

2023-24
Annual report



Basic Rights
Queensland Inc.





Basic Rights Queensland Inc.

Basic Rights Queensland (**BRQ**) is a state-wide service providing free legal advice, advocacy, and support in the areas of social security, disability discrimination, and mental health. Our expertise helps individuals navigate the complex and ever-changing landscape of Centrelink, ensuring they understand their rights and can challenge incorrect decisions. We also assist clients facing disability discrimination, offering legal advice and advocacy to address their issues holistically. Through our Mental Health Legal Hub, we provide tailored legal services for individuals with mental health conditions, addressing their unique challenges within the realms of social security, disability discrimination and employment law and linking them with help for other legal problems.

Our Working Women's Queensland (**WWQ**) program supports women facing workplace issues such as discrimination, harassment, domestic violence, and unfair termination. WWQ offers free, confidential advice through our telephone-based service, helping women understand their rights and take action against unfair treatment at work. We are committed to empowering vulnerable women in Queensland by providing them with the tools and knowledge to navigate complex workplace situations and protect their rights.

In addition to direct client services, BRQ plays a vital role in advocacy and law reform. Our team actively collects client experiences to identify gaps in the system and collaborates with the government to improve laws and policies. BRQ also engages in community legal education and worker training, ensuring individuals and organisations have the information and skills needed to navigate the legal landscape and support those facing social security and workplace issues.



Our funders



Proud member



In 2023-24,
we helped **3,618 people**

72.4%

were women

41.2%

aged over 50

1,574

had a
disability

256

First Nations
people

122

experienced family
violence

75

were
homeless

5 main problems
we helped with:

1. Social security eligibility 2,885
2. Employment law 1,463
3. Unfair dismissal 689
4. Worker conditions/entitlements 655
5. Disability discrimination 527

Services we provided:

3,784

legal advices

162

new cases

1,392

legal tasks

585

duty lawyer
services

5,075

information
& referral





President's report

As President of Basic Rights Queensland, I am proud to reflect on a year of incredible progress, resilience, and advocacy. Our commitment to social justice, fairness, and equity has only strengthened as we continue to serve the people of Queensland, particularly the most vulnerable among us.

This past year has been marked by significant developments, both in our core services and in the broader political and social landscape. The cost-of-living crisis, coupled with growing demand for services, has placed immense pressure on individuals across the state. BRQ has stood firm, expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

We continue extending critical legal support to individuals and families facing significant barriers to justice. From social security advice to disability discrimination advocacy and support for women experiencing violence and harassment in their workplaces, the services provided by our team changes lives, empowering clients with the support they need to navigate complex legal systems.

Our Working Women Queensland program has seen tremendous growth, thanks to new funding and national recognition of our advocacy on behalf of working women. WWQ's impact this year is truly inspiring, particularly in the areas of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination. The legislative changes we've fought for, alongside our direct support to women across Queensland, demonstrate our unwavering commitment to gender equality.

We continue to champion broader law reform, including our submissions to parliamentary inquiries and our work on issues like Centrelink reform, workplace protections, and paid family and domestic violence leave. Our advocacy is driven by a belief that real, lasting change is possible when we centre human rights and fairness in our policies and systems.

I would like to thank every staff member, volunteer, management committee member, and partner who has been part of this extraordinary year. In particular, I want to acknowledge the leadership of Kara Cook, who provided strong and forward-

focused direction during her tenure as CEO, and who leaves the organisation much stronger for incoming CEO James Farrell.

Our team's dedication to fairness and equality has made BRQ the impactful, inspiring organisation that it is today. I look forward to another year of advocacy, growth, and justice for Queenslanders.

Claire Moore

President



96%
of surveyed clients
would recommend
BRQ to someone
else



CEO Reflections:

A year of growth, impact, and transition

As I reflect on this past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the extraordinary work of Basic Rights Queensland. Leading BRQ through a period of substantial growth and transformation has been both a privilege and a humbling experience. Building on the strong foundation laid by my predecessor, Fiona Hunt, I now prepare to hand over the reins to our incoming CEO, James Farrell.



Our commitment to vulnerable Queenslanders

Over the past 12 months, BRQ has continued to serve as a vital resource for Queensland's most vulnerable communities. In an environment of rising living costs and financial uncertainty, the importance of our advocacy for justice has never been more critical. We have broadened our reach, deepened our commitment to social justice, and strengthened our core services to support those who need it most.

Empowering working women

Our Working Women Queensland program experienced significant growth, addressing urgent issues like sexual harassment and workplace discrimination. Through dedicated advocacy and collaboration with legislative bodies like the Fair Work Commission and the Australian Human Rights Commission, we have ensured that women across Queensland are better equipped to seek justice and support in their workplaces.

Expanding access to justice in rural and remote areas

One of the year's standout achievements has been the expansion of our Rural and Remote Project. This initiative has broken down historical barriers to justice for regional and Aboriginal communities across Queensland. By forging partnerships with local organisations, BRQ has made a meaningful impact, assisting clients in navigating complex issues such as Centrelink disputes and disability discrimination. This project has been a powerful example of how tailored, community-driven services can make a real difference.

Mental health legal support: A lifeline for many

The expansion of our Mental Health Legal Support program has been another critical focus this year. With more than half of our clients living with mental health conditions, securing additional funding for this program has allowed us to provide even more compassionate, specialised care. Our team's commitment in this area has helped transform the lives of many individuals who often face both legal and health challenges simultaneously.

Looking ahead: A new chapter

As I prepare to pass the leadership to James Farrell, I am confident BRQ is poised for continued success. James brings extensive experience and a deep commitment to our mission, and I have no doubt that BRQ will continue to grow and thrive under his stewardship.

Acknowledging our people

I want to express my deepest thanks to the entire BRQ team. Your passion, dedication, and expertise have been the cornerstone of our success this year. I am incredibly proud of everything we have achieved together.

To our volunteers, partners, and supporters – thank you for your unwavering commitment to our mission. Your contributions have been invaluable in driving the impact we've made in the lives of countless Queenslanders.

It has been an honour to serve as the CEO of this remarkable organisation. I look forward to seeing BRQ continue to champion justice and equality for all, and I am excited to witness the positive impact that lies ahead.

Kara Cook

CEO

Helping people access their social security entitlements

In the midst of the cost-of-living crisis we continued to expand our advice, assistance and engagement in social security this year. This expansion allowed us to meet as much of the increasingly desperate client need for income support in our community as possible, with our resources and expertise. We have seen some improving trends within Services Australia's decision making and have taken significant advantage of their introduction of an Advocate's Channel to overcome many of the persistent challenges, including lengthy delays that remain problematic. We hope that trial becomes permanent in the near future. We also contributed to numerous consultations on the establishment of the Administrative Review Tribunal which will replace the Administrative Appeals Tribunal on 14 October 2024.

Social Security Advices

In 2023-24 BRQ provided over 2500 social security legal advices as well as over 1100 legal tasks, where those clients needed greater assistance with taking further steps (such as writing a tailored Doctor letter or contacting Services Australia on their behalf). In addition, we provided over 180 more intensive duty lawyer advice sessions, in which we examined the Tribunal file before giving advice and regularly tailored letters to doctors etc as part of that service. Often those legal tasks and duty lawyer tailored letters enabled clients to succeed in a new claim or self-represent in their appeals where they did not otherwise meet our casework criteria.

Social Security Casework

In 2023-24, we completed over 50 social security casework files. We represented 30 clients in their Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Social Security and Child Support Division) hearing with a positive outcome in 27 of those cases (90%) - a very high success rate! We also represented 11 at the new claim or early intervention stage (6 succeeding), 6 at the Authorised Review Officer level (4 succeeding) and 4 at the General Division of the Tribunal (3 succeeding).

The majority of those cases were Disability Support Pension rejections or cancellations, however, we also successfully overturned decisions in special benefit rejections, compensation preclusion period, residential qualification, rent assistance rate, unreasonable to live at home, member of a couple findings, debts and early start date cases.

Natalie* was living in a small one-bedroom home with her ex-partner and experiencing ongoing domestic violence. Her sole income, the Disability Support Pension (DSP), had been drastically reduced due to her ex-partner's earnings, leaving her unsafe and without the means to move. Despite submitting the necessary forms to Centrelink more than six months earlier, they remained unprocessed. Natalie had followed up with multiple complaints and requests for a social worker, but with no response.

Basic Rights Queensland (BRQ) intervened and advocated for Natalie via the Advocates Channel. On the same day, Centrelink processed the forms, resulting in Natalie receiving several thousand dollars in arrears, an appointment with a social worker, and an apology from Centrelink.

Elisabeth* notified Centrelink of her new boyfriend, despite their relationship not being serious yet, because she wanted to be transparent. A Centrelink representative incorrectly instructed her to fill out a form, which led to her carer payment being cut off. This left her and her children in financial hardship, risking homelessness just days before Christmas.

BRQ identified the error and urgently appealed the decision, providing evidence to support the claim. Centrelink reversed the relationship status decision, reinstated Elisabeth's payment, and awarded full backpay just in time for Christmas.

Mary* sought help from Centrelink after her partner's domestic violence left her with sole care of their children and no income. Centrelink rejected her application, citing the "newly arrived resident waiting period" as Mary had not lived in Australia long enough to qualify.

BRQ identified that Centrelink failed to consider exemptions for special circumstances like Mary's. Through the Advocate's Channel, BRQ requested an urgent appeal and pointed out the applicable exemptions. Within days, the appeal was successful, and Mary received income support with full backpay.

John* was denied income support due to a previous compensation payment, which had long been exhausted. He was relying on charity and friends for food and basic necessities and felt this couldn't continue.

BRQ assisted John in appealing to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT), gathering supporting evidence from his health professionals and friends. To overcome communication barriers, BRQ helped John prepare a statement for the Tribunal. His appeal was successful, and he was awarded income support from the hearing date, allowing him to regain financial independence within two weeks of contacting BRQ.

Huynh* had their JobSeeker Payment cancelled after leaving Australia to care for a sick parent. Huynh believed they would be automatically transferred to the Age Pension upon reaching the eligible age, but after leaving, Centrelink informed them they had to apply in person, which was impossible due to caregiving commitments abroad.

BRQ submitted a written request arguing that Huynh should have been automatically transferred to the Age Pension. Centrelink agreed, reinstated Huynh's payment, and paid arrears. Huynh can now continue caregiving abroad while receiving the Age Pension.

Kim* and her son **Peter*** faced challenges navigating Centrelink due to language barriers and Kim's overwhelming work and caregiving load. Peter, who has a significant disability, was only receiving JobSeeker despite being unable to meet the work requirements.

BRQ helped Peter secure a long-term exemption from mutual obligation requirements and assisted Kim in successfully appealing the rejection of her Carer Payment and Carer Allowance. Within days, both were able to receive the financial support they needed.

Ami*, a mother of two, was granted a permanent protection visa but was struggling financially. Her partner, on a temporary visa, was unable to work or receive payments. Despite her hardship, Ami had been denied assistance at a Centrelink service centre.

BRQ advocated for a priority assessment of Ami's claim and requested that Centrelink consider her as a single person for payment purposes. Once approved, Ami received a Single Parenting Payment and backpay. She now receives sufficient financial support for her family, including rent assistance.

Sean* sought BRQ's advice for his daughter Sophie*, the first in their family to pursue post-secondary education. Sophie had to relocate from their remote home to study, placing a financial strain on the family.

BRQ identified additional payments Sophie was eligible for and contacted Centrelink to ensure she was receiving all relevant entitlements. Centrelink found Sophie was owed arrears and a relocation scholarship, easing the financial burden and allowing her to focus on her studies.

Ahmed*, a single parent, had not received Family Tax Benefit (FTB) for several years and was struggling with severe financial hardship. A concerned local government member brought Ahmed's case to BRQ's attention during an outreach clinic.

BRQ intervened, requesting an expedited FTB assessment and providing the necessary evidence to Centrelink. Ahmed's entitlement was confirmed, and he received FTB along with significant backpay. His financial situation improved, allowing him to better care for his family.

The important role of social work and support

Social work plays an integral role in our holistic approach to providing legal and advocacy services. Social workers are embedded across our programs, ensuring that our clients receive not only legal advice but also practical, emotional, and social support. This multidisciplinary model enhances our ability to address the complex, intersecting needs of vulnerable individuals and families across Queensland.

Our social workers offer vital support to clients navigating challenging circumstances, such as those dealing with social security issues, workplace discrimination, or mental health challenges. By taking a trauma-informed and culturally responsive approach, our social workers create a safe, empathetic environment for clients who often feel overwhelmed by their legal issues. Their role includes providing advocacy, connecting clients with community resources, and assisting with the practicalities of life that may be exacerbated by legal challenges.

Our social workers are particularly critical in cases involving domestic and family violence, mental health issues, and disability discrimination. They offer direct support through casework, providing information and advice, as well as facilitating warm referrals to specialised services. For many clients, this integrated approach means that legal solutions are coupled with the emotional and social support necessary for long-term well-being.

In 2023–2024, our social work teams have been involved in several key initiatives that have had a profound impact on our clients:

- **Supporting clients with complex needs:** Many of our clients experience significant mental health challenges and trauma, which affect their ability to navigate social security systems or deal with employment discrimination. Our social workers work tirelessly to provide ongoing support, including psychiatric assessments and advocacy that ensures clients meet the strict evidentiary requirements for the Disability Support Pension (DSP). This targeted support helps many of our clients access the financial security they deserve.
- **Holistic support for working women:** At Working Women Queensland, our social workers collaborate closely with industrial advocates to assist women facing workplace challenges such as sexual harassment, discrimination, and bullying. The holistic nature of this service is especially important for women experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage, including those dealing with the impacts of domestic and family violence (DFV). By providing both legal advice and social work support, WWQ ensures that women can access their rights and begin to rebuild their lives in safe and supported environments.
- **Support groups:** This year, WWQ launched a support group program that offers women the opportunity to connect with others who have experienced workplace trauma. These groups allow women to reflect on their experiences, share hard-won knowledge, and empower each other through collective social action. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting increased confidence and a sense of solidarity.
- **Outreach to marginalised communities:** BRQ's social workers have played a key role in extending our services to rural and remote Queensland, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. By partnering with local organisations and attending outreach clinics, our social workers help individuals in these regions navigate complex social security issues, including DSP claims and appeals. The impact of these outreach efforts cannot be overstated, as they have provided much-needed legal and social support to communities that often face significant barriers to accessing services.





Our social work team embraces collaboration as a key element of success. We work closely with external partners, including community health providers, legal networks, and specialised support services, to ensure our clients have access to comprehensive resources. We also continue to innovate in our service delivery, exploring creative ways to engage vulnerable communities and ensure that our services are accessible to all Queenslanders.

The social work team's work with mental health outreach programs, such as 3rd Space and Emmanuel City Mission, has also expanded this year. These programs offer critical points of contact for clients experiencing homelessness and extreme vulnerability, providing an essential lifeline for those who may otherwise be isolated from support networks.

Our social work services have proven time and time again to be a critical component of our overall mission. By blending legal advocacy with social support, we ensure that our clients are not only empowered in their legal rights but also supported holistically as they face some of life's most challenging situations. This multidisciplinary approach remains a cornerstone of our commitment to social justice and equality for all Queenslanders.

"I am not by myself anymore. I feel stronger now. Thank-you"

- Anna*
supported by a
BRQ social worker

"I cannot express enough how grateful I am to have found this support group... As a young woman, who does not have any support unit here, this event made me feel hopeful, knowledgeable and empowered..."

- Naree*
participated in
a social work group



Taking our services to rural and remote communities

Since the beginning of our rural and remote program, we have supported hundreds of First Nations Australians with their Centrelink issues. Issues range from complex DV/Centrelink matters, Disability Support Pension (DSP), debt waivers and many more.

In the second half of 2023 we visited Gununa (Mornington Island) and Dumaji (Doomadgee), as part of the First Nations Foundation's Financial Wellness week. The events were organised by First Nation Foundation and 54 Reasons (previously Save the Children) and included delegations from Australian Retirement Trust, Australian Taxation Office, Commonwealth Bank and Shelter Housing Action Cairns. Two of the most common questions we faced in these trips were, "How long are you here for?" and "When are you coming back?" highlighting the need for services in these remote areas. The main take away from Mornington Island and Doomadgee experience is the lack of services on the ground and the unmet needs of the communities.

In the first half of 2024 we embarked on impactful trips to Woorabinda and Cherbourg, fostering collaborative partnerships with local organisations in collaboration with the University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre. Our service delivery was a collaborative partnership with Centrelink, local councils, the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts, local health service providers and local community-controlled organisations. Together, we provided these communities with comprehensive services and supports typically accessible in metropolitan areas but often lacking in rural and regional locations. This collective effort not only addressed immediate legal needs but also strengthened the support networks. This collaborative approach underscores our dedication to enhancing access to justice and ensuring that our legal services are as effective and relevant as possible for those in our state.

Beatrice* inquired about our services on behalf of her grandson **Darren***, who had recently applied for NDIS but was unaware that he might be eligible for DSP. After reviewing his medical evidence, which showed a low IQ, we advised Beatrice and Darren that he likely qualified for DSP. We assisted with lodging the claim and submitted the medical evidence directly to Centrelink. Darren's DSP was granted a few weeks later.



Jenny,* a young woman with an intellectual disability and a continence condition, lived in a remote Gulf community and was receiving no income support from Centrelink. Her sole support came from her single mother, who was also caring for three other children under the age of 10 and relying on a Carer Payment. We helped Jenny complete the necessary Centrelink forms and quickly secured medical evidence from her paediatrician. Within two weeks of submitting her Disability Support Pension (DSP) claim, it was approved, nearly doubling the family's fortnightly support.

Beth* had been caring for her two children for two years without any Family Tax Benefit (FTB) from Centrelink. When she came to our outreach legal clinic, we learned that the children's father, who had a history of domestic violence, had falsely claimed they were living with him. We helped Beth lodge an FTB claim for the past two years and gathered evidence from community stakeholders. The following day, Centrelink approved her claim, and Beth received approximately \$11,000 in backpay. She now receives ongoing support from Centrelink.

Archie*, a member of the Stolen Generation who had not worked in over 20 years, was receiving JobSeeker Payment (JSP) but struggled with brain damage from a substance use disorder. A community worker brought Archie to our outreach clinic, where we contacted his GP to gather medical evidence for a DSP claim. We also made legal arguments about the severity and permanency of his condition. Archie's DSP was approved a few months later, and he received backpay from the date of his claim. He no longer has to meet the unnecessary job search requirements of JSP and can live with greater dignity.

Anna,* a single mother supporting her newborn on Youth Allowance, lodged a Family Tax Benefit (FTB) claim with Centrelink but had received no response after nine months. Assuming she wasn't eligible, Anna came to our remote clinic. We contacted Centrelink on her behalf and discovered a processing error. Centrelink immediately processed her claim, and Anna was paid nearly \$9,000 the following day.



Melissa,* a part-time worker supporting her family, was struggling to repay a \$5,000 Rent Assistance (RA) overpayment to Centrelink. She didn't understand why the debt had been raised, as she had updated her details with Centrelink when moving to her current home. With her permission, we appealed the debt, and a review officer confirmed it was due to a Centrelink error. The debt was waived, relieving Melissa of the financial burden.

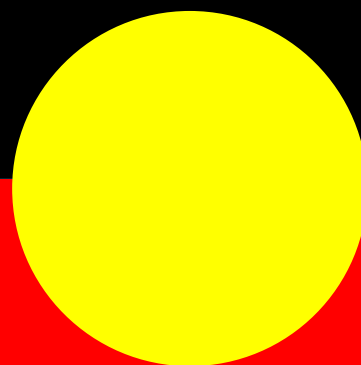


John,* a university student living in Brisbane, had been receiving only \$45 per fortnight in ABSTUDY, despite applying for the payment four months earlier. His grandfather sought help from our outreach clinic. After obtaining John's permission, we contacted Centrelink and explained that John was eligible for a higher payment and a relocation allowance. Centrelink corrected the error, increasing his fortnightly payment to \$650 and providing a \$5,000 relocation payment. John's family no longer needs to support him financially.

Basic Rights Queensland acknowledges and pays respects to Queensland's past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders, and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples right across our nation.

We pay our respects to the Turrbal and Jagera nations who own the land on which we work in Meanjin (Brisbane).

Basic Rights Queensland acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonisation and is committed to working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to challenge disadvantage and discrimination and create a just and equal society.



Educating and informing people about their legal rights

In 2023–2024, we continued our commitment to empowering communities through our comprehensive Community Legal Education (CLE) programs. We reached hundreds of participants, raising awareness about legal rights, improving access to justice, and fostering stronger connections with service providers throughout Queensland.

Over the past year, our core legal services programs delivered 51 CLE sessions to more than 500 participants, including workers, clients, and community members, on a range of issues, including Disability Discrimination, Centrelink, and Employment Law. These sessions were facilitated by dedicated community education workers, solicitors, social workers, and our director, providing opportunities for our entire team to engage directly with the community.

We actively participated in forums and interagency networks such as the Community Legal Education Legal Assistance Forum and Family Support groups, collaborating with other services to ensure that Queenslanders in need are supported. This collaboration allowed us to offer up-to-date resources, referral pathways, and information on how BRQ can assist vulnerable individuals throughout the state.

Some of the key events we participated in include Homeless Connect, NAIDOC Week, and Mental Health Week, providing vital information and referrals. Our team also travelled to Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Yeppoon to deliver CLE sessions to Acute Care Teams within Queensland Health and local community services. Additionally, we maintained a weekly presence at the Brisbane Murri Court, supporting First Nations men and women with legal information and referrals related to Social Security and Disability Discrimination.



We also worked closely with TAFE Queensland, delivering CLE sessions to students in the Adult Migration Education and Community Services programs. Engaging with diverse networks, including Regional Local Level Alliances, Regional Councils, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled health providers, BRQ has been committed to exploring innovative ways to reach vulnerable communities and ensuring that all Queenslanders can access justice and equality.



Working Women Queensland

This year, Working Women Queensland delivered 44 CLE activities and developed 26 new resources. Our focus was on reaching vulnerable workers, especially those facing intersectional discrimination. Highlights include:

- **Culturally and linguistically diverse communities:** We partnered with government agencies, non-government organisations, and community groups to deliver targeted education on workplace rights, sexual harassment, and discrimination to migrant and refugee communities. Thirteen sessions were delivered specifically to these groups across Queensland.
- **Strengthening referral networks:** Collaborating with three sexual violence services in Brisbane, Toowoomba, and the Gold Coast, as well as two wider sexual violence networks, we connected with legal professionals and other community legal centres to deliver state-wide CLE focused on discrimination and human rights.
- **Reaching women in male-dominated industries:** We delivered CLE sessions to women in the construction and IT industries, attending four Construction Expos and connecting with apprenticeship providers to ensure that young apprentices, particularly women, have access to legal information and support.

Feedback from participants highlighted the impact of our CLE sessions:

"Your insights on workplace harassment and violence were incredibly impactful for our community. Thank you for your time, expertise, and commitment to positive change in the workplace. We eagerly anticipate future collaborations to empower and support women in male-dominated trades."

"I also wanted to extend our sincere gratitude for your invaluable contributions to our Latino community. Your assistance answering questions and doubts made a significant difference for them. Thank you once more for your assistance. It is greatly appreciated."



It's an exciting time for Working Women Queensland with the Albanese Government's announcement of ongoing and expanded funding for Working Women's Centres. This funding will support the three established centres in Queensland, South Australia, and the Northern Territory.

Additionally, it will enable community legal centres, women's legal centres, unions, and workers' compensation services to establish new Working Women's Centres across the remaining states and territories.

This boost in funding follows recommendation 49 of the Respect@Work report and years of fierce, dedicated advocacy from the existing centres. It acknowledges and celebrates the unique model of Working Women's Centres, which offer holistic and trauma-informed support for vulnerable, non-unionised women seeking help with workplace issues.



For Working Women Queensland, the new and expanded funding means we can continue to provide essential services to women facing sexual harassment, discrimination, bullying, and other workplace challenges. We look forward to further collaboration with our sister organisations nationwide.

This year, we further expanded the team and are now a team of 15 industrial officers, intake workers, social workers, and solicitors. As always, we must acknowledge the incredible women who make up the Working Women Queensland team - their tireless advocacy for and dedication to our clients is truly inspiring.



The 2023-24 year has presented significant challenges for working women, with the escalating cost of living, a persistent gender pay gap and a national crisis of gendered violence. Demand for our services has increased, and we were able to support more Queensland women, and provide more intensive support services this year.

Discrete support

In the 2023-24 financial year, we supported 1480 women across Queensland, almost all experiencing financial disadvantage. Our team provided 1869 information services and 599 supportive referrals to other services.

We received requests for advice and support through our 1800 phone line, via our partnership with the Fair Work Commission through the Workplace Advice Service, and through the Queensland Human Rights Commission, via our newly established legal advice clinic.

We provided 390 duty lawyer services to vulnerable Queenslanders and 1656 advices.

Representation and ongoing support

We increased our casework capacity during the 2023-24 financial year, providing services to those most at risk. We provided 41 dispute resolution services, 31 court or tribunal services and 179 legal tasks.

Through our representation services, WWQ secured more than \$800,000 in compensation, including for women who experienced sexual harassment or discrimination in the workplace.

We look forward to our continued role in advocating for the rights and well-being of women in the workforce.

Priyanka,* a single parent working in the caring industry, was dismissed shortly after starting a new job due to an irrelevant criminal history. This unexpected job loss caused significant financial hardship, as Priyanka was already living week to week. Working Women Queensland (WWQ) supported Priyanka by filing a general protections application in the Fair Work Commission, alleging that her dismissal was an act of discrimination.

At a Member-assisted conciliation conference, WWQ helped Priyanka reach a settlement that included compensation. This positive outcome was significant, given the limited protections for workers against discrimination based on irrelevant criminal records at the time. Priyanka expressed that she felt heard and empowered throughout the process.

In early 2024, **Rae*** reached out to WWQ after being told she was being made redundant. Despite prior assurances that her job was secure following a restructure, things changed after Rae made a workers' compensation claim for a workplace injury. Her employment was terminated without proper consultation, leaving Rae, nearing retirement age, distressed about her future prospects after more than a decade in the role.

Unsure of her rights, Rae contacted WWQ for assistance. WWQ helped her file an application with the Fair Work Commission and provided support in preparing for her conciliation conference. The matter was resolved to Rae's satisfaction during conciliation.

Estelle,* a single mother of two working in the professional services industry, contacted WWQ after experiencing workplace bullying. Having recently fled a domestically violent relationship, Estelle faced discrimination and bullying from her colleagues and manager, who believed she wasn't working hard enough due to her family responsibilities. Her manager made invasive comments about her personal circumstances and shared them openly with others at work.

WWQ assisted Estelle in filing a complaint with the Queensland Human Rights Commission, where her case was resolved for \$30,000 in compensation for the hurt and humiliation she endured. Estelle's case highlighted the persistent discrimination faced by those trying to access paid domestic and family violence leave, despite its recognition as a workplace entitlement.

Annika,* a drafts person, had worked full-time for her employer for three years under a remote work arrangement. After moving her family interstate to accommodate her child's special needs, Annika was suddenly locked out of the workplace system and ignored by her employer. She was later told that her remote work agreement had been revoked and she would need to return to the office. When Annika refused, her employer stopped paying her.

WWQ supported Annika through an unfair dismissal application in the Fair Work Commission. The case was resolved at conciliation with compensation, a statement of service, and her termination being recorded as a resignation. Annika expressed her gratitude for WWQ's support, noting she wouldn't have known what to do without our help.

Susan,* an Aboriginal woman and the only Indigenous employee at her worksite, sought advice from WWQ after a disciplinary process was initiated against her based on uninvestigated and unsubstantiated allegations from a colleague who had previously made racist comments. This wasn't the first time Susan faced such allegations without investigation.

WWQ advised Susan over three appointments, helping her understand her rights. Susan chose to inform her employer that she had obtained legal advice and raised concerns about the fairness of the disciplinary process. As a result, the employer withdrew the allegations.

Feeling empowered by the knowledge and support she received, Susan decided not to pursue further action. Susan expressed her determination to remain in her job, stating that leaving due to racism would send the wrong message to Aboriginal children and parents. She felt confident in her ability to advocate for herself moving forward.

***"Speaking with you,
I feel empowered – I
now know my rights
as an employee and
can use them to
stand up for
myself..."***

- Susan*
a WWQ client

Advocating for a fairer and more just society

We are committed to not only providing direct support to individuals in need but also driving systemic change to ensure a fairer and more just society. Our law reform efforts this year have focused on addressing key legislative gaps, advocating for policy reforms, and elevating the voices of the most vulnerable Queenslanders in national conversations.

Our commitment to advocacy stems from a deep understanding of the barriers our clients face, from navigating the complex Centrelink system to combating workplace discrimination. Through our legal and social work services, we see firsthand the impact of outdated or inadequate legislation on individuals and communities. That's why we actively engage in law reform — to challenge systemic inequalities, improve access to justice, and create lasting, positive change for future generations.

Workplace and employment

Working Women Queensland contributed to reforms designed to improve workplace safety and protect vulnerable workers, including by:

- advocating for changes to the *Australian Human Commission Amendment (Costs Protection) Bill*, ensuring the cost of pursuing justice don't prevent individuals from raising legitimate complaints.
- making submissions to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review into Justice Responses to Sexual Violence and the Queensland Sentencing Advisory Council's review of sentencing for sexual assault and rape offences — pushing for reforms that better support survivors of violence.
- making submissions to the Paid Agents Review in the Fair Work Commission and research into paid domestic and family violence leave to influence ongoing policy discussions on workplace rights.
- advocating around the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on women in the workplace, supported by research from Wotton + Kearney to shape protections for women working in industries increasingly affected by AI-driven processes.

Disability rights and accessibility

As part of our broader disability rights work, we contributed to important research and advocacy efforts, including by:

- collaborating with the University of Queensland Social Sciences School on the Assistance Animal Research Report – 'Unleashing Accessibility', which is being used to lobby for urgent reforms in the accreditation and training requirements for assistance animals.
- participating in consultations for the development of the new Administrative Review Tribunal, ensuring the needs of our clients are reflected in the establishment of this critical body.

Social security

Our work in social security continues to be a crucial area of focus, as we strive to dismantle the barriers faced by clients who rely on government support:

- Together with Economic Justice Australia (EJA), BRQ provided a Response to the Robodebt Royal Commission Recommendations, advocating for measures that protect individuals from government overreach and errors.
- We played a key role in lobbying for the implementation of the Services Australia Advocates Channel, a direct line for advocates to access Centrelink teams, which has significantly improved service delivery and reduced delays for our clients.
- Our contributions to the Automation in Social Security Project and the Remote Women's Project led by EJA further underscore our commitment to ensuring that technology and automation do not disproportionately disadvantage vulnerable populations.

Anti-discrimination and human rights

We advocated for stronger anti-discrimination protections and advancing human rights across Queensland:

- We submitted responses to both the Anti-Discrimination Bill 2024 and the Review of the Human Rights Act 2019, offering detailed feedback to ensure that Queensland's legislative frameworks are both inclusive and reflective of the diverse needs of its citizens.
- WWQ presented at the Labor National Conference Fringe Program, advocating for systemic changes to address workplace gender inequality and highlighting lessons learned from the Post-Robodebt Administrative Law Protection.

Supporting women who survive sexual harassment

Violence against women in Australia has reached alarming levels, with workplace sexual harassment being a prominent example of this issue. WWQ provides frontline support, thanks to targeted funding that enables us to provide essential support services. We offer information, legal advice, social work intervention, and ongoing representation to women who have faced sexual harassment and discrimination at work.

Individuals experiencing intersectional oppressions, including based on race, disability, and sexuality, are at an increased risk of violence and harassment. Our work at WWQ reflects this reality, and we prioritise support to those facing multiple forms of discrimination.

Addressing workplace sexual harassment requires tackling the root causes of gender inequality. Many of the cases we handle reveal persistent issues like power imbalances, gendered stereotypes, and toxic workplace cultures. These are key drivers of harassment and must be addressed to create safer work environments.

We extend our gratitude to the women who have courageously shared their stories and entrusted us with their advocacy. Their experiences not only help us fight for justice on an individual basis but also drive our collective efforts to improve conditions for all working women in Queensland.



Uma,* newly arrived in Australia, was working on a farm in Far North Queensland. Her employment was precarious and isolated, with only a few other employees working alongside her. Throughout her time on the farm, Uma was subjected to inappropriate comments, sexual propositions, and declarations of love by her manager, which eventually escalated into sexual assault.

Fearing she would lose her job for “causing trouble,” Uma was too afraid to report the assault to the police. She needed her income to survive and didn’t want to be involved in lengthy legal proceedings. After making a complaint to her employer, Uma’s employment was terminated, citing performance issues. The farm had no workplace sexual harassment policies in place.

WWQ provided Uma with ongoing legal and social work support through its holistic, wraparound model. WWQ helped Uma resolve the matter directly with her employer, securing a significant sum of compensation, an apology, and a statement of service to help her find new employment. As part of the settlement, the employer was also required to undergo sexual harassment training and implement proper workplace policies.

Uma described the experience as the most stressful of her life, expressing her gratitude for WWQ’s support throughout the process.

Narelle,* a part-time healthcare worker, was sexually harassed at work by a coworker. Distressed by the incident, she reported it to her employer, but felt her concerns were minimised and not taken seriously. The following day, Narelle was harassed again by the same coworker, who also attempted to intimidate her into not escalating her complaints.

Despite multiple reports to her employer, no action was taken, and the coworker continued to harass her. Feeling unsupported, Narelle resigned and filed a police complaint. WWQ provided Narelle with initial legal advice and helped her lodge a sexual harassment complaint. WWQ continues to offer casework support as Narelle awaits the next steps in the process.

Narelle has also been supported by WWQ’s social worker. Her strength and positive outlook remain unwavering despite the ongoing adversity. Through conversations, her courage and determination to seek justice have been highlighted, and she has become an active participant in WWQ’s support group programs, providing invaluable peer support to other women facing similar challenges.

Mental Health Legal Hub: A lifeline for many



BRQ's mental health team have responded to the changing and increasing legal needs of Queenslanders with trauma informed and culturally responsive legal services. Our Mental Health Legal Hub has enhanced the capacity of BRQ to provide more extensive casework assistance to very vulnerable people experiencing mental health conditions and other intersectional disadvantage in matters relating to social security, employment and disability discrimination.

A large proportion of the clients we have been advising in relation to the Disability Support Pension (DSP) have required advice on multiple occasions as they navigate the claim and appeal process, often without the assistance of support workers. Our clients mostly experience significant functional impairments due to their disabilities and frequently advise us that their health and wellbeing is impacted due to the stress associated with the lengthy process, the complexity of the DSP medical criteria and onerous evidentiary requirements.

BRQ has been able to support a number of clients by funding psychiatric assessment and a comprehensive report to satisfy these evidentiary requirements for DSP. This has been life changing for clients who would otherwise not have any means of affording an appointment with a psychiatrist, not to mention a report.

Over the last twelve months, we continued to provide outreach through clinics at 3rd Space and Emmanuel City Mission on alternate weeks. Our clinics have continued to be an important point of contact for clients who are experiencing homelessness and are accessing services in the inner-city areas. We are grateful to our outreach partners for offering their support and venues to make contact with clients.

Supporting people across regional Queensland

Despite our longstanding commitment to delivering legal help across regional Queensland, there are still service gaps for people at the intersection of social security and mental health. We travelled to Central Queensland for a 3-day outreach trip covering the region between Rockhampton, Gladstone and Yeppoon delivering Community Legal Education sessions to 3 acute mental health services and 6 community support services including neighborhood centres, a family and private charity, a housing service and a public intoxication intervention service. These interactions revealed that services weren't aware of BRQ's services or had never accessed our services on behalf of their clients, but that they all could benefit from our and would like our assistance in future. Many organisations we met with reinforced the importance of travelling to the regions to build awareness and trust. On the final day of the outreach trip we attended a Central Queensland Homeless connect event, to discuss our work with over 100 individuals and services and broaden awareness of our services across the region. The trip built knowledge of our services and established relationships that will help realise our long-term commitment to justice for all Queenslanders.

You are amazing, and honestly I can't thank you enough for the help you're giving me. I've been flailing out here, trying my absolute best to make heads and tails out of everything and wondering my whole life, if I'm making the right decision and if I even properly understand... The light you've shed on this overwhelming, massively stressful situation and the load you've taken off my shoulders.. has been such an incredible blessing and the feeling of being able to breath out again is so lovely. Also the information you've given me regarding both the dsp tables and the explanations of their terms, the clarity and understanding their language has given me a bit more confidence as well. For all of this.. I'm incredibly grateful 🙏 thank you so so very much

- Feedback from Phil*

a client of our Mental Health Legal Hub

Fiona,* who had been unable to discuss her trauma-related condition for years, was finally ready to apply for the Disability Support Pension (DSP). However, when she reached out to BRQ, she found it difficult to speak with her GP to gather the necessary evidence for her claim.

Over six months, BRQ provided Fiona with regular support and guidance throughout the DSP application process. We helped Fiona identify and build trust with a new medical professional who could provide the needed evidence. Once a relationship was established, we worked with this professional to secure the documentation required for Fiona's DSP claim.

Throughout the process, BRQ maintained frequent contact with Fiona, offering emotional support and liaising with Services Australia via the Advocates Channel as needed. Thanks to this ongoing support and advocacy, sufficient evidence was submitted, and Fiona was awarded DSP with full backpay.

Services Australia just rang me today and have approved the [new] Claim, I'm actually a little shocked and light headed, Mum literally broke down in tears finally with relief as have I. When I first spoke to you over 6 months ago, I was relieved to have someone in my corner... what you do for people it is lifesaving, without you I would have never been able to file these claims. The fact that I find developing relationships with people so hard due to my mental health and I immediately felt comfortable to share my problems with you is a testament to your kind nature...

- Peter
a BRQ client

Peter,* who struggled with multiple physical and mental health conditions, was growing increasingly frustrated with his situation. His conditions made it difficult for him to meet the requirements of his Jobseeker payment, and as a result, his payments were cut off, leaving him unable to afford essential medications. His relationship with Services Australia and his disability employment service had deteriorated.

To help Peter, we appealed the decision to cut off his Jobseeker payment and requested its reinstatement. We worked with Peter's GP to secure a referral to a psychiatrist for further assessment and reconnected him with his psychologist, whom he had stopped seeing during the COVID-19 lockdowns. We gathered evidence from his GP, psychologist, and psychiatrist to support his application for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) and assisted him in filing a new DSP claim as a backup.

Knowing the assessment process was causing Peter significant anxiety, we prepared him for the required evaluations and requested that his new DSP claim be prioritised. Peter was ultimately granted DSP, restoring his financial stability. We also represented Peter at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) hearing for the appeal of his earlier rejected DSP claim, and he was granted DSP with arrears.

The strong evidence we collected also supported Peter's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) claim, and we referred him to Carer's Queensland for further assistance with this process.

Chau* had been trying to secure reasonable adjustments for their ADHD and autism in the workplace for nearly a year when they contacted BRQ. By this time, their employer had reduced their work hours without explanation, leaving Chau feeling discriminated against and unsupported due to their disability. Frustrated and unable to trust their employer, Chau wanted to leave.

BRQ quickly identified that miscommunication between lower-level managers and HR had led to the mishandling of Chau's requests. We contacted senior HR representatives to highlight the employer's errors, negotiated an exit for Chau, and secured an ex-gratia payment equivalent to 8 weeks of full-time wages. Additionally, we obtained a commitment from the employer to involve Chau in developing a policy for implementing reasonable adjustments for employees with disabilities, ensuring others wouldn't face the same challenges.

Thea* was placed into residential care after her mother was injured and left temporarily unable to care for her. Within the residential care arrangement, Thea was not able to access her assistance animal who was trained to support Thea with emotional regulation and tasks supporting visual acuity. After returning to her mother's care, Thea contacted us and we submitted a complaint on her behalf to the Queensland Human Rights Commission.

At conciliation we argued that the residential accommodation provider and State Department assuming custody had discriminated by denying Thea access to her assistance animal, and that the decision to place Thea in accommodation that was not suitable for her assistance animal had not considered her human rights. We resolved against all parties for compensation, an apology and an undertaking to introduce a nation-wide training program and policy audit for dealing with children who relied on assistance animals.

Ming* was experiencing difficulties with a specialist disability accommodation (SDA) provider and a strata management group. The strata management group issued a breach notice and invoice for repair work to Ming, alleging he had caused minor damage to common property. The width of his wheelchair made it difficult for him to manoeuvre in certain areas of the complex.

We drafted a letter to the SDA provider and asked that they take responsibility for the invoice as the provider responsible for providing Ming with safe and suitable accommodation. We also reminded the provider that as a registered NDIS service provider their acts and decisions fell within the scope of the *Human Rights Act*, and proper consideration of these rights were necessary to any decision to pass on the invoice to him. The service provider agreed to cover the invoice and to work with Ming to ensure further damage would not occur.

Fighting disability discrimination

In 2024 our disability discrimination practice continued to grow as the rising cost of living and inflation burdened vulnerable and marginalised communities. Under mounting financial pressures, our team supported clients to fight back against discrimination within accommodation settings, in the administration of State programs and in accessing critical services when access became more important than ever.

This year our clients helped us recognise systemic shortfalls in the efficiency of the Queensland *Human Rights Act*, but also the potential of the Act in promoting and safeguarding human rights. We communicated these findings in our submission to the Human Rights Act 2019 Review and acted for clients making human rights complaints within the Queensland Human Rights Commission and the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Within our practice we successfully exceeded dispute resolution targets for the year and resolved the majority of complaints that we represented in conciliation within the Queensland Human Rights Commission. With the support of exceptional counsel acting pro bono, we represented more clients at the Queensland Civil Administrative Tribunal level, overcoming complex procedural challenges in achieving the outcomes our clients deserved.

We developed relationships with new pro bono partners to bring expertise across intersecting areas of law into our advice sessions, as well as building on established pro bono relationships to challenge laws in key areas for our clients. Our 'Paw Reform' continued through 2024 as the University of Queensland Social Sciences helped us understand the experiences of people relying on assistance animals in the backdrop of confusing State and Federal legislation.

More and more this year our clients pursued complaints to facilitate meaningful change in the way public and private entities engaged with people with disabilities and in advocating for inclusive policies to benefit others within their communities. We count on these voices for the impact our service has had throughout 2024 and will continue to strive to ensure those voices are heard.



Leah* was a NDIS participant who resided in specialist disability accommodation (SDA) owned by a Government Department and managed by a NDIS-registered service provider. The NDIS service provider also provided supported independent living services to the client under a service agreement. Both public entities made decisions purporting to end her tenancy in the SDA property when the NDIS service provider sought to end the service agreement. Detailed human rights and discrimination complaints were made to each entity alleging the decisions had not considered Leah's human rights and were discriminatory.

We helped Leah make a complaint to the QHRC about unlawful discrimination and breach of human rights. While highly legalistic arguments about discrimination can result in clients disengaging during the conciliation process, the Act gave Leah some accessible language to express how unfair the treatment had been and the impact on her.

The matter was resolved at conciliation and Leah continues to reside at the property

Mikey*, a 6-year-old student with Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, and global developmental delay, faced repeated suspensions from his state school due to "challenging behavior." The school proposed reducing his hours to part-time and confined him to a separate room away from his peers and usual teacher for two weeks, even during break times. During this period, it was unclear whether Mikey was receiving any meaningful access to the curriculum.

When Mikey's parents requested reasonable adjustments, such as allowing his allied health practitioners to provide in-school support and therapy, the school dismissed their requests. The Principal appeared unaware of the school's obligations under the law. However, after a human rights complaint and further advocacy, the Regional Office intervened.

The Regional Office arranged for a functional behavior assessment to be conducted and implemented the recommendations of Mikey's allied health team. The school also received additional resources to reduce class sizes and increase the number of classes, benefiting not just Mikey, but all students in his year level. As a result, Mikey was able to start the new term in a smaller class with a teacher specializing in special education. His allied health team was also allowed to provide ongoing in-school support and therapy, ensuring Mikey could thrive in a more inclusive and supportive environment



Acknowledging our volunteers & pro bono partners

Our work is significantly amplified through the dedication of volunteers and the strength of our pro bono partnerships. These collaborations allow us to extend our reach, deepen our impact, and ensure that vulnerable Queenslanders receive the legal, social, and advocacy support they need. In 2023–2024, we expanded our volunteer and pro bono programs, further embedding them into our outreach, research and casework activities.

Homelessness outreach program

Recognising the significant gaps in social security advocacy and economic justice for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, BRQ developed an outreach program designed to meet people where they are. In 2024, we expanded this initiative through clinics at 3rd Space and Emmanuel City Mission drop-in centres in Brisbane. This outreach program has been crucial in building trusting relationships with both participants and service providers, ensuring that people who are homeless or at risk can access the support they need.



Our collaboration with student volunteers from the University of Queensland Pro Bono Centre has been integral to this program's success. These dedicated volunteers provided consistent fortnightly clinics throughout the year, offering direct social security advice, and facilitating referrals to legal, health, and essential services. Through this commitment, we have been able to increase economic justice for some of the most marginalised members of our community, reducing barriers and bridging the gaps for those who face significant obstacles to accessing services.

Research and advocacy for women's rights

In 2023-24, WWQ welcomed Amy Lafferty from Wotton + Kearney on secondment. This partnership resulted in a detailed research paper and presentation on the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on women's work, particularly in highly feminised industries. By investigating barriers to women's participation in STEM fields and exploring ways to increase gender representation, this research has provided valuable insights for our ongoing advocacy efforts.

Our collaboration with Wotton + Kearney continues into the new year, with the AI research project expanding to examine targeted issues such as workplace surveillance and performance monitoring. These partnerships have not only supported our advocacy but have also positioned WWQ as a key player in shaping future workplace policies to ensure positive outcomes for working women in Queensland.

Additionally, WWQ partnered with the UQ Pro Bono Centre on a literature report titled "Issues Facing Women Aged 45+ in the Workforce and Their Lack of Representation in Leadership Roles." This comprehensive review focused on key challenges, including breaking the glass ceiling, the emotional labour of women, dual caring responsibilities, and the economic impacts of these burdens. The findings from this report are central to our advocacy efforts aimed at addressing these systemic issues.

Pro Bono support in rural and remote outreach

Our rural and remote outreach programs have also benefited from the commitment of UQ Pro Bono students. This year, students Joanne Vivian, Tamika Dalby, Lakhveer Kaur and Grace Terec joined us on outreach trips to Woorabinda and Cherbourg, providing invaluable support to our team as we delivered services to isolated communities. Working alongside our advocates, these students gained firsthand experience in the challenges faced by rural Queenslanders and contributed to the delivery of essential legal advice and support.



Secondment strengthens our AAT advocacy

In 2024, we launched a new secondment program in partnership with HWL Ebsworth, expanding our capacity to support clients in social security matters. HWL Ebsworth graduates joined BRQ to assist our advocates in preparing Duty Lawyer files for the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT). This partnership has been mutually beneficial, providing graduates with exposure to challenging areas of law while enhancing BRQ's ability to meet the rising demand for legal services.

This program has been particularly impactful in supporting our social security advocates, offering them additional resources to help clients navigate complex AAT hearings. By integrating secondees into our highly collaborative work environment, we ensure that they gain valuable experience while maximising the quality of service provided to our clients.

Through the generosity and dedication of our volunteers and pro bono partners, we have been able to significantly expand our reach, ensuring that vulnerable Queenslanders receive the support and advocacy they need. These partnerships are a testament to the power of collaboration and the collective commitment to achieving justice and equity for all.

Thanks to our pro bono partners

HWL
EBSWORTH
LAWYERS

wotton
kearney+

Allens

CLAYTON UTZ

COLIN
BIGGERS
& PAISLEY
LAWYERS

hg
HopgoodGanim
LAWYERS

TRAVIS
SCHULTZ
& PARTNERS

maurice
blackburn
lawyers

MinterEllison.



Finance report

This year, BRQ has not only reinforced its position as a vital provider of legal services but has also made unprecedented strides in expanding our impact, securing new streams of funding, and increasing service delivery across Queensland.



Building on a strong foundation

We owe a tremendous thank you to our loyal funders and partners who continue to believe in our mission to fight for justice and equality. Government funding under the National Legal Assistance Partnership continues to be our bedrock, providing critical support for our social security and disability discrimination services, with BRQ receiving more than \$9.81 million over the five-year term of the 2020–2025 agreement. With the current NLAP expiring in June 2025, and some uncertainty about what comes next, we can't underestimate the value of stable, ongoing funding which allows us to plan confidently for the future.

We are also delighted that the Working Women Queensland program has secured new and extended funding to continue our vital work in preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment and discrimination. This comes at a time when these issues are more relevant than ever, and we are proud to be leading the way in implementing Recommendation 49 of the Respect@Work Report. Current funding agreements, including \$908k in the current year, will carry us through the next phase of this critical initiative.

Expanding our reach

This year has seen us diversify our funding and expand our services even further. We are particularly proud of our successful implementation of the Mental Health Support and Workplace Sexual Discrimination programs. This three-year, \$2.1 million funding will ensure that BRQ can continue to provide life-changing services to some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

Our rural and remote program received increased support, enabling us to extend our outreach to previously underserved areas. The impact of this is profound: we're seeing greater referrals and more success stories from clients who have been empowered through our advocacy and legal support.

Financial sustainability & strategic growth

One of the most exciting developments in recent years has been BRQ's commitment to future-proofing the organisation. Thanks to our donors, including long-time supporters like the Electrical Trades Union, and new benefactors and supporters, we have built a solid financial base that allows us to invest in our people, technology, and capacity-building.

This year's total revenue reached \$3.97 million, a significant increase over the previous year (\$2.72m), driven by new grants, donations, and strategic partnerships. Our major expenditure remains salaries and staffing, which totalled \$3.29 million, reflecting our commitment to retaining and attracting the best talent to deliver our vital services.

Looking ahead

The funding landscape continues to be competitive, but BRQ is well-positioned to thrive. With the Respect@Work initiatives gaining momentum, we are pursuing further funding opportunities that will allow us to continue our leadership in this area. We are also working closely with the Queensland and Commonwealth governments to secure additional long-term funding for our core services, including social security law, disability discrimination, and women's employment rights.

In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our staff, volunteers, and partners. BRQ's continued growth and success is a reflection of your passion, innovation, and commitment to justice. Together, we will continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those who need us most.

Connor Wrench

Treasurer

Statement of financial performance

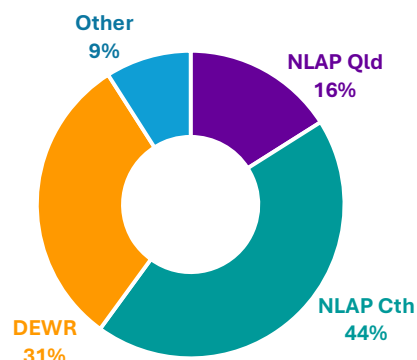
	2024	2023
Revenue		
Legal Assistance Services Funding grants	1,301,730	1,148,650
Mental Health Support service grants	875,689	321,680
Working Women's Centre grants	907,973	636,517
Workplace Sexual Harassment service grants	737,820	525,646
Remote travel and other grants	18,436	9,091
Donations	4,839	6,947
Services revenue	13,500	1,500
Finance income	78,927	34,228
Other revenue	31,350	32,475
Total revenue	3,970,264	2,716,734
Expenses		
Staff expenses	(3,292,439)	(2,394,298)
Premises costs	(75,067)	(18,426)
IT & communication expenses	(94,718)	(68,566)
Print, postage & document management expenses	(20,265)	(6,099)
Membership, subscriptions & conference expenses	(25,335)	(29,458)
Depreciation and amortisation	(124,522)	(85,517)
Training & workshop consultants	–	(3,451)
Governance & social marketing consultants	(62,100)	(19,923)
Audit & Accounting fees	(45,095)	(7,742)
Insurance costs	(6,514)	(4,953)
Travel expenses	(42,270)	(49,199)
Programming & planning costs	(39,073)	(8,033)
Finance expense – Leased property	(27,214)	(1,296)
Other expenses	(44,622)	(13,376)
Total expenses	(3,899,234)	(2,710,337)
Surplus before income tax	71,030	6,397
Income tax expense	–	–
Surplus after income tax for the year	71,030	6,397
Other comprehensive income for the year, net of tax	–	–
Total comprehensive income for the year	71,030	6,397

Statement of financial position

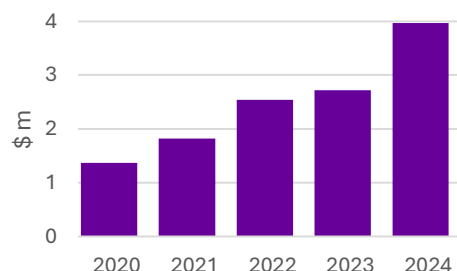
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	3,254,764	2,410,695
Trade and other receivables	24,086	5,624
Prepayments	67,504	18,448
Total current assets	3,346,354	2,434,767
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	83,605	63,463
Right-of-use asset	807,707	14,700
Total non-current assets	891,312	78,163
Total assets	4,237,666	2,512,930
Current liabilities		
Trade and other payables	442,144	246,455
Contract liabilities	1,226,256	684,234
Lease liabilities	142,158	9,984
Employee benefits	276,746	189,815
Total current liabilities	2,087,304	1,130,488
Non-current liabilities		
Lease Liabilities	684,219	–
Employee benefits	52,016	39,345
Total non-current liabilities	736,235	39,345
Total liabilities	2,823,539	1,169,833
Net assets	1,414,127	1,343,097
Equity		
Accumulated surplus	1,414,127	1,343,097
Total equity	1,414,127	1,343,097

Our audited financial report is available upon request.

Funding sources



Revenue growth



Basic Rights Queensland extends a huge thank you to all our funders, sponsors and partners who enable us to undertake our work. We are incredibly grateful for the support we receive from former clients, individuals, businesses and organisations both financially and in-kind.

Funders



Queensland Government



Australian Government

Attorney-General's Department



Australian Government

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Sponsors



Our management committee



Claire Moore has a rich history in public service, including roles in the Department of Aboriginal Affairs and the Department of Social Security. From 1966 to 2001 she served as Vice-President of the Queensland Council of Unions, and she was elected Senator for Queensland in 2001. Joining BRQ in 2021 as Acting Director, Claire now serves as Chair of our Management Committee, bringing invaluable leadership and experience.

Janine Aitken, an expert in Employment Law, Marketing, and WH&S, has a diverse professional background. Practicing mainly in Employment and Industrial Relations Law, she is also active in philanthropic efforts focused on medical research and women's support services. Janine joined BRQ's Management Committee in 2020, bringing her passion and knowledge to our work.



Jessica Hodge is a graduate of the University of Queensland and University of Melbourne who works in personal injury law at James Law. She specialises in workers' compensation and public liability claims. A BRQ Management Committee member since 2020, Jessica serves as Secretary, contributing her legal expertise and commitment to our team.

Connor Wrench is a Chartered Accountant with broad expertise in financial accounting and advisory services, having worked with both listed clients and highly regulated industries in Australia and the UK. He has also completed secondments in the Australian Federal Government's cyber security division. Currently, Connor is the Treasurer of BRQ's Management Committee, offering critical financial oversight.



Dr Judith Burton was a Senior Lecturer and Director of Academic Programs at the School of Public Health and Social Work at Queensland University of Technology. Judith spent 20 years in learning and teaching higher education. Judith's research focused on topics related to children, families and evaluation of human services programs and practices.

Dr Lyndal Sleep is a researcher at the Queensland Centre for Domestic and Family Violence Research, and has served on BRQ's Management Committee since 2019. Lyndal's research focuses on social security decision making, technology and women and she is passionate about enhancing the safety and wellbeing for women in situations of intersectional disadvantage.



Peter Arndt is a veteran social justice advocate, recognised with a United Nations award in 2015. His work spans various communities, including Aboriginal people, asylum seekers, and those in conflict zones like West Papua and Sri Lanka. Peter joined BRQ in 2021, bringing deep insights from his international advocacy work.

Priscilla Lal leads the Legal Advisory team for Suncorp Bank, providing legal advice and guidance across all of the Bank's key strategic initiatives. Drawing on over 20 years of experience as a dispute resolution lawyer and in legal project management, Priscilla brings extensive legal knowledge to our Management Committee.





Basic Rights
Queensland



Our team

Alani Tenaglia

Aleena MacDonald

Alice Chester

Alice Wallace

Andrew Davison

Anna Gilet

Bernadette Drew

Bethany Sterland

Bonnie Kubler Shaw

Caitlin Jacob

Cameron Birkhead

Cara Hughes

Caspian

**Bahramshahi-
Willett**

Clarissa Zhong

Dahye Jung

Devina Saberi

**Dorothea
Georgiades**

Ellie Dalton

Fiona Hunt

Haneen Alfadhli

Jack Margaritis

Jake Sheehan

Jayne Carter

Jill McKay

Joanne Vivian

Kara Cook

Kathleen Hunt

Katie Tighe

Kathryn Rendell

Lachlan Varley

Linden Peacock

Maeve Lu

Marie Gabuya

Mark McKeon

Megan Inglis

Mersiha Causevic

Monica Matray

Neisha Traill

Nilukshi Wardill

Paul MacKay

Penny Spalding

Peter Nisbet

Ro Chadwick

Robin Grove

Samantha Tolova'a

Samarah Kerr

'Sam' Simon Tracy

Steve Irvine

Tamara Chin

Tamika Dalby

Teresa Grahame

Terri Kempton

Thomas Parer

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Tneka Springett

Yokki Ang

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