



**Connecting people with  
information and services**

---

**SPRING Newsletter 2023**



# A MESSAGE ... FROM THE PRESIDENT

We recently recognised our 60th anniversary serving the Western Australian community with a formal occasion involving many stakeholders at Government House. Some of the guests included representatives from the government, opposition, our funding organisations, partner organisations, past and present staff and volunteers and other stakeholders such as Community Legal WA CEO Chelsea McKinney and our long term and valued Patron, the Hon Len Roberts-Smith RFD KC. It was a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our role and how we have adapted to support community needs over that time.

The Bureau opened on the 19 March 1963 in a ground floor room of the Boans Department Store. A part-time typist was employed with equipment borrowed from the Under-Secretary's Department. In the first 12 months, about 3,000 enquiries were received compared to over 40,000 inquiries with the WA community this year.

Today, it is amazing to witness the diversity of services provided by the Bureau, in response to community demand. We operate an Information and Referral Unit, Mediation Service Unit and a Legal Unit. We continue to change and adapt to keep abreast with modern times, including the recent and welcomed introduction of Virtual Legal appointments and facilitated dispute resolution. Importantly, affordability remains a key feature of CAB's service offering.

Contained in this edition are two infographics - CAB in the Community and a CAB Snapshot showing our positive contribution to the community. We are particularly pleased by the large number of Western Australians who utilise our services and are highly satisfied with the information they receive. Most importantly, we provide front-line services often assisting at critical times to prevent a large number of people unnecessarily entering the often costly legal and justice system.

As a Board, in our 60th year, we remain grateful for the support we receive from the Western Australia Government to deliver important services to the WA community. It is also an important reminder that CAB continues to benefit from our caring and dedicated staff and volunteers that underpin our service.

CAB held its Annual General meeting in mid-November, a copy of the report is on our website. We are delighted to confirm the Board of Management for the next 12 months:

- Sandra Brown
- Kate Wellington
- Barbara Kwiecien
- Margaret Dixon (Volunteer Representative)
- Linda Elezovich
- Robert Lilley
- Rob Muir
- Gai Macauley (Volunteer Representative)



President Sandra Brown.

# CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU: 60 YEARS OF SERVICE

Our records show the first plans to establish a Western Australian-based Citizens Advice Bureau began in 1961, when the WA Council of Social Service (WACOSS) Committee was directed to look for premises to finance a Bureau. In 1962, the WACOSS Chair sought financial assistance from the Lotteries Commission, Local Government Association and the WA Government. Finance was granted for three years up to a total of twelve hundred pounds.

Today, CAB is a highly regarded not-for-profit and we operate a Perth Office and nine branches across WA, including in the Perth metropolitan and the regional areas of Busselton and Bunbury. With over 200 trained volunteers, CAB helps over 40,000 Western Australians each year across in its Information and Referral, Legal Advice and Mediation Services.

CAB President, Sandra Brown, said CAB is proudly funded by the WA Department of Communities, Department of Justice and the Law Society Public Purposes Trust. Our sought-after services include Information and Referral service, where the public can call on subjects ranging from neighbourhood disputes, restraining orders, family and property matters, our mediation and legal services and criminal injuries compensation.

“In CAB’s 60th year, it has been a pleasure to visit a number of branches this year as they always serve to highlight the significant contribution CAB volunteers make in the community.”



Celebrating CAB’s 60th Anniversary milestone is (from left): Shane Love, WA Leader of the Opposition and MLA, Sandra Brown, CAB President, long-term CAB volunteer and Honorary Life Member Judith Tuckey, OAM, CAB Patron the Hon. Len Roberts-Smith RFD KC and the Hon. Matthew Swinbourn, MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General.



From left, Community Legal WA Chief Executive Officer Chelsea McKinney, the Hon Matthew Swinbourn MLC and immediate past CAB Vice President Linda Elezovich.



CAB volunteers, from left, Amy So JP, CAB Fremantle volunteer Lina Ridley JP and Perth-office volunteer Frances Herd.



CAB's Patron the Honourable Len Roberts-Smith RFD KC delivers a speech at the recent 60th anniversary celebrations at Government House.

# MIDLAND BRANCH CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

The Midland Citizens Advice Bureau branch gathered together recently with both past and present volunteers to commemorate 30 years of service to the community whilst also honouring and celebrating CAB's 60 year anniversary.

The Midland branch was established in September 1993 and was initially accommodated in the Midland Town Hall Talkie Tea rooms, Great Eastern Highway.

Over the last 30 years, the dedicated and trained volunteers at the branch have assisted with a wide range of enquiries and assist the community with various legal matters, including monthly legal appointments in the areas of Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney and Enduring Powers of Guardianship, information and referral services, and continuing to work in partnership with Legal Aid WA in hosting Virtual Office appointments at the branch on a weekly basis.

It is evident that the Midland branch holds a vital place within the Midland community and that it continues to reach and positively impact those that utilise the services that it provides.

CAB is extremely thankful to all the volunteers who have devoted countless hours to ensuring the public have access to information and are able to make informed decisions.



From left: Midland volunteers and Midland branch Chair, Laura Groves (right) gather together to celebrate Midland Branch's 30th year of service to the community at a local Midland venue.

# INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES: A SNAPSHOT - PERTH BRANCH VOLUNTEERS



Information and Referral Volunteer Beth Cheng on the phone lines at the Perth office on her rostered Thursday shift.

## INTRODUCING: BETH CHENG

Beth commenced volunteering at CAB in July 2023. Having graduated from Murdoch University in 2013 with a degree in Law and Commerce, and furthermore receiving a Diploma of Education from Notre Dame University, Beth became a teacher at Thornlie Senior High School in 2015.

Thornlie Senior High School has a program which encourages their teachers to engage with the community and therefore has allocated 20 days of the term where Beth can volunteer with us at CAB on a weekly basis.

Her favourite part of volunteering at CAB is the connection made between the volunteers and how meaningful it is to impact clients lives positively.

We are thankful for Beth's contribution to the Perth Citizens Advice Bureau branch and wish her luck in all her future endeavours!



Perth Volunteer, Delina Joseph on reception and the intake of clients for daily appointments.

## INTRODUCING: DELINA JOSEPH

Delina began volunteering at CAB in December 2022. Nearly one year ago!

She is currently in her third year of studying Law and International relations at Curtin University. With a passion for Migration Law, she is deeply passionate about refugee issues, human rights and matters surrounding international diplomacy.

Delina enjoys volunteering at CAB as it has enriched her life with many meaningful relationships and given her the opportunity to come into contact with many people, clients and staff alike, of varying backgrounds and from many different walks of life.

Being able to provide a service to the community is of great importance to Delina and we are fortunate to have her ongoing commitment and dedication to CAB.

# CAB IN THE COMMUNITY

**40,448**  
**PEOPLE HELPED**



### COMMUNITY EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT

- AGED CARE
- LIBRARIES
- SUPPORT GROUPS
- TALKBACK RADIO
- LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### OUR TOP 3 AREAS OF LAW BY APPOINTMENT

1. WILL/EPA/EPG
2. LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION
3. PROBATE



**96%**  
CLIENTS FOUND CAB HELPFUL



**94%**  
CLIENTS WOULD RECOMMEND OUR SERVICES TO OTHERS

**CUSTOMER PERCEPTION SURVEY**  
CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU  
MAY 2023

**97%**  
CLIENTS WERE HAPPY WITH OUR SERVICE



**88%**  
CLIENTS RECEIVED USEFUL INFORMATION

A PANEL OF  
**13**  
ACCREDITED MEDIATORS



**9**  
QUALIFIED FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRACTITIONERS



**5**  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEDIATION SERVICE



# CAB'S LEGAL UNIT: IN THE COMMUNITY

## Curtin Mini Career Fair

Samantha Gomez our Principal Legal Officer and Jiji Croy, lawyer, recently attended Curtin University in the Perth CBD for a mini career fair.

At this fair, many students approached CAB's stall seeking information about what CAB does, opportunities to volunteer in our Information and Referral phone lines or as a paralegal. Students were also keen to obtain information about what working as a lawyer at CAB is like.

Samantha and Jiji enjoyed the opportunity to mingle with our next generation of future lawyers and to see how keen and motivated they are, to make a valuable contribution to society.



Lawyer Jiji Croy attending the Curtin University Mini Career Fair and hosting the CAB booth.



Lawyer Jiji Croy speaking at the Swancare Retirement Village about services offered at CAB.

## Swancare Retirement Village

During October, the legal team attended Swancare Retirement Village to deliver a presentation on Wills, Enduring Powers of Attorney, Enduring Powers of Guardianship and briefly on Probate and Letters of Administration.

The audience was very receptive to the information delivered by the legal team and had many challenging and interesting questions they sought answers to.

Many indicated an increased awareness of the need to review their Wills or have a new one drafted.

They also indicated they had been unaware of the need to consider the practicalities of who they appointed in their EPA and EPG (i.e. that the appointee should be living in Perth).



# MEDIATION UNIT: WELCOMING OUR NEWEST MEDIATOR

CAB operates a Mediation Service that functions with the help of 12 trained and accredited mediators. These mediators are passionate about dispute resolution and donate their time to work with individuals to provide services which help to alleviate the strain on both clients and the justice system alike.

Our mediation team is proud to announce that it has gained a new mediator, growing our team of mediators to a total of thirteen. Please read below for a brief introduction.



Long-term volunteer Mediators Shannon Hayes and Robert Lilley.

## INTERVIEW WITH RHODA MASON

**Could you please provide some information regarding your previous work involvement prior to your employment at Perth CAB?**

After University I commenced my Articles with Legal Aid WA and worked as a Solicitor for 10 years. I was interested in Alternative Dispute Resolution and became a Nationally Accredited Mediator and an accredited Family Dispute Resolution Practitioner. I then worked in the Mediation Team at Relationships Australia WA for almost 13 years.

**What is your area of interest or passion?**

I am passionate about helping people resolve their disputes in constructive, respectful, and self-empowering ways.

**What attracted you to work at CAB on our Mediator team?**

I know CAB mediators and respect their work which sparked my interest in joining the team at Citizens Advice Bureau.

**What activities do you enjoy engaging in during your free time outside of the workplace?**

In my free time I love reading novels, walking my dog Lotte, and baking cakes.

**If you could be anyone in the world for a day, who would it be, why and what would you do for the day?**

If I could be someone else for one day, I would be an archaeologist excavating a new site at an exotic location!


# CAB SNAPSHOT

SERVING & INFORMING WA FOR **60 YEARS**



**+9**  
BRANCHES  
METRO & REGIONAL

**OVER 200**  
VOLUNTEERS

**INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICE**

- PHONE LINE
- FACE-TO-FACE
- ONLINE



**LEGAL SERVICE**

- WILL/EPA/EPG
- FAMILY LAW
- LOA
- PROBATE



**MEDIATION SERVICE**

- DISPUTE
- FAMILY
- COMMUNITY
- COMMERCIAL
- CONFIDENTIAL PROCESS

## WA FUNDING BODIES




**ADDITIONAL FREE SERVICES**

- WA NILS
- CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION
- TAX HELP
- JUSTICE OF PEACE AND LEGAL AID WA (WITH OUR THANKS)

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION



## GOVERNANCE

COMPLIANT:  
REGULATORY  
REQUIREMENTS



## NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR CLC'S

- ✓ ACCREDITED
- ✓ CERTIFIED



# MEDIATION UNIT: TRAINING AND CONTINUOUS DEVELOPMENT

The Mediation Unit continues to host a monthly mediator training session every month. The purpose of this meeting is to gather the team together and to continuously provide training that will provide new resources, techniques and knowledge to the mediators in turn allowing them to better assist the clients of CAB.

In August 2023, the monthly mediator training session was led by Mr. Sukhwant Singh, a seasoned Barrister and Solicitor from Magister Legal – Commercial Lawyers. The focus of this month's training was to address topics such as the impact of marriage and child rearing on personal finances, understanding beneficial ownership, navigating inheritance laws, handling international money transfers and considerations for the older generation.

The Mediation Unit frequently encounter property cases involving one parent who stays at home while the other parent works, resulting in the stay-at-home parent having significantly less superannuation. When jointly evaluating the assets of both parties, it is important to fairly distribute the superannuation contributions made by the employed parent to the stay-at-home parent.

We have found the working parent sometimes question their super contribution to the stay-at-home parent and this is where Mr. Singh provided further elaboration on the challenges faced by stay-at-home parents, which encompass not only financial obstacles but also diminished seniority and experience, as well as limited opportunities for career advancement during this period.

When parents decide to leave their jobs to raise children, the courts will consider these potential losses. This information provided clarity to the mediators regarding the various aspects in which they can communicate the range of losses to our clients, extending beyond just financial implications.

***Mr. Singh gave some valuable insights and three key factors to consider:***

1. Understanding the legal rights provided by property laws. It is important to accurately document and register property transactions with Landgate, although registration alone does not automatically grant property rights.
2. Exploring impartial approaches to resolve such situations and ensure fairness among involved parties.
3. Assessment of the legal rights and entitlements of both registered and beneficial property owners, even in cases where a name is not explicitly listed on the property title (e.g., trusts or family groups). Additionally, inheritance laws may also be influential in such circumstances.



Mr. Sukhwant Singh of Magister Legal



# CAB HOLIDAY CLOSURE 2023/2024

 PERTH	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 22 (12pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 2 (9am)</b>
 ARMADALE	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 11 (3pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (9am)</b>
 BUNBURY	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 15 (1pm)</b> <b>FEBRUARY 5 (9am)</b>
 BUSSELTON	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 15 (1pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (10am)</b>
 FREMANTLE	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 15 (2pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (9.30am)</b>
 JOONDALUP	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 15 (3pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (9am)</b>
 KWINANA	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 13 (1pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (10am)</b>
 MANDURAH	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 15 (1pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 16 (9am)</b>
 MIDLAND	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 7 (3pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (9am)</b>
 ROCKINGHAM	<b>last day:</b> <b>reopens:</b>	<b>DECEMBER 7 (2:30pm)</b> <b>JANUARY 15 (9am)</b>

Please contact us on 9221 5711 if you have any queries.



# CAB's 3 Pillars



## INFORMATION AND REFERRAL

Our role is to give accurate and current information and referral assistance to help the WA community navigate their challenges.

We answer queries via:



With regular Community Legal Education activities we go out to meet people in the community and represent CAB offsite.

### Additional Services:

- Tax Help
- WA NILS
- Criminal Injuries Compensation
- CAB Virtual Legal Appointments
- Justice of the Peace



## LEGAL

We provide a low-cost legal advice service on a range of issues and prepare various legal documents:

- **Family Law** - divorce, child and property matters
- **Civil Law** - Wills, Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Power of Guardianship, Probate applications and Letters of Administration, Estate
- **Criminal Law**

Probate kits can be purchased on our online shop and at our Perth office.



## MEDIATION

We offer dispute resolution services for the following matters, including:

- **Family Matters**
  - Parenting
  - Property
  - Grandparenting
- **Community Matters**
  - Dividing fences
  - Overhanging branches
- **Commercial Matters**
  - Workplace disputes
  - Small business and association disputes

### • Facilitation and Education.

Mediations are held in our Perth office or virtually.

## With thanks: Funding Partners and Visiting Lawyers

We wish to express our gratitude and appreciation towards our funding partners and supporters.

Your contributions and unwavering support enable us to continue to provide a quality service in diverse areas.



Our funding partners



Our visiting pro bono lawyers (above) assist our clients in family, estate and criminal law matters



**CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

Level 1/25 Barrack Street

Perth WA 6000

Enquiries (08) 9221 5711

Admin (08) 9325 4217

Mediation (08) 9325 4121

[cabwa.com.au](http://cabwa.com.au)

[cabwa@cabwa.com.au](mailto:cabwa@cabwa.com.au)

---