. Many individuals coming through our reception space are browsing and taking resources which is awesome. Every bit counts as we know it will help someone in some way (especially those who aren't connected to the digital world!).

The scope of law related inquiry is HUGE for CLCs (spanning A to Z you name it we hear it). We are developing a system that will give us quick access to a range of commonly used information and referrals (including related social referrals) making it very user friendly and equally helpful for our frontline and legal team.



Family Court Navigator Clinic

We are in partnership with the Family Court Kaiaarahi providing a community drop-in 'navigator' clinic at our meeting rooms here at CLW. The clinics kicked off in July and run monthly either by appointment or drop in.

It will provide whaanau access to a broad range of Family Court related information and assistance for example filling out applications, signing up to support programs, arranging Court appearances / interpretation etc. The main thing is that the service is removed from the Court house and therefore in theory (and the hope is) more readily available.



0800 529 482

FAMILY COURT NAVIGATORS FREE CLINIC @ COMMUNITY LAW WAIKATO

Clinic Dates

- ◆ Monday 22nd of July 10am – 12pm
- ◆ Monday 19th of August 10am – 12pm
- ◆ Monday 16th of September 10 am – 12pm
- ◆ Monday 14th of October 10am – 12pm
- ◆ Monday 11th of November 10am - 12pm
- ◆ Monday 9th of December 10am - 12pm

Contact:
Community Law
Waikato 0800 529 482
to book an
appointment.

Walk-in appointments
may be available.

Community Law Movement - Nationwide!

CLCA - National statistics



A New National Framework – Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The AGM this year was also a day to mark and celebrate. A dynamic group of leaders paved the way towards co-governance and after three years of collaboration and deliberation, a new national Constitution was passed.

The new Tiriti framework for the Community Law movement is a sustainable way forward to facilitate better collaboration, partnership and growth when it comes to access to justice. The framework pulls in all the voices in the movement including governance, employees and volunteers. Two caucuses, Tangata Whenua and Tangata Te Tiriti, will work side by side to steer the ship (CLCA Board).

It is still early days with much learning still to come however the new mode of operation is underway with the caucuses coming together at the 2024 annual Hui and Hui-A-Tau (otherwise known as the AGM).

Kaupapa Maaori Legal Services – Three-year Pilot

CLCA and CLCs are working together in this space, delivering a three-year pilot across the movement. The pilot is now entering its second year and is built on an “in-house” framework, Korowai Tuakiri. CLCs choose to participate in this pilot and the dream is to develop sustainable legal Kaupapa Maaori services across Aotearoa. A team of two full time coordinators are leading this work alongside the support of the CLCA Board.

CLCA Annual Hui - Tairaawhiti | Gisborne

The 2023 National Community Law movement Hui was held in Tairaawhiti in early November. Around 120 employees and volunteers from the 24 CLC's throughout the motu attended to reflect, share information, and collaborate on future plans.

Ngaa mihi to Tairaawhiti Community Law Centre and CLCA for organising the event.



Alcohol Harm Reduction Project (AHRP)

A project funded by Te Whatu Ora, that is centred around support for alcohol licencing objections. The project is delivered nationally by five CLCs (Community Law Waikato included). Again, there are many successes in this space and one example is the reform of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act and better access to information around the process for objections.

Law Related Information – Community Law Manual

The Community Law movement is the proud publisher of an online and hardcopy Law Manual. It is an easy to read and widely used source free to everyone in Aotearoa. The Manual receives more than 5000 visits a day. To view or order your copy visit the Community law website – www.communitylaw.org.nz.

Law Reform – a Voice for the Community

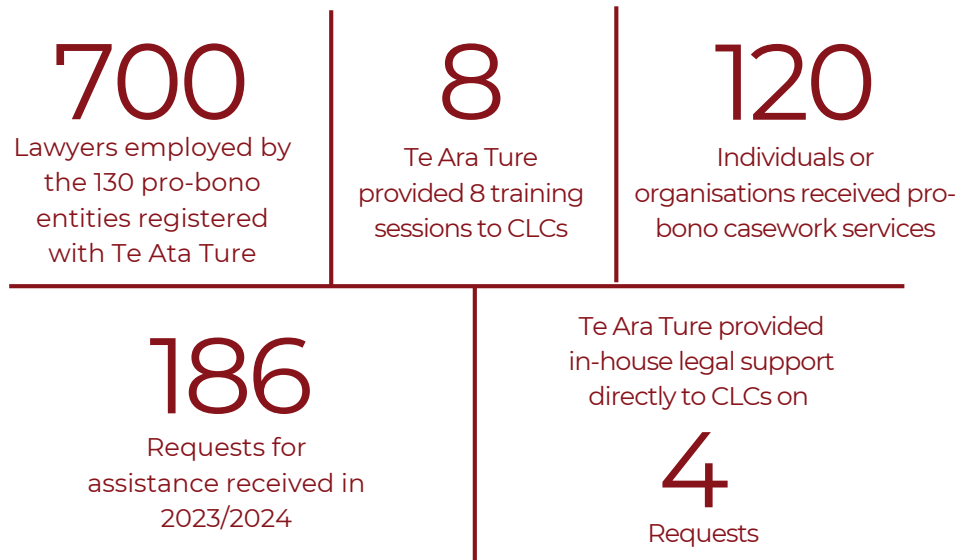
CLCA employs two team members who work full time in the law reform space. The duo collaborates with the 24 community law centres to guide their work. There have been many important successes such as the changes that impose minimum standards for emergency housing.






Te Ara Ture (Pro bono clearinghouse)

Another successful service hosted and coordinated by CLCA. The initiative was established in 2021 and as grown. Te Ara Ture is an online platform connecting community legal need with pro bono legal support. The platform hosts more than 700 lawyers across Aotearoa who offer their assistance. At this stage the referral route is only via CLCs with the exception of NGOs who can access legal support directly. For more information about Te Ara Ture visit www.tearature.co.nz.




“
 Your tireless efforts have made it possible for my loved ones to be here with me today, and I cannot thank you enough.
 ”



“
 Your guidance throughout the complex visa application process was invaluable
 ”



“
 Your professionalism and efficiency gave us peace of mind
 ”



Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari te toa takitini

Success is not the work of one but the work of many





Our team is made up of experienced and accomplished lawyers, administrators, advocates, case workers, legal assistants, and volunteers. All share a passion for social justice and dedicate their precious time and energy to support our Community Law Waikato kaupapa.

Our volunteers

Our volunteer team includes solicitors and law students who bring extensive experience and expertise across a wide variety of legal areas, as well as practical skill. Our volunteers offer their time to support our vision of access to justice, and we could not be more grateful.

Our volunteer lawyers offer their advice and expertise to give free legal advice, present legal education webinars or seminars. Often they volunteer their time after working a full day in their own legal firms. We are incredibly grateful to have so many community-minded and experienced lawyers volunteer to support the movement.

Our volunteer caseworkers are law students from the University of Waikato. The role of a caseworker involves interviewing clients and relaying the advice given by a solicitor back to the client. Caseworking is a valuable learning opportunity for the students, and we are thrilled that during their time volunteering with us they gain such rich legal experience.

thank you

Our team

Every member of our team brings a set of unique talents, backgrounds, and experiences to the Centre. The things that make us unique as individuals make us richer as a team - The things that make us unique as individuals make us stronger as a team - a satisfied and motivated workforce helps us achieve the best outcomes for our clients and the communities in which we serve.

We live and work by our strong values; our combined values and differences help create a happy and inclusive workforce with a passion for making positive change in the lives of others.

2023 / 2024 snippets

Caitlin returned as a full-time Solicitor

We welcomed 6 new caseworkers

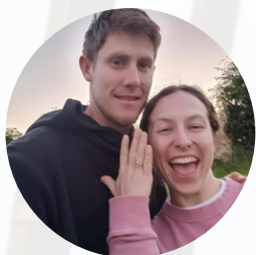


Annual team building event in Taamaki Makaurau

CLW Christmas Party!



We welcomed a new intake of caseworkers



Madison left on her big OE and announced her engagement

Kylee Katipo & Truc Tran joined the board

Neil Shaw joined the team as a Solicitor

New Zealand Law Society Ball



New Zealand Law Society Quiz

Round the bridges



Ellen returned from a 6 month secondment

We were joined by two exchange students from Germany



Our caseworkers had fun at an escape room

Aroha Wainui joined our team full-time as a Legal Assistant

Cheryl Green retired from the board after 10 years of service



JUL - AUG - SEP - OCT - NOV - DEC - JAN - FEB - MAR - APR - MAY - JUN

Kotahitanga

“ Taakiri tuu te kotahitanga, Taakiri tuu te Mana Motuhake ”
Lets come together so we are all together

*In memory of the late
Kiingi Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VII*



Te Tari Ture ā-Hapori o Waikato
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0800 529 482

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