

TC BEIRNE SCHOOL OF LAW

UQ PRO BONO CENTRE

NEWSLETTER *DECEMBER 2015*



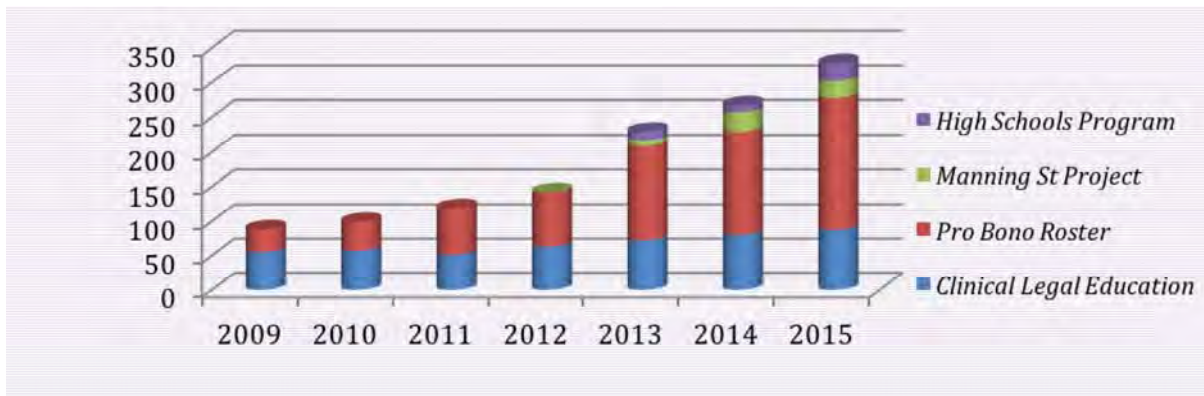
Annual snapshot

2015 was another year of growth for the UQ Pro Bono Centre. Our highlights included:

- Expanding our reach to assist Community Legal Centres (CLCs) and non-profit agencies in the greater Brisbane region. This year law students assisted community organisations in Logan, Ipswich, Toowoomba and Cairns, many of which are involved in the provision of domestic violence legal and support services.
- An increase in international pro bono opportunities, with students completing legal research tasks for and on behalf of the Supreme Court of Tonga, the International Labour Organisation and the Public Solicitor's Office of the Solomon Islands.
- A vibrant student presence at the 4th Asia Pro Bono Conference in Myanmar, which saw three law students present their own research on university models that support pro bono activities.
- The commencement of a three year specialist Tenancy Law Clinic, funded by a \$50,000 grant from the Ian Potter Foundation. Twelve law students participated in this legal clinic in 2015 under the supervision of Tenants Queensland lawyer, Julie Bartlett.

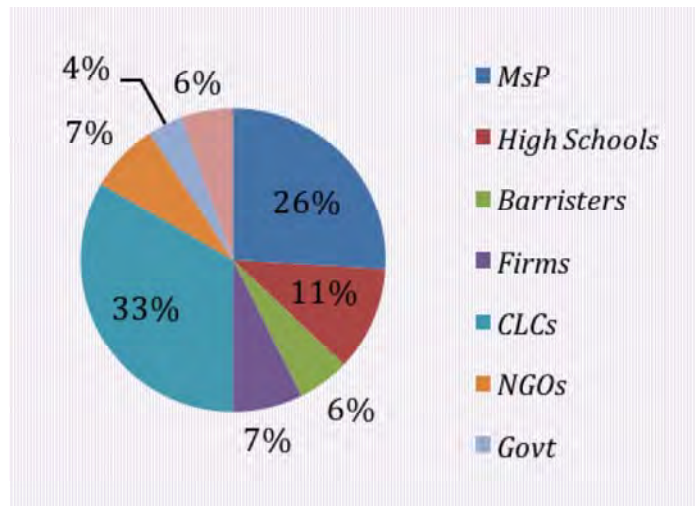
The Centre is steadily implementing its goals under the 2014 – 2017 Strategic Plan which are spread across six distinct areas: pro bono legal services; teaching and learning; research; profile and engagement; governance; sustainability. This Newsletter outlines the progress we have made against the Centre's strategic goals in 2015.

Longitudinal snapshot: 2009 – 2015



Pro bono legal services

2015 Pro Bono Roster Activities by type:



Our work with CLCs: Community Legal Centres remain a key requestor for student pro bono work, and the Centre is incredibly proud of its relationship with many CLCs throughout Queensland and also with QAILS, the peak body for Queensland CLCs. In 2015, students undertook work through the pro bono roster for YFS Legal, QPILCH, the LGBTI Legal Service, Caxton Legal Centre, Toowoomba Advocacy and Support Centre, Cairns Community Legal Centre and the North Queensland Women's Legal Service (Cairns). Additional work for other CLCs was also completed through the Manning St Project.

Our work with barristers: Law students who work alongside barristers are generally exposed to high quality, diverse pro bono work. In 2015, the Centre set an ambitious goal to increase the number of pro bono roster activities with barristers by 20%. This year 13 students worked with five barristers on four separate legal matters. Work in this period included research assistance for trial (appeal against a conviction of murder); direct brief representation in a complex, multi-party commercial dispute; research relating to workplace gender equality; research into appellate decisions regarding refusals of protection visa applications.

International pro bono opportunities: A presence in the Asia-Pacific

In 2015 UQ law students participated in an unprecedented number of international pro bono

activities. Students provided pro bono support to a number of organisations in the Asia-Pacific region, including the completion of a long-term legal research project for the Supreme Court of Tonga on jury law reform.

One UQ law student, **William Lee**, was fortunate to travel to both Myanmar and the Solomon Islands in 2015 to deliver presentations on legal research and community legal information material that he had developed under two separate pro bono activities with the Centre. In Myanmar, William co-presented the findings of a six-month research project at the 4th Asia Pro Bono Conference along with law student peers **Rebecca Morrison** and **Balawyn Jones**. In reflecting on his trip to Myanmar, William stated:

“The opportunity to present to a multidisciplinary audience was in and of itself a highlight. The chance to experience, observe and foster a rule of law culture within an emerging legal system was priceless. Working collaboratively throughout the conference with local Myanmar lawyers, their ideas and ethics served to cement my own understanding of the importance of a functioning legal system driven by passionate custodians of the profession.”

In the Solomon Islands, William delivered a presentation on mining, logging and environmental approvals processes for and on behalf of the Landowners Advocacy and Legal Support Unit within the Public Solicitor’s Office.



L to R: Law students Rebecca Morrison, Balawyn Jones, UQ Pro Bono Centre Director Monica Taylor, Caxton Legal Centre Director Scott McDougall, law student William Lee.

[See media release.](#)

The Centre is keen to strengthen its involvement with the nascent Asia-Pacific pro bono movement. In 2016 we hope to continue to play a role in working alongside law students and lawyers throughout the region to support access to justice and the rule of law. The 5th Asia Pro Bono Conference will be held in Indonesia in September 2016, and the Centre hopes to send another delegation of talented and committed law students to this conference. Financial support to enable law students to participate in this conference will be gratefully received.



Delegates from the 4th Asia Pro Bono Conference - handover from Myanmar to Indonesia

Diversification of the High Schools Program

This year the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) group and Asylum and Refugee Law Project (ARLP) conducted a steady number of high school outreach visits. Law students **Maria Cantrill, Ryan Smith, Josh Rhee, Rifayat Shamma, Marya Atmeh, Sara Al-Bostanji, Katija Kressibucher, Kate Sparshott** and **Romy Stewart** participated. Special thanks to student conveners **Charlotte Greener** (IHL) and **Nikola Core** (ARLP) for their efforts in coordinating the program in 2015.

The Centre is diversifying the High Schools Program's existing offerings. Under the supervision of **Dr Francesca Bartlett** and **Kathryn McMillan QC**, new community legal education sessions to high schools in the area of domestic and family violence and the law will be delivered by law students in 2016.

Street law activities

This year the Centre delivered a new 'street law' opportunity in partnership with CLC stakeholders and in response to sector demand. From August – October, six students participated in a 'Life Skills Project' legal education project with QUT, RAILS and MDA. Supervised by **Dr Clare Cappa**, the UQ students' efforts culminated in a community training session at Inala where they delivered legal education sessions to asylum seekers and refugees on issues such as tenancy law. Students **Tobias Gregg, Rebecca Markley-Towler, Samantha Johnson, Jasmine Lam, Joel Scott** and **Travis Jordan** enthusiastically participated in this initiative in partnership with law students from QUT.

Manning St Project

2015 was the fourth year of the Centre's partnership with Caxton Legal Centre involving law

students in law reform and policy projects on a pro bono basis. This year eight projects were run with 22 students:

- *Asia-Pacific Pro Bono Alliances* (Caxton) - **Rebecca Morrison, Balawyn Jones** and **William Lee**;
- *Queensland Legal Information Project* (Caxton) – **Eliza Weder** and **Haerim Nam**;
- *Environmental Law Reform* (EDO) – Semester One: **Lauren Ash, Annabel Elliott, John Paik** and **Hamish McDonald**. Semester Two: **Jemma Lanyon, Rebecca Rutland** and **Aoteng (Otto) Lu**;
- *Seniors and Information technology* (SLASS) – **Karim Moummar** and **Alex Ravenswood**;
- *Activist ADR* (QAILS) - Semester One: **Madeleine King, Bryon David** and **Matthew Wise**. Semester Two: **Lyn Han, Sophie Clarke** and **Reid Barry**;
- *Sexual Assault and Disability* (WWILD) – **Hamish Swanson** and **Jasmine Kwong**.



Semester One 2015



Semester Two 2015

Teaching and learning

In 2015, the clinical legal education program expanded to include the first year of our Tenancy Law Clinic in partnership with Tenants Queensland. The TLC assisted 118 clients across both semesters. 64 clients received one-off tenancy advice and an additional 54 clients received further assistance and case work. Students participating in the TLC drafted letters, QCAT applications, submissions, Residential Tenancy Authority forms and other relevant documents.

Semester 2 2015 Tenancy Law Clinic students with TQ Principal solicitor and clinic supervisor, Julie Bartlett.

“[The] TLC was very professionally run, led by the solicitor and our mentor Julie. We were always very welcomed and encouraged to be part of the team.... The first call that I listened in on was very confronting; our client was visibly distraught, disabled, poor and being evicted from her property.... as the semester progressed I developed the skills to be able to listen and sympathise with a client, but most importantly identify the legal problem and find a solution.” Student, Semester 2 2015



The Law School’s Clinical Legal Education Program now offers 10 legal clinics in partnership with seven community legal centres, and is a highly popular course elective offering at UQ. Coordinating the clinical program alongside the Centre’s pro bono activities creates effective learning synergies that reinforce the ‘service ideal’ of being a lawyer. [Read more about the clinical program.](#)



UQ students participating in the Refugee and Immigration Law Clinic, Semester 2 2015



Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic, Semester 2 2015, with supervising lawyer Marissa Dooris.

Research

The line between engagement and exploitation: student pro bono

In July, Centre Director Monica Taylor delivered a paper at the 2015 ALTA conference, the theme of which was *Legal Education and Access to Justice*. The paper applied recent research about the regulation of unpaid work experience and volunteering in Australia, to the specific context of student pro bono work.

L to R: Professor Jennifer Corrin, Dr Clare Cappa, Monica Taylor. Prof Corrin also delivered a paper entitled, Access to Justice in Pacific Small Island Developing States.



Profile and engagement

Regional road trip

From 12 – 13 October, the Centre visited Cairns and Townsville as part of a Law School visit to the region to revive connections with UQ Law alumni. During the trip we met with the following CLCs:

- Townsville Community Legal Service
- Cairns Community Legal Centre
- North Qld Women's Legal Service (Cairns)
- QPILCH (Townsville and Cairns)
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Women's Legal and Advocacy Service, Townsville

It was a delight to visit these CLCs and learn more about their clients' legal needs. We look forward to continuing to assist CLCs throughout the region in 2016.



Pro Bono Awards & Information Session

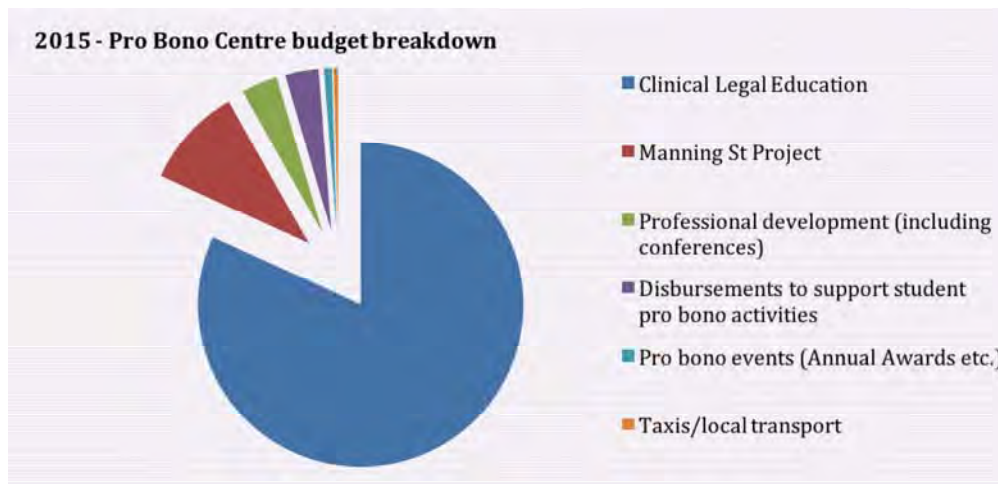
The Centre's annual Pro Bono Awards & Information Session on Wednesday 25 August was a great success. Guest speaker Bridget Burton from Legal Aid Queensland gave a humorous and personal speech to students. [More about this event here.](#)

Governance

Student Advisory Panellist **Lachlan Campbell** will graduate in December 2015 and we warmly welcome **Wendy Pei** to the student panel. The Centre would like to thank Lachie for his contribution and wish him well on the next phase of his legal career. Wendy joins other law students **Amina Karcic**, **Verdi Guy**, **Gabrielle Minards** and **Chloe Bennett** who provide strategic advice and input into the Centre's operations.



The greatest expenditure item for the Centre continues to be clinical legal education. Other than the recent injection of \$50,000 in 2015 thanks to Ian Potter Foundation, our clinical legal education program continues to be fully funded by the law school's internal budget.



If you would like to invest in the Centre's work, please visit www.law.uq.edu.au/giving

Stay up to date with pro bono news, events and opportunities by following the [UQ Pro Bono Centre on Facebook](#).

We wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas and new year. We thank all our partners including Our Patron, **Honourable Justice Peter Applegarth**, and members of our Advisory Board for their ongoing support:



Randal Dennings (Chair)

Honourable Justice Darryl Rangiah

Chris Wilson, Bar Association of Queensland

Elizabeth Shearer, Queensland Law Society

Mary Burgess, Legal Aid Queensland

Scott McDougall, Caxton Legal Centre

James Farrell, Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services

Sue Garlick, Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House