



## **Message from the President**

As I write this the sky is blue, the sun is warm and the garden is chock-full of azalea blooms.

Here in Western Australia we have remained free of lockdowns, mask wearing and closed theatres and we are eternally grateful for this. At CAB, our Perth office and Branches have all remained open to advise, inform and give referrals to the general public who seek our help. Great work by our staff and volunteers as always!

I have two dates for you to look out for in your busy lives. The first is our Annual General Meeting to be held on the **28th of October**. I would so like to see as many volunteers as possible with us and, of course, all the Financial Members of CAB who can vote at a General Meeting. This year, the Board has also called a Special General Meeting, which will be held prior to the AGM.



There will be two resolutions dealing with the Rules of the Association, which will be put to the Members for their approval.

The second date is our Christmas lunch! In a strong, positive frame of mind, we have already set the date and made the booking for 2021 on **November 18th**! It will be fun to get together to meet old friends, make new ones and have staff, volunteers and our pro-bono professionals all sitting down again as a group.

Vice-President Dr Peter McKerracher and I have been visiting all the Branches as you hold your Annual Branch Meetings and it has been a pleasure to meet everyone.

We have received many positive comments with regard to the installation of the new computers. It has become increasingly apparent that the technology upgrade has improved our ability to help with online questions through the improved accessibility of our online fact sheets and the online shop, which has been a benefit to so many people.

Keep up the interest in what you do, keep abreast of any changes in the law and most of all remember: you are the face, or the voice, of CAB that will make a difference to someone who needs our help.

Enjoy the Spring,

Wendy Stephens

President

Board of Management

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## **Message from the CEO**

Hello and welcome to our Spring newsletter.

The second half of the year is always a very busy time for us at CAB.

As Wendy has mentioned, we have the Annual General Meeting in October and we're preparing the Annual Report highlighting what's been happening throughout the year.



Last week, our auditors conducted the annual financial audit. We also had our annual Community Legal Centre review and cross check to retain Community Legal Centre status (which we passed with flying colours!) and we're reporting on the last financial year to our funders.

Most importantly, we're busily planning our annual volunteer Christmas lunch. It should be great fun and we love catching up with everyone who plays their part in CAB's success.

As usual, we experienced a surge of enquiries following our guest spots on Curtin Radio with Jenny Seaton. In June we chatted about neighbourhood disputes and in August Selva and I spoke about what to do after probate is granted.

Selva was quick to remind callers to obtain legal advice when making a will, as they are not as simple as people think. This can often result in your executor being left trying to sort the legalities of your estate or even worse, your estate not being distributed according to your wishes.

We have welcomed 14 new volunteers since June in both the Perth metropolitan branches and Bunbury and Busselton. These volunteers have a variety of roles including front counter duties, assisting with Criminal Injuries Compensation applications and working on CAB's Infoline. We're so lucky that in the current environment we have so many wonderful, talented people wanting to volunteer for CAB.

This is extraordinary given the impact COVID has had on volunteering and we are thankful we haven't had the same issues attracting volunteers that other agencies have. We also have new volunteer training coming up in a few weeks, so CAB is growing bigger by the day. I'm very proud of the high calibre of our volunteers and they play a huge part of the success that CAB enjoys.

So, to all of our new volunteers, welcome and thank you for choosing CAB as a place to volunteer your time.

I also want to welcome Milo Bronleigh to the staff team in Perth. Milo is an Executive Assistant and will be working alongside Natalia and senior staff to cover the Volunteer Coordinator's role when Elena goes on parenting leave. Which is fairly soon and we're all pretty excited about having a CAB baby. Also, a huge congratulations to Stacey Price who, after completing her restricted practise, has been made a permanent member of CAB's staff. Selva, Stacey and Daniel now provide legal advice across seven of our branches as well as in the Perth office.

Once again, a huge thank you to all CAB staff and volunteers, your passion to help your community and your willingness to give your time to others is what makes CAB such a great organisation to be a part of.

Take care and stay safe,

Kathryn Lawrence  
Chief Executive Officer

## National Student Volunteer Week

We recently celebrated National Student Volunteer Week! This was exciting as we were able to speak to some of our wonderful student volunteers!

If you haven't already, you should view the video that was posted on CAB's various social media platforms. We had some great engagement with the community during this event and felt very lucky to be able to learn what part CAB plays in our volunteers' student journey.



This year we celebrated National Student Volunteer week! Here are some of our wonderful volunteers from the Perth and Midland branches.



Volunteers from CAB Joondalup enjoy regular social coffee catch-ups at Dome to stay in touch with one another and build strong friendships.



CAB Bunbury and Busselton volunteers attended refresher training earlier this year.

# WA'S BAD NEIGHBOURS

**Bizarre gripes include baby crying at night**  
**EXCLUSIVE KATE EMERY**

Perth parents have received an anonymous letter demanding they stop their newborn from crying at night or face eviction, amid a spike in messy neighbourhood disputes.

The parents, who were "devastated" to receive the letter apparently signed by "fellow residents", were among the more than 2000 neighbourhood disputes reported to the WA Citizens Advice Bureau in the past year.

The bureau has seen both a growing number of inquiries relating to neighbourhood disputes and an unwillingness among neighbours to resolve the issue themselves. Often the person with a grievance did not even know their neighbour's name.

Bureau chief executive Kathryn Lawrence said the young couple who received the note complaining that their newborn was keeping other residents awake were "sadly not unusual".

"Neighbours who constantly complain about children playing in backyards are common," she said.

Another dispute involved a single mother whose children's basketball was stolen by a neighbour who was enraged they were playing in their own driveway.

The 2000 inquiries received by the bureau in 2020-21 represented a huge increase from the 207 received in 2014-15. However, the increase was significantly skewed by changes in how the statistics are collected.

Ms Lawrence said neighbourhood disputes were "definitely increasing rapidly", with an average of 40 inquiries a week.

Dividing fence issues accounted for about two-thirds of inquiries, mostly involving disagreements over who should fund repairs or a new fence. Trees, parking, noisy air-conditioners and concerns about being filmed by a neighbour's CCTV were also common problems.

Ms Lawrence said it was also becoming "very common" for people living in strata complexes to contact the bureau with concerns the strata company was not dealing with an issue.

One resident complained that their strata company had mistakenly deemed a neighbour's pet to be a "small dog" when it was actually a "medium dog". The former was allowed under strata laws, while the latter was not.

Ms Lawrence said it was so common for neighbours to be reluctant to talk to each other that the bureau had created information sheets to teach them how to do so.

"Very rarely do they actually need legal advice because the matters don't tend to be a legal dispute but more of a personal dispute between the neighbours," she said.

**CASE 1**

Parents sent a letter asking them to stop their baby crying at night.

**CASE 2**

Angry neighbour took ball off kids who were playing basketball in their own driveway

The movie *Bad Neighbours*.

Our CEO, Kathryn was interviewed by the West Australian in July about neighbour disputes.

## **Staff Profile – Milo Bronleigh**

Milo is a new staff member who joined the team in July as an Executive Assistant. We asked him some questions to get to know him better.

*What did you do before coming to CAB – what is your background?*

**Milo:** Well! I am in my final semester of law school. Last semester I was the student coordinator for international students at UWA and I was interning at the Human Rights Commission. I was also doing support work with people who have disabilities.

Now, I'm working here and at The Freedom Centre as a peer educator. I also do some voluntary work for the Butterfly Foundation where I get to advise groups on how to best address eating disorders in the community. I'm also on the LGBTQIA+ Refugee Advocacy and Advisory Group and volunteer at Curtin where I am helping with eating disorder research.

*You've been at CAB for a few months now – what initially drew you to working at CAB?*

**Milo:** I wanted to work at a community legal centre!



I had done policy work in the past but wanted experience working in the community. I think that the work that CAB does is really great, but what initially drew me into accepting the job was how warm everyone was to me at the interview – and the fact that everyone seemed keen on chatting about the best places to eat.

*You currently also work for the WA AIDS Council as a Peer Educator – do you enjoy the change of pace that provides from your work at CAB? How different is it?*

**Milo:** It's very different! I really like how I get to constantly shift between tasks. I am glad that the trauma-based work that I do at Freedom Centre is broken up with less emotionally intense work at CAB.

I get to work with volunteers in both roles which is great because the teams I work with are all passionate and devoted. It's really refreshing to work with people who really care about helping others!

*You're about to finish your Juris Doctor – are there any areas of law that you have a particular interest in?*

**Milo:** I really enjoy family law, just because my favourite part of any unit is reading the crazy cases. Family law does not disappoint.

However, hopefully when I finish, I can channel my energy into helping the community in whatever way I can.

*You have many different roles across other organisations – how do you find the time to do these things? Are there any aspects to these roles you enjoy more than others?*

**Milo:** TIMERS. LISTS. REMINDERS. CALENDARS. MULTITASKING. I don't really mind what kind of work I'm doing, as long as I'm in an encouraging environment. I'm pretty lucky that I get to work with people who are always willing to offer their support.

*What do you like to do in your spare time when you're away from the office?*

**Milo:** I love reading horror novels and watching horror movies. I also like mystery novels, so long as there's psychological terror somewhere in there.



Elena visited the Armadale volunteers to provide a refresher workshop on information & referral.

## **Volunteer Highlight**

Lauryn is a volunteer at our Midland branch who started with us in June. She has quickly become an important part of the team so we chatted to her about her experience volunteering with us.

*Do you find working for CAB to be fulfilling and worthwhile? Can you tell us what you enjoy the most?*

**Lauryn:** I have really enjoyed my experience volunteering at CAB so far.

Not only has the experience allowed me to gain an understanding of the workings of community legal centre but I really enjoy the atmosphere and getting to meet not only other volunteers but members of the community.

*What did you do before volunteering at CAB? Can you tell us about your experience interning?*

**Lauryn:** Prior to volunteering at CAB I interned at CEO's for Gender Equity, a not-for profit which works with CEOs, state managers and managing directors in Perth to promote gender equity in jobs and pay from the top down. As a business and management intern my role involved updating the website, contacting clients and reconciling payments.

While this internship was very different from my role at CAB, both have been invaluable in showing me the various functions of the not-for profit sector.

*How do you find the Midland office?*

**Lauryn:** The Midland office has been great so far. I volunteer on Mondays which is the Legal Aid virtual office day.

I spend the day liaising with walk-in clients as well as answering the phones and emails. Everyone has been very welcoming, especially Martha our Branch Coordinator who does such an excellent job keeping our branch running smoothly!

*How does volunteering at CAB compare to your experience at law school?*

**Lauryn:** CAB provides a really hands on experience which complements the more theoretical approach of studying at law school. I can't wait until I study family and estate law because I'm sure everything I have picked up interning will definitely come in handy.

*What type of information do you find clients to be most in need of, in your experience?*

**Lauryn:** For the most part we are contacted for information concerning divorce, wills, EPA and EPGs, as well as the location of a local Justice of the Peace. While this information is the most highly requested we also get a fair few people who call or come in simply asking questions about the community or wanting a chat.

*Do you see yourself volunteering for CAB into the future?*



**Lauryn:** I definitely hope to volunteer at CAB into the future. Every day is different so I'm sure there is still so much more I can learn!



At the Annual Branch Meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September, Dr Tony Buti MLA announced his retirement as Chair of the Committee after 5 years of service. We would like to take this opportunity to thank him for his commitment and time and wish him all the best.

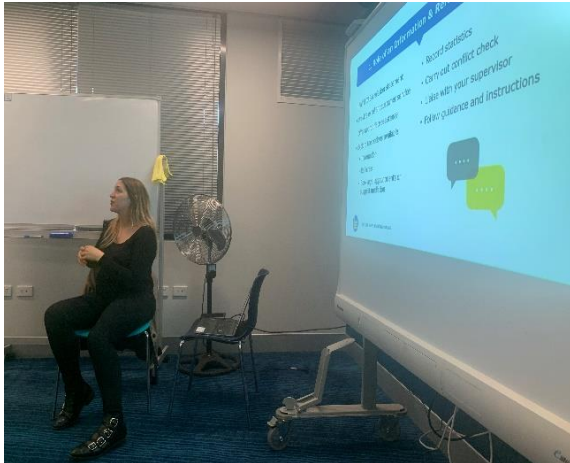
## **CAB News**

It has been a busy few months for us at CAB.

- We have entered Phase 5 of COVID (yay!), welcomed Stacey as a full-time solicitor in our Perth office and hired a new executive assistant, Milo. It's been very busy with all of these new changes.
- We were also sad to see our mediation coordinator, Donna, leave.

Fortunately, she has taken a role that will challenge and excite her! We wish you the best of luck, Donna!

- After having her well-deserved holiday, Judy will be returning to the office on the 24th of September to prepare for her retirement. Judy has been at CAB for 12 years & it has been a pleasure working with her. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours.
- We are so excited to announce that Lina from the Fremantle Branch is finalising her JP training and has completed the Oath to become a JP on the 2nd of September. Congratulations Lina for your hard work throughout this training process and looking forward to seeing you certify documents in a CAB office soon.
- We'd also like to thank Anglicare for shouting out our Fremantle office, especially Opal and Margaret in their latest Partner Newsletter. Anglicare had this to say: *"These wonderful ladies have been helping the community at the Freo CAB for 7+ years. We have loved working with you both and hearing your happy voices on the phone."*



Elena presented a customer service workshop in Bunbury as part of refresher training. She discussed ways to effectively communicate and serve our diverse clients.

Thank you, Opal, Margaret, Cyndie and Helen for all of your work in delivering the WA NILS service to the Fremantle community, and your continued commitment to helping others.

- The most important news is regarding our Christmas lunch! Make sure you save the date: November 18<sup>th</sup>!

## **Volunteer Highlight**

Josh has only been at CAB for 3 months, yet it seems like he's been part of the team for an eternity! He embraces all opportunities to learn and sharpen his skills to help people in need.

*Do you find working for CAB to be fulfilling and worthwhile? Can you tell us what you enjoy the most?*

**Josh:** Yes, I absolutely find it to be both of those things.

Working for CAB has become a paramount priority in my life due to the fantastic service it provides to the community and the wonderful opportunities it has given me to broaden my legal knowledge and develop my professional skills!

In my time here, I have really gained an appreciation for how crucial CAB's services are to our local community and to ensuring that everybody regardless of their background or circumstances is able to access justice and proficient legal services!

*What did you do before volunteering at CAB?*

**Josh:** I was a Law student at Murdoch University from which I graduated in mid-2021.

Presently I am working at CAB in both the Perth & Midland Offices as well as continuing my casual job working in a retail liquor store.

My eventual goals are to practice as a criminal law barrister, so I am also exploring opportunities for work & experience in that field as well!

*How do you find the Midland office?*

**Josh:** The Midland office is fantastic!

Our procedures and systems work differently in the Midland office as opposed to the Perth office, but I really enjoy the challenge of the extra responsibilities that I get to take on in Midland and the opportunity it offers to interact directly with clients at the front desk!

The Lawyers Day in Midland is particularly rewarding as I get to work closely with our wonderful Midland Branch Coordinator Martha to organise and facilitate the legal appointments for our Principal Legal Officer Selva.

I thoroughly enjoy these Thursdays as they have enabled me to develop an appreciation for how the solicitors' appointments work and taught me valuable skills with handling legal documents. I know these skills will be helpful to me in my future career as a legal practitioner.

*How did you find the training for Criminal Injuries Compensation?*

**Josh:** Difficult and rewarding!



Just like learning any new skill it is certainly challenging and at times there can be an overwhelming amount of information to take in. Nonetheless, my two trainers, in Max and Elena, have made the experience very enjoyable with their phenomenal tutelage!

The chance to do the CIC training has been one of the best opportunities I've been granted at CAB. Taking the CIC appointments permits me to deal with clients directly and apply my knowledge and skills to help each of them with unique problems and concerns that each client has.

I very much appreciate the opportunity that CAB has provided me and the training I have been given in CIC. It has been a great opportunity to learn & a character building exercise!

*What type of information do you find clients to be most in need of, in your experience?*

**Josh:** We receive enquiries from clients across a very broad spectrum of dispute matters and subject areas which makes it hard to pinpoint specific topics that clients are most interested in.

If I had to narrow it down however, I would say neighbourhood dispute matters such as dividing fence issues, family law matters such as divorce and property settlement as well as a sprinkling of criminal law problems would be the principal topics that most of our clients call us for assistance with.

*Do you see yourself volunteering for CAB into the future?*

**Josh:** Absolutely! It is utterly surreal how quickly CAB has become such an important part of my life. I feel extraordinarily privileged to be able to consider myself as a part of the CAB family and I hope that I will continue to be able to volunteer at both CAB Midland & Perth for the foreseeable future.

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### **Spring Special Days & Events**

There are a plethora of special days and weeks commemorating and celebrating different types of people and causes all across the year.

These often accompany a variety of events as well, so keep your eyes out for things happening in the community.

- [1<sup>st</sup> of October – International Day of Older Persons](#). This is a celebration of the older people in all society and serves as a reminder to continue developing a society for all ages.
- [10<sup>th</sup> of October – World Mental Health Day](#). This is a day to raise visibility of mental health in the community.
- [13<sup>th</sup> of October – Pink Ribbon Day](#). This is a day to show support for people who suffer with breast cancer.
- [31<sup>st</sup> of October – Halloween](#). This year, Halloween falls on a Sunday. Why not come to work on the Friday before wearing a costume?
- [5<sup>th</sup> of December – International Volunteer Day](#). This is a day to recognize the efforts and work of volunteers across the globe.

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### **Events**

Only a few months left until our Festive lunch! This year we're having it at the Hyatt on November the 18<sup>th</sup>. More details will be released soon, so keep your eyes peeled and don't forget to RSVP!

- [29<sup>th</sup> of September – Birrriya Aboriginal Cultural Awareness Training.](#) This three-hour workshop will give participants a detailed understanding of tribal kinship and tribal law in the Perth Metro region.
- [18 – 19 November – WA Tenancy Conference.](#) This aims to address the longer-term impacts of COVID and innovative approaches and solutions for tenant rights.
- [27<sup>th</sup> of October – Workplace Sexual Harassment Conference.](#) This conference focuses on the latest legal obligations and workplace practices in preventing and responding to sexual harassment in the workplace.
- [14<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> of November – Perth Pride Fest.](#) Over a fortnight of events that celebrate diversity. These include: cooking classes, concerts, bingo and screenings of movies.
- [1<sup>st</sup> of December - Step into volunteering.](#) This session, held by the City of Bayswater, will provide participants with an informal introduction into volunteering and how best to search for positions suited for the individual.
- [2<sup>nd</sup> of December – International Volunteer Day Garden Party.](#) Volunteering WA hosts an annual Garden Party to celebrate the contribution of volunteers across WA. Tickets are sold from the 1<sup>st</sup> of October.

If you know anyone who is interested in volunteering at CAB, please tell them about the [Expression of Interest form](#) on our website.



Selva Stenross, our Principal Legal Officer, gave an information session about Wills, EPAs and EPGs in Kalamunda.