

**citizens
advice
bureau**

**Connecting people with
information and services**

SPRING Newsletter 2024

It's EASI in CAB's hands

A stylized line-art illustration of two hands shaking, symbolizing partnership or agreement. The hands are rendered in a simple, clean line style, with fingers slightly curled as if in a firm grip. The background behind the hands consists of several curved, overlapping bands in shades of blue and yellow, creating a sense of movement and energy.

Empower. Advise. Support. Inform.

CEO SPRING UPDATE

Kaya,

It's our final newsletter for the year as we farewell Spring and 2024, which for CABWA and its 10 branches located in the South West corner of WA, means we have transitioned from Kambarang to Birak.

In looking back over the last 3 months since the Winter newsletter the word that comes to mind is "change".



Dion Dosualdo

Typically, this time of year, not-for-profit organisations host their AGM's. It can be a time of mixed emotions with many organisations experiencing Board member changes. This year we farewell three incredible people who have contributed a great deal to the sustainability and success of CABWA. It is with deep admiration and respect that I pay tribute to Barbara, Margaret and Sandra.

Records held by the CABWA testify to the enormity of contributions in time, in experience and invaluable expertise made by Barbara, Margaret and Sandra.

Whether it has been securing much needed funding, building professional relationships, developing internal processes or being advocates for the CABWA, for well over two decades (and then some!) we have benefited from their commitment to the community and CABWA. On reflecting on their collective contribution to the CABWA, there are not enough words, not enough superlatives, not enough platitudes to convey our gratitude to them. To Barbara, Margaret and Sandra, I say a big...
THANK YOU.

Spring also delivers our annual report and I am pleased to advise we have retained a modest profit having balanced our cost with that of our funding and revenue activities for the previous financial year.

Reflecting on the year I am grateful to everyone who contributes to this incredible organisation and would like to make mention of the volunteer Justices of the Peace. Each and every one of the JP's demonstrate such an incredible generosity of spirit. Many people are truly astonished when they realise the JP service is free. What impresses me the most is the conversations I hear, the sharing of stories, the laughter and the sage advice often given. There's a real human connection that our society and community benefits from having JP's at our various branches.



**THANK YOU
Barbara Kwiecien, Margaret Dixon and Sandra Brown.**



INFORMATION & REFERRAL

By **Sarah Clifford** - Volunteer & Client Services Coordinator

Throughout Spring we continued to undertake interviews for new volunteers. Inductions have been scheduled for the next year and new volunteers will attend these sessions prior to start or very shortly afterwards.

A recent Volunteer Survey was undertaken to gauge the mood of the Branches and to determine whether they feel their communities are being serviced appropriately and for their perspective on whether Head Office can improve its support.

In the past 18 months:

- 53% of volunteers felt their Branches needed more support from Head Office
- 25% volunteers did not feel supported by our CEO
- 20% volunteers did not feel supported by the Volunteer and Client Services Coordinator

In contrast in the past two months the feeling of being supported increased with:

- 29% felt their Branches needed more support from Head Office
- 13% felt their Branches needed more support from our CEO
- 3% felt their Branches needed more support from the Volunteer and Client Services Coordinator

In Spring we welcomed a new Justice of the Peace at our Bunbury Branch and are looking to secure the services of more JP's across our Branches where needed.

Throughout Spring we were joined by several interns working on advocacy and policy projects as well as grant research, digital content plus communication and marketing.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
Empower

We offer a range of services designed to EMPOWER you to take control of your decisions. Whether you have questions about your situation or need legal assistance, we can help with drafting Letters of Administration, Wills, EPAs, and EPGs.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
Advise

We offer affordable appointments to access legal ADVICE on criminal law, family law and estate matters which includes the probate process.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
Support

Our mediations team offer an affordable way to SUPPORT you to discuss your family, community or commercial dispute in an open and constructive way.

CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU
Inform

We can INFORM you by providing resources and general information to assist your understanding, or refer you to a trusted specialist.

INFORMATION & REFERRAL



From left to right: Sarah Clifford, The Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM and Mrs Darrilyn Dawson

I was recently invited to a morning tea with the Governor of Western Australia, His Excellency The Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM. I took the opportunity to discuss with Mrs Dawson (pictured here), the challenges many within our community face with accessing online forms.

CAB is frequently hearing from callers and visitors the challenges they face in accessing online Government services, applying for rebates, accessing offers and giveaways.

There are a variety of disadvantages and circumstances that otherwise preclude people from accessing online services they include: Digital Literacy, Physical or Cognitive Disabilities, Age-Related Challenges, Language Barriers, Technical Issues, Financial Constraints, Privacy Concerns, Insufficient Identification, Health Conditions and Lack of Support just to name a few of the common barriers we are hearing about.

Finally, special mention to Ross who has kindly agreed to become the new Branch Coordinator at our Midland Branch. Our Branch Coordinators do an incredible job and we appreciate the time and effort they put into volunteering and serving the community.



MEDIATION

By **Monika Kraima** - Mediation Coordinator

As we wrap up another year, I want to take a moment to thank the volunteer panel of mediators (our mediation team). Their dedication, compassion, and hard work have made an incredible difference in the lives of many individuals and families, and I truly appreciate everything you do.

This year, our mediators have gone above and beyond to provide essential support to people who may not have had access to mediation services otherwise. They have given their time, energy, and expertise without expecting anything in return. Whether it's helping families communicate, solving problems, or simply offering a space for people to be heard, their impact is clear. We often see the relief on people's faces once agreements are signed, and that's a direct result of our mediator's efforts.

I would also like to recognize those mediators who have stepped up when others have fallen ill or been unable to attend. You have dedicated extra time, often at a moment's notice, to ensure that the service continued without disruption. Your flexibility and commitment are greatly appreciated.

Additionally, I want to thank those who worked on updating our paperwork to reflect the recent family law changes. Your attention to detail and commitment to keeping us compliant with new regulations have been invaluable.

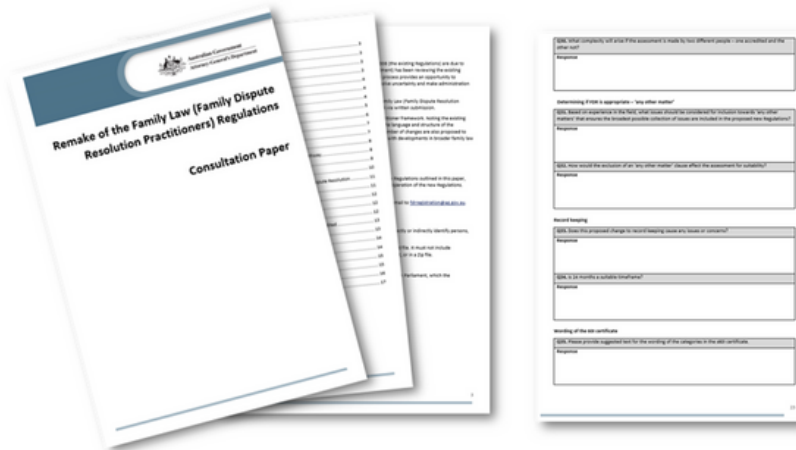
A special mention goes to our amazing volunteer administration staff. You handle the essential behind-the-scenes work, from managing FilePro to answering the endless calls and queries, ensuring that everything runs smoothly and efficiently. Also thank you to the Level 1 volunteers for brainstorming with me, answering all my questions, and for all your support.

My job would be so much harder without such a dedicated, skilled, and reliable team supporting me. Each of you contributes something invaluable, and I feel fortunate to work alongside such a wonderful group of people.

Dispute Resolution Statistics for Financial Year 2023-2024

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Enquiries: | 488 |
| Initial contacts: | 203 |
| Pre-mediations: | 177 |
| Mediations: | 87 |
| Files opened: | 103 |

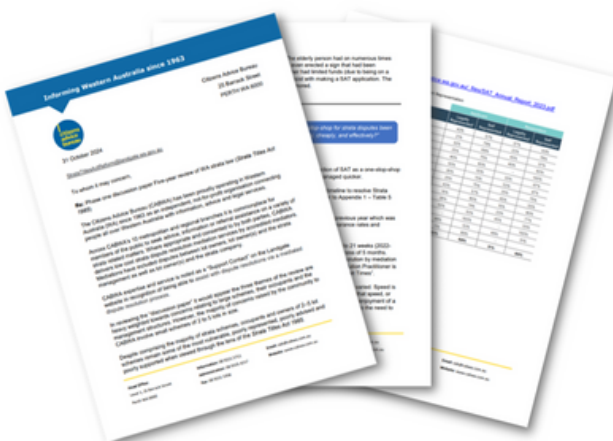
MEDIATION



CAB recently completed a submission in response to the Consultation paper regarding the “remake” of the Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) Regulations. The Family Law (Family Dispute Resolution Practitioners) Regulations 2008 are due to sunset on 1 April 2025, prompting the Attorney-General’s Department to review the existing Regulations with a view to remaking them prior to their sunseting.

The consultation process is a vital step in ensuring that the regulations governing Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) practitioners are not only comprehensive but also reflective of the current challenges and dynamics faced by families in our community. Engaging with this process has allowed CAB’s Mediation unit to highlight key concerns and suggest improvements that could enhance the effectiveness of FDR practices.

CAB Mediation unit has expressed its appreciation and the commitment of the Attorney-General’s Department to gather input from stakeholders and the importance placed on making these regulations accessible and practical for practitioners and families alike.

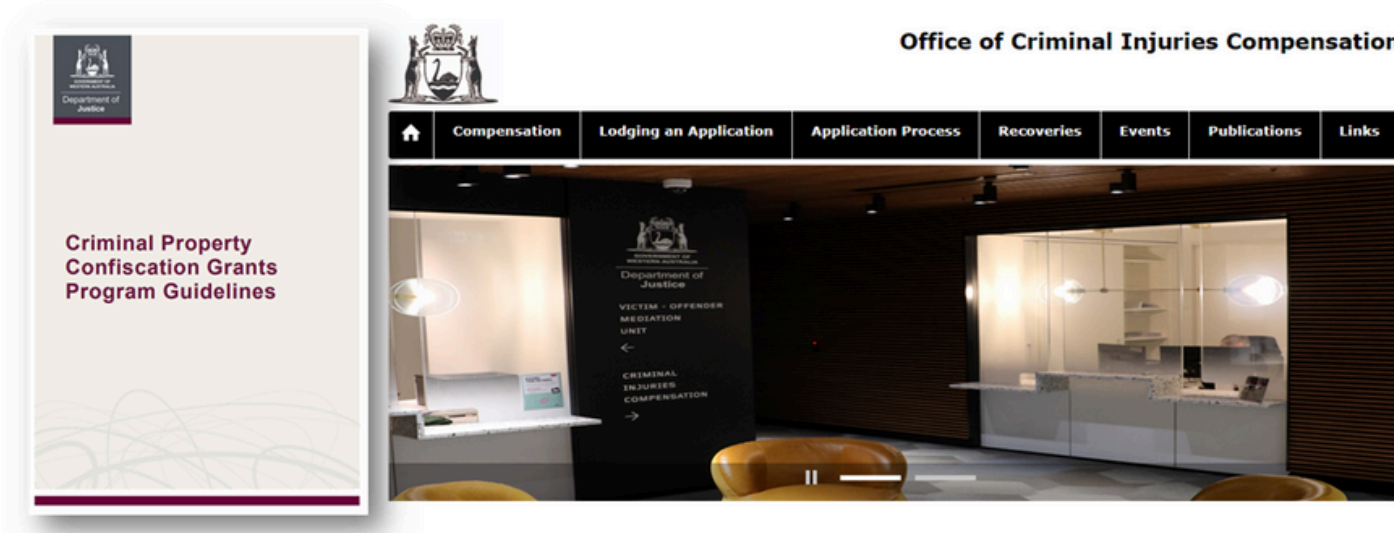


In a submission to “Phase one discussion paper Five-year review of WA strata law (Strata Titles Act 1985)” CABWA advocated for the introduction of low cost strata dispute resolution mediation services by accredited volunteer mediators. Mediations have included disputes between lot owners, lot owner(s) and the strata management as well as lot owner(s) and the strata company.

With 83% of strata schemes in WA consisting of 5 or fewer lots, an overwhelming majority of strata schemes do not benefit from support or advice from a strata manager. CABWA expertise and service is noted as a “Support Contact” on the LANDGATE website in recognition of being able to assist with dispute resolutions via a mediated dispute resolution process, but... parties in a dispute are not compelled to seek mediation as a dispute resolution process meaning they must resolve the matter themselves or escalate the dispute to State Administration Tribunal. This approach is considered highly adversarial not to mention intimidating for many people.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION



Grant Submission

CAB completed a funding submission under the Criminal Confiscation Grants Program for the purposes of seeking financial assistance in the development of in-house training material specific to assisting the community with their online applications for Criminal Injuries Compensation (CIC) claims.

Expanding on the training materials available to our Volunteers will assist victims who would otherwise be restricted in their capacity to access or complete a CIC application due to a variety of disadvantages and circumstances that otherwise preclude them from accessing the online eCourts or completing the hardcopy form application.

In addition to developing a training program designed for CAB volunteers to facilitate support services, training will also be victim-centric with materials and resources designed to limit the re-traumatisation of victims as well as provide self-care strategies for our volunteers.

The CIC service when delivered, will be facilitated through CAB’s various branches and undertaken in a fit-for-purpose private room ensuring confidentiality in an empathic and supported environment.

A well-designed volunteer training program is expected to deliver a service that contributes to the quality of information submitted to the Office of CIC.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

TAX HELP PROGRAM

We recently wrapped up our Tax Help Program thanks to the assistance of a team of accredited volunteers who generously gave their time in support of this FREE service to the community.



Certificate of Appreciation

Presented to
Citizens' Advice Bureau of WA
Inc

In recognition of your valued service
to the Australian Community through your participation
in the Tax Help Program.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Rob Heferen".

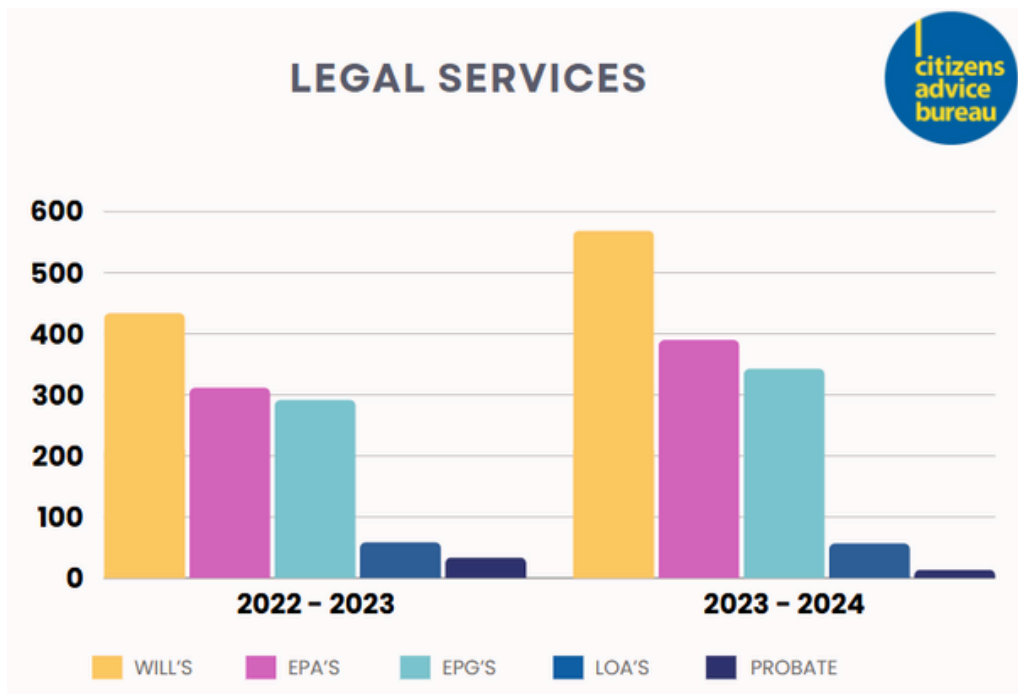
Rob Heferen, AO
Commissioner of Taxation
2024

LEGAL

By **Samantha Gomez** - Principal Legal Officer

The Spring newsletter is a timely opportunity to reflect on the year past and for me to take the time to recognise the wonderful work and achievements from our Legal Unit.

Our Legal Unit has grown substantially from 1 lawyer to now having 6, as a result of a change in our recruitment strategy. We now have lawyers servicing Mandurah, Kwinana, Joondalup, Midland, Armadale and Busselton branches and we are looking at having lawyers service our remaining branches too. This has enabled CABWA to provide our services to a much larger section of the community.

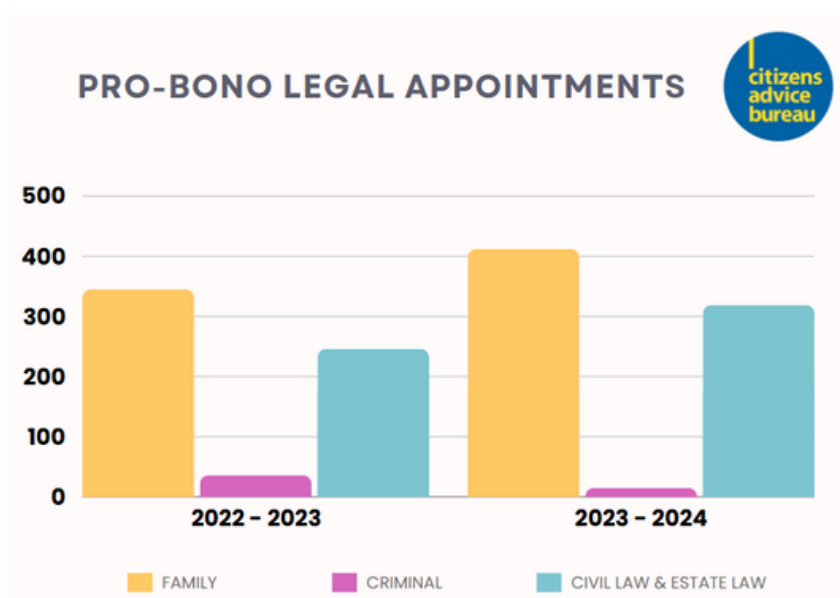


As a legal unit, 2024 has been a year of significant change. Our focus on service improvement has involved a complete review and overhaul of all our legal documents. This has taken a significant amount of work and a huge thank you must go to the wonderful Susan Parker, who led the implementation of this change.

A huge thank you must also go to our remaining lawyers; Ginny, Sylvia, Nadia, Greg and our recently appointed new lawyer for Kwinana, Jodie. Your willingness to go above and beyond, your commitment and dedication to providing high quality legal advice and the smiles and laughter from our clients, is evidence of the wonderful job you are all doing.

LEGAL

A special mention must also go out to our pro-bono visiting Lawyers who have been kept extremely busy with appointments, servicing the community throughout 2024. Their willingness to donate their time shows their commitment to social justice and we thank you for your contribution.



Moving forward, embracing flexibility is a sensible recruitment strategy for the Legal Unit, ensuring continuity of service for our clients, improving job retention, supporting a work life balance for our lawyers and ensuring greater job satisfaction.

In addition, it provides CAB with the capacity to expand the team without necessarily having to employ a fulltime lawyer. As a result of this recruitment strategy, we have successfully sourced a part-time lawyer for our Busselton branch and most recently for our Kwinana branch. With all vacant legal positions now filled, the Legal Unit has shifted its focus to enhancing the quality of service for our clients. This includes improving our client interactions, raising the standard of documents produced, increasing the quality of our advice to clients (both written and oral) and having substantive legal correspondence provided to clients.

With a full complement of legal staff, CAB has positioned itself to increase the frequency of service outreach appointments into our branches, through our Virtual Office appointments (VO). Our VO appointments are now available in four (4) of our ten (10) locations, including Busselton and Bunbury. Our community outreach is also supported by our long-standing relationship with the Legal Aid WA Virtual Office, where we host their legal appointment services in eight (8) CAB branch locations, with our volunteers facilitating and enabling the Legal Aid WA Virtual Office. With CAB VO and Legal Aid VO appointments available in most of our branches, the delivery of legal services to surrounding communities significantly enhances the accessibility of low-cost legal advice on a broader and more diverse scale, particularly for our most vulnerable community members.

In 2025 we are looking at increasing th range of legal services offered, adopting a new Client Management System to allow us to manage our workload more efficiently, exploring how Artificial Intelligence can assist in the delivery of our legal services to the community, building and developing new pro bono partnerships and of course having fun along the way.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Criminal Injury Compensation Assistance Volunteer

We sat down with Perth Branch Volunteer Penny to discuss what it is like to provide the assisted application service for Criminal Injury Compensation (CIC).

When did you commence CIC at CAB?

It would have been about 4 months ago when the offer of CIC training was made to the volunteers. I thought I might like to give it a go.



What initially attracted you to CIC?

The challenge of helping people. I much prefer to be helping people one-on-one.

Having completed CIC applications how have you found the experience?

I found the login process difficult. Applicants are emailed login security codes that are 14 characters in length which is required for security reasons. Applicants need to have their phone handy (to get login details) and many turn them off as a courtesy, so the login process can take up to 30minutes. When I started I was nervous at first, there was self-doubt but I found it rewarding and that I was doing a public service.

Could you have been better prepared to undertake CIC's?

When I did the training with the Office of the CIC (OCIC) I asked a lot of questions and other volunteers later told me they learnt a lot because of the questions I asked. It isn't until you start doing the applications that you have questions.

Would you recommend other volunteers to consider doing CIC, does it take a particular type of person?

I was puzzled why many had not volunteered when I did the training, and I asked a few CAB volunteers why they hadn't volunteered, some said they were concerned about the trauma regarding what they might hear. I have experiences that help with managing the trauma but it takes someone who wouldn't easily be traumatised to do CIC.

CAB footnote: Penny was running a little late for this interview having deciding to walk with a CIC applicant to the offices of the CIC. The applicant could not proceed online but rather than leave the applicant to find the OCIC on their own, Penny personally escorted them from our Perth branch. Penny personifies the embodiment of kindness, in doing what you can, where you are and with what you have. You're a star Penny!

SPRING COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Beechboro Library for the City of Swan



Alchera Living



SPRING COMMUNITY EDUCATION



Bullsbrook Community Expo



Bunbury Library

CAB in the Community



43,184

PEOPLE HELPED



4,903

PEOPLE HELPED WITH FAMILY AND PERSONAL SERVICES



11,093

PEOPLE HELPED WITH ESTATE PLANNING



OUR TOP 3 AREAS OF LAW BY APPOINTMENT

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



COMMUNITY EDUCATION ENGAGEMENT

AGED CARE • LIBRARIES
CAREERS FAIRS • UNIVERSITIES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT



A PANEL OF

14

ACCREDITED MEDIATORS



9

QUALIFIED FAMILY DISPUTE RESOLUTION PRACTITIONERS



421

PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY HELPED WITH ELDER MATTERS



3

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS WITH MEDIATION SERVICE

CAB Snapshot

SERVING AND INFORMING WA FOR MORE THAN

60 YEARS



+9

BRANCHES

METRO & REGIONAL

MORE THAN **200 VOLUNTEERS**



INFORMATION & REFERRAL SERVICE

- PHONE LINE
- FACE-TO-FACE
- ONLINE



LEGAL SERVICE

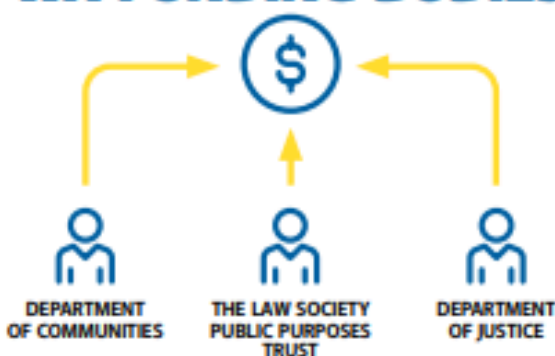
- WILL/EPA/EPG
- FAMILY LAW
- LOA
- PROBATE



MEDIATION SERVICE

- DISPUTE
 - > FAMILY
 - > COMMUNITY
 - > COMMERCIAL
- CONFIDENTIAL PROCESS

WA FUNDING BODIES



ADDITIONAL FREE SERVICES

- WA NILS
- CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION
- TAX HELP
- JUSTICE OF PEACE & LEGAL AID WA (with our thanks)

COMMUNITY EDUCATION



GOVERNANCE

COMPLIANT: REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS



NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME FOR CLCs



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Held on Thursday 21 November at 40 St Georges Terrace, Perth, the AGM was well attended and a quorum easily reached.

Chaired by CABWA Vice President Kate Wellington, special mention was made of outgoing Board representatives Sandra Brown, Margaret Dixon and Barbara Kwiecien.

Special mention was made in recognition of Mr Ken Duffy, Midland volunteer for well over 41 years who had recently passed away.

The order of business noted the various apologies and moved to acceptance of the previous minutes. There was no business arising and the reports of the President, CEO and Treasurer (presented by CABWA Secretary Barbara Kwiecien) were noted and accepted.

Special mention in the Treasurer's verbal report included thanks to CABWA Accounts Coordinator John Hoo.

CEO Division (Units) report highlighted the efforts of the Mediation, Legal and Information Referral Units, each of whom had exceeded the previous year in all aspects of their operations.

Legal appointments, mediations and enquiries were all up on the previous year. Vice President Kate Wellington noted with thanks the work of CABWA Business Coordinator Kirsty Bowker in preparing the Annual Report. The Report was accepted.

Announcement of elected Board members were as follows:

For the position of Volunteer Representative, the Board welcomes Lina Ridley. For vacated positions, the Board welcomes back Kate Wellington and Brendan Taylor. For vacated positions the Board welcomes newly elected members Corrina Rudd and Gary Stuart.

The 2024 CABWA Board of Management are: Rob Lilley, Kate Wellington, Rob Muir, Gaye Macauley, Brendan Taylor, Corrina Rudd, Lina Ridley and Gary Stuart.

At the completion of the 2024 Annual General Meeting, CABWA's Board of Management reconvened at the Perth Branch to meet to elect its various Office Bearers. In a unanimous decision and unopposed, the Board re-elected Rob Lilley as President. In a unanimous decision and unopposed, the Board re-elected Kate Wellington as Vice President. In a unanimous decision and unopposed, the Board re-elected Rob Muir as Secretary (formerly Co-Secretary).

The position of Treasurer remains vacant and may be filled by a temporary appointment by the Board following an expression of interest in the new year.

CAB BRANCH LOCATIONS

ARMADALE

Shop 6, Armadale
Central Shopping
Centre

(08) 9497 5311

BUSSELTON

Unit G4
19 Cammilleri Street

(08) 9751 1199

BUNBURY

1 Stirling Street

(08) 9721 6008

FREMANTLE

135 High Street, Shop
GT22 Manning Building

(08) 9335 4522

KWINANA

2 Robbos Way
Kwinana Town Centre

(08) 9439 1251

JOONDALUP

Lotteries House
Suite 5
70 Davidson Terrace

(08) 9301 2833

MIDLAND

Tuckers Arcade
Shop 6
4 Old Great Northern
Hwy

(08) 9271 2500

MANDURAH

Mewburn Centre
11 Sholl Street

(08) 9535 3101

ROCKINGHAM

Room 4, 14 Council
Avenue

(08) 9527 6671

PERTH CBD

Level 1, 25 Barrack
Street

(08) 9221 5711



CAB HOLIDAY CLOSURE 2024/2025

| | | |
|--|-----------------------|---|
|  PERTH | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 20 (3:30pm) JANUARY 2 (9:30am) |
|  ARMADALE | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 13 (1pm) JANUARY 13 (9am) |
|  BUNBURY | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 15 (1pm) JANURAY 13 (9am) |
|  BUSSELTON | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 13 (1pm) JANUARY 13 (10am) |
|  FREMANTLE | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 15 (2pm) JANUARY 13 (9.30am) |
|  JOONDALUP | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 13 (3pm) JANUARY 13 (9am) |
|  KWINANA | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 10 (3pm) JANUARY 13 (10am) |
|  MANDURAH | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 13 (1pm) JANUARY 14 (9am) |
|  MIDLAND | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 13 (3pm) JANUARY 13 (9am) |
|  ROCKINGHAM | last day: reopens: | DECEMBER 12 (2:30pm) JANUARY 13 (9:30am) |



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**



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 to our Funding Partners

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.



With thanks to our Visiting Lawyers

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



CABWA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands in which we live and work, the Whadjuk Nyoongar people.

We pay our respects to elders, past, present and emerging, acknowledging their special connection to land, waters and community.

CABWA recognises, respects and welcomes diversity in all its forms, in the belief that diversity is a source of strength and opportunity.



CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Level 1/25 Barrack Street

Perth WA 6000

Enquiries (08) 9221 5711

Admin (08) 9325 4217

Mediation (08) 9325 4121

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cabwa@cabwa.com.au
