

Annual Report

2023-24

**A world where
everyone can
access justice.**

Vision



Mission

**To empower
renters to thrive
in safe homes.**



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Anika Legal acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the Lands on which we meet and work. Our office is located on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation, and we pay our respects to their elders past and present. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. This is, and always has been, Aboriginal land.

About Anika Legal

More people rent in Australia than ever before. One third of people in Australia rent their home. Two in five of them are families. Many will rent for their entire lives, raising kids and retiring in rental homes. **Everyone deserves a healthy home**, but due to the challenges faced by renters in accessing justice, many live in unsafe, insecure homes, and are at constant risk of homelessness. Less than 1% of private rentals are affordable to a person earning minimum wage. Unsafe homes, neglected repairs, and the looming threat of eviction create daily hardships for renters.

These are people like our client Muhammad. Muhammad and his family lived in a freezing, damp rental, where his daughter developed a severe skin condition. Despite repeated repair requests, nothing changed—until Anika Legal stepped in, empowering him to secure the necessary repairs. Muhammad is just one of **over 1000 people who have been supported by Anika Legal**.

At Anika Legal, **we empower renters to assert their rights and seek justice** while driving the systemic reforms needed to build a **fairer, safer housing system for all**.

Letter from the CEO



This year, the rental crisis became even more extreme. Renters were forced to choose between paying the rent and eating dinner. Renters lost the roofs over their heads and had nowhere to go. Renters were so terrified of losing their home they chose not to assert their rights, instead tolerating an unsafe home making them and their families sick. **The crisis was so acute and widespread that we had to intensify our focus, doubling down on innovative solutions aimed at addressing the root causes rather than merely managing symptoms.**

Anika Legal became a member of the Federation of Community Legal Centres. This set the stage for deeper collaboration with the sector and **a stronger, unified voice to drive meaningful action against housing injustice.** Our partnerships with Consumer Action Law Centre, Thriving Communities Australia, and Consumer Policy Research Centre were pivotal in demonstrating the power of an action research approach, and the fulfilment that comes from collaborating with mission-aligned organisations.

Seeing our clients repeatedly exploited by unfair bond claims compelled us to challenge the systemic flaws enabling these unjust practices. We wrote the Broken Bonds report which spotlighted the underlying problem, which was ultimately covered by most major news outlets. **Our recommendations were announced as reforms by the Victoria Government just four months later.** This achievement marked a milestone for our organisation, allowing us to celebrate not only the **297 renters we directly supported** last year but also the **1.5 million Victorian renters now protected by a fairer rental system.**

With our advocacy playbook proven effective, we focused on advancing our innovative service model—the student-powered engine driving Anika’s action research. **We strengthened partnerships** with RMIT, Leo Cussen, and Deakin University while piloting this model within corporate law firms. The latter has led to the establishment of Anika’s **flexible secondment model** - a program we now run with MinterEllison, Maddocks, Hall & Wilcox, Norton Rose Fulbright, and Gadens - which will harness thousands more hours from lawyers who wanted to contribute to access to justice but would otherwise be unable to because of schedule or skillset barriers. These service model innovations have significantly increased Anika’s lawyer capacity, **enabling us to help more renters while cultivating a more socially conscious legal profession.**

In a tumultuous year for renters, I’m especially proud of the team’s courage to embrace innovative approaches. Our unique approach to service delivery empowers renters to thrive in safe homes. Our technology allows us to scale this impact and transform it into an evidence base capable of influencing systemic change, and solving the root problems of housing injustice.

This year has been a challenging one for renters, but it also reinforced our belief that **change is not only possible—it’s already happening.** A sincere thanks to all clients, team members, partners, donors and supporters, whose contributions have made this year’s impact possible.

Next year we look to change not just systems, but also to shift the beliefs and narratives that entrench housing injustice. **We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring everyone has access to a safe, secure, and affordable home that enables them to thrive.**

Noel Lim
CEO and Co-Founder



Letter from the Chair



As an organisation Anika has continued to grow and mature as it seeks to assist renters and advocate for renters rights within the regulatory system. Anika has recruited new board members with an impressive range of skills to assist the staff and volunteers of the organisation. Noel, our CEO, has been successful with a number of grant applications that have enabled the organisation to increase the number of staff and to embark on some ambitious advocacy projects to increase renters rights.

Legal centres, such as Anika, must do more than just represent clients in need of assistance. It is imperative that legal centres identify the underlying causes of problems faced by clients and seek to address those problems through systemic reform. **This year Anika has succeeded in alerting the public and government to a number of systemic problems that disadvantage tenants.** We can proudly say that our advocacy has contributed to significant legal reforms to address those problems.

The work and successes of the organisation would not be possible without the commitment of our volunteers, our staff, our board and our community partners and funders. We particularly want to acknowledge the support of university law schools and the Leo Cussen Centre for Law which provide law students and graduates to assist with casework for our clients. We thank everyone for their contribution and commitment and trust that we can continue to work together for the benefit of individual clients and tenants as a class as we seek to embed their right to safe, secure housing.

Denis Nelthorpe

Chair





What we do

Anika Legal is a **free, not-for-profit legal service for renters**. Through casework, innovation and systemic advocacy, we support our clients and fight for a fair housing system so that **every renter can thrive** in a safe, secure, affordable home that supports their quality of life.



Renters are empowered to live in safe homes with dignity



- Renters achieve greater social outcomes
 - Renters empowered to engage with rental system
 - The rental system proactively **protects renters' rights**
 - The legal profession champions greater **access to justice**
-
- Fairer resolution of tenancy disputes
 - Greater awareness of rental rights
 - Expanded **protections of renters' rights**
-
- Legal education, advice and assistance
 - **Legal information, resources and tools**
 - **Advocacy submissions** and campaigns
 - Lawyers and law students contribute to housing justice
-
- Free **legal services** for renters
 - Develop **online legal resources** and digital tools
 - **Advocacy activities bolstered by casework data**
 - **Volunteer programs** for lawyers and law students

Renters in Australia are in crisis



Casework evidence fuels advocacy for systemic change

Our ability to take on more cases aligned with our advocacy goals, empowers renters to live in safe homes and builds the evidence base for critical reforms to the housing system. This in turn improves our ability to raise funding.

Expanding our service offerings enables us to grow our student & lawyer programs

Expanding our service offerings enables us to create opportunities for more students & lawyers to contribute to access to justice. This leads to a more socially responsible legal profession.

Additional funding enables investment in innovation & technology

As Anika attracts more funding, it enables us to invest in our innovation & technology platform, which enables us to leverage untapped resources (students & lawyers) to contribute thousands of hours to housing justice. It also enables us to expand our service offerings and deliver them more efficiently.





Working with other services

We work closely with our network of community partners to ensure renters seeking help receive the most appropriate support, and to address the systemic causes of injustice.

Through ongoing consultation with the sector and surveys of our clients, we've identified the specific cohort of renters who benefit most from our support - people who are ineligible for traditional legal aid, but require a legal service to negotiate with the other side to resolve their legal problem.

Our clients find ongoing casework significantly more helpful than online tools or one-off legal advice.



Joining the Federation of Community Legal Centres

This year Anika Legal was accepted as a member of the Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria.

The Federation is the peak body for Victoria's Community Legal Centres, and their community of members are at the forefront of providing access to justice for those in need.

Being a member of the Federation enables Anika Legal to work more closely with the other CLCs around Victoria as we continue to advocate for housing policy reform, and provide free legal assistance to Victoria's renters.



Wraparound
Comprehensive support for very vulnerable people, provided through traditional legal aid

1:1 ongoing support
including negotiating with the other side and helping renters to self-advocate

Light touch
One-off advice or self-help resources



Anika Legal's strategy focuses on **creating a fairer housing system** by addressing renters' immediate legal needs, while fostering long-term systemic change.

Built on three pillars—**empowering renters, leveraging data for advocacy, and fostering a socially responsible legal profession**—our approach ensures every case contributes to a broader vision of housing justice.

By combining direct services, innovative technology, and collaboration with partners, we are building a foundation to address both individual challenges and systemic barriers to safe, secure housing.

Together, our strategic pillars ensure that **every renter we support today helps create a fairer system for all.**

1. Empowering Renters Through Direct Legal Services

- Consolidate and refine services addressing repairs, bond recovery, and evictions.
- Develop new services for emerging challenges like energy efficiency, debt, and self-representation at VCAT.
- Enhance technology, such as Clerk, to increase capacity and efficiency.

2. Leveraging Data for Systemic Advocacy

- Use casework data to inform and advocate for housing policy reforms.
- Strengthen relationships with government and advocacy groups to amplify renters' voices.
- Seamlessly integrate data collection into service delivery to support evidence-based advocacy.

3. Fostering a Socially Responsible Legal Profession

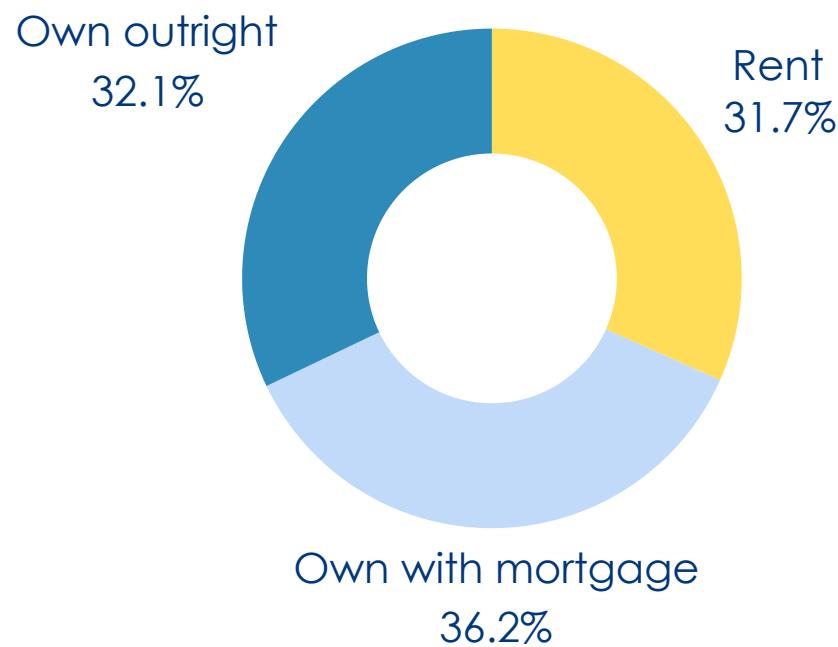
- Expand programs engaging students and lawyers to foster a culture of social justice.
- Partner with educational institutions and law firms to provide hands-on experience.
- Grow secondment and mentorship programs, building the next generation of socially conscious legal professionals.





One third of Australians rent, and more are renting long-term and with families.

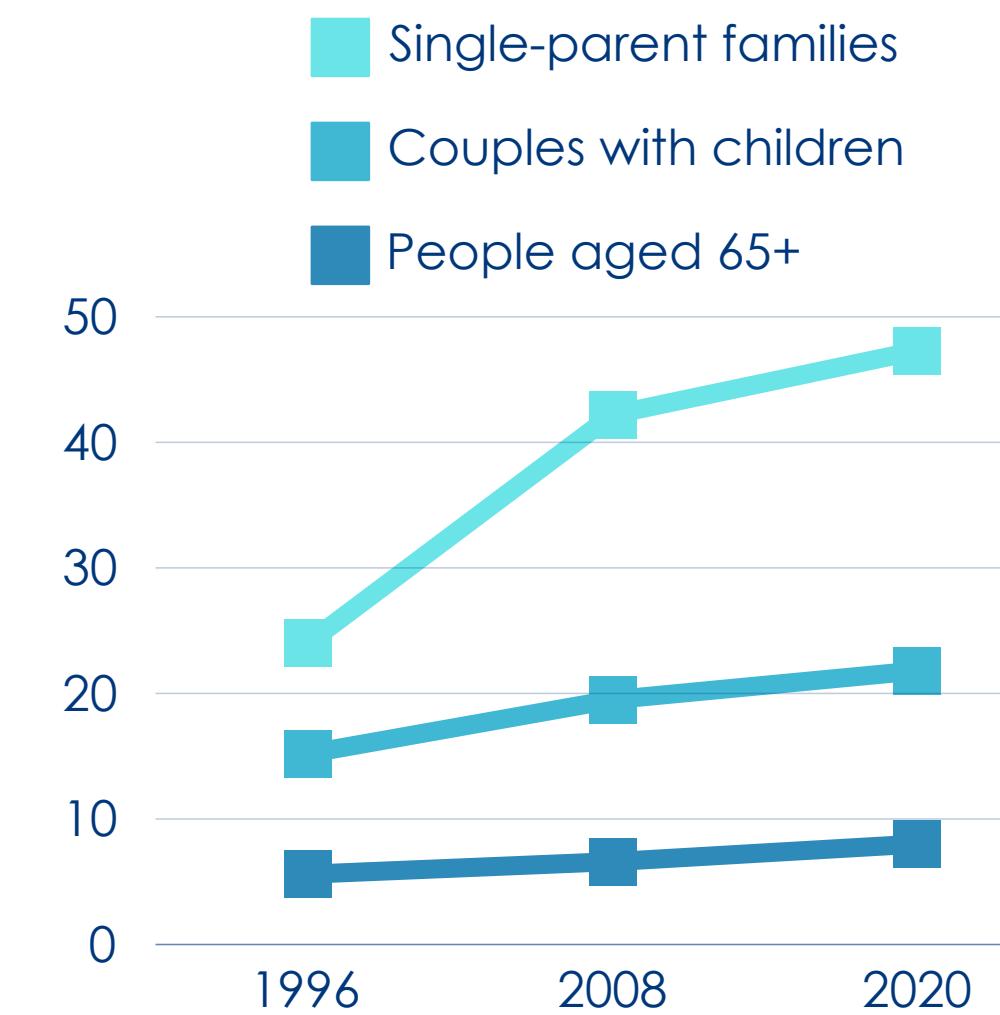
Living situations in Australia



32.1% own their home outright
31.7% rent their home
36.2% own their home with a mortgage

Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)

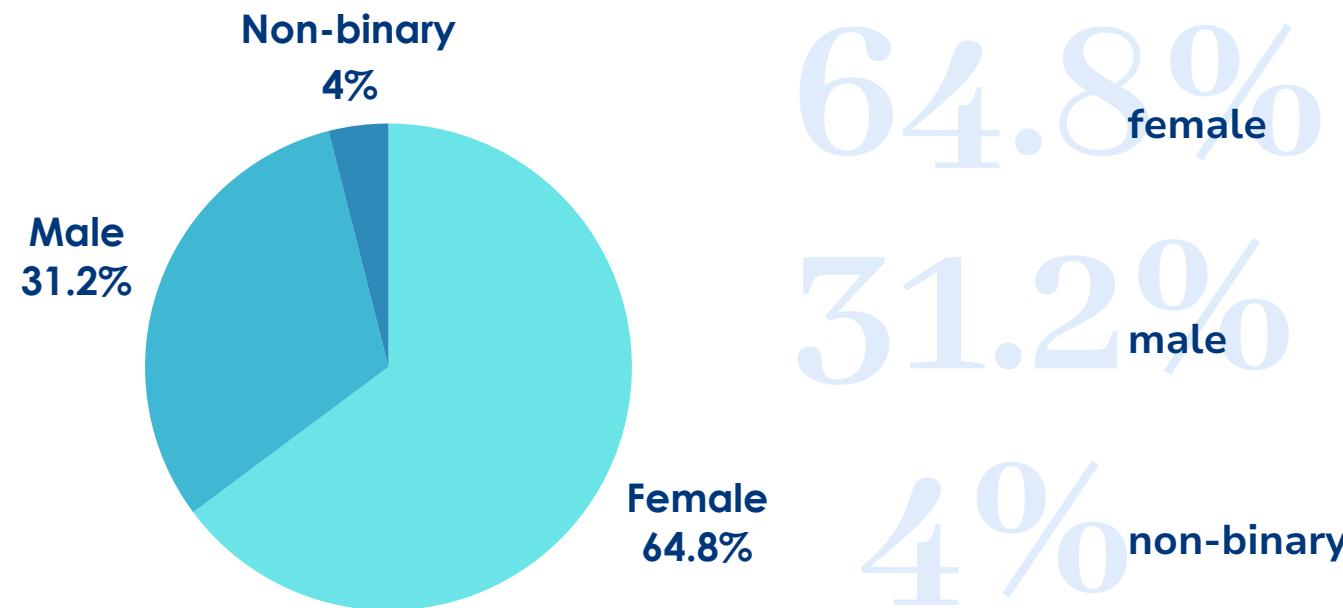
Percentage of demographics renting from private landlords



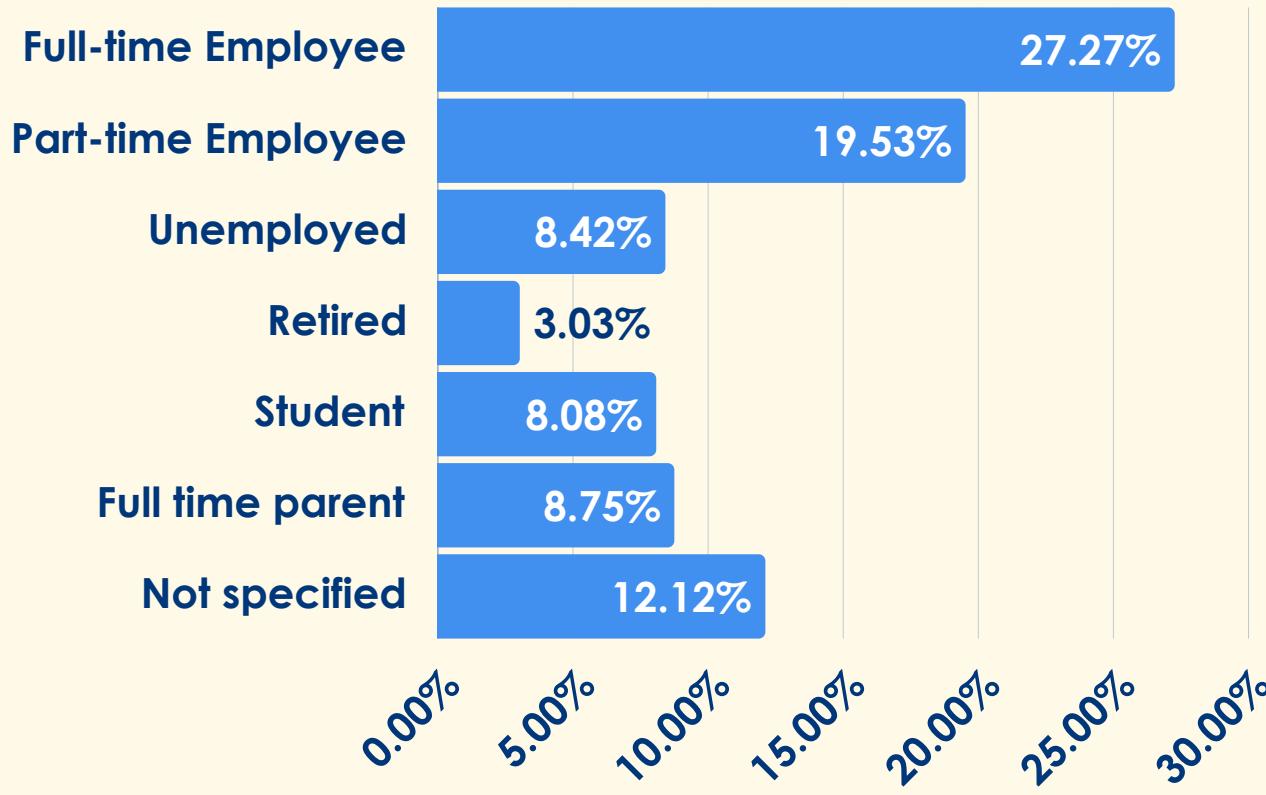
Source: [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)



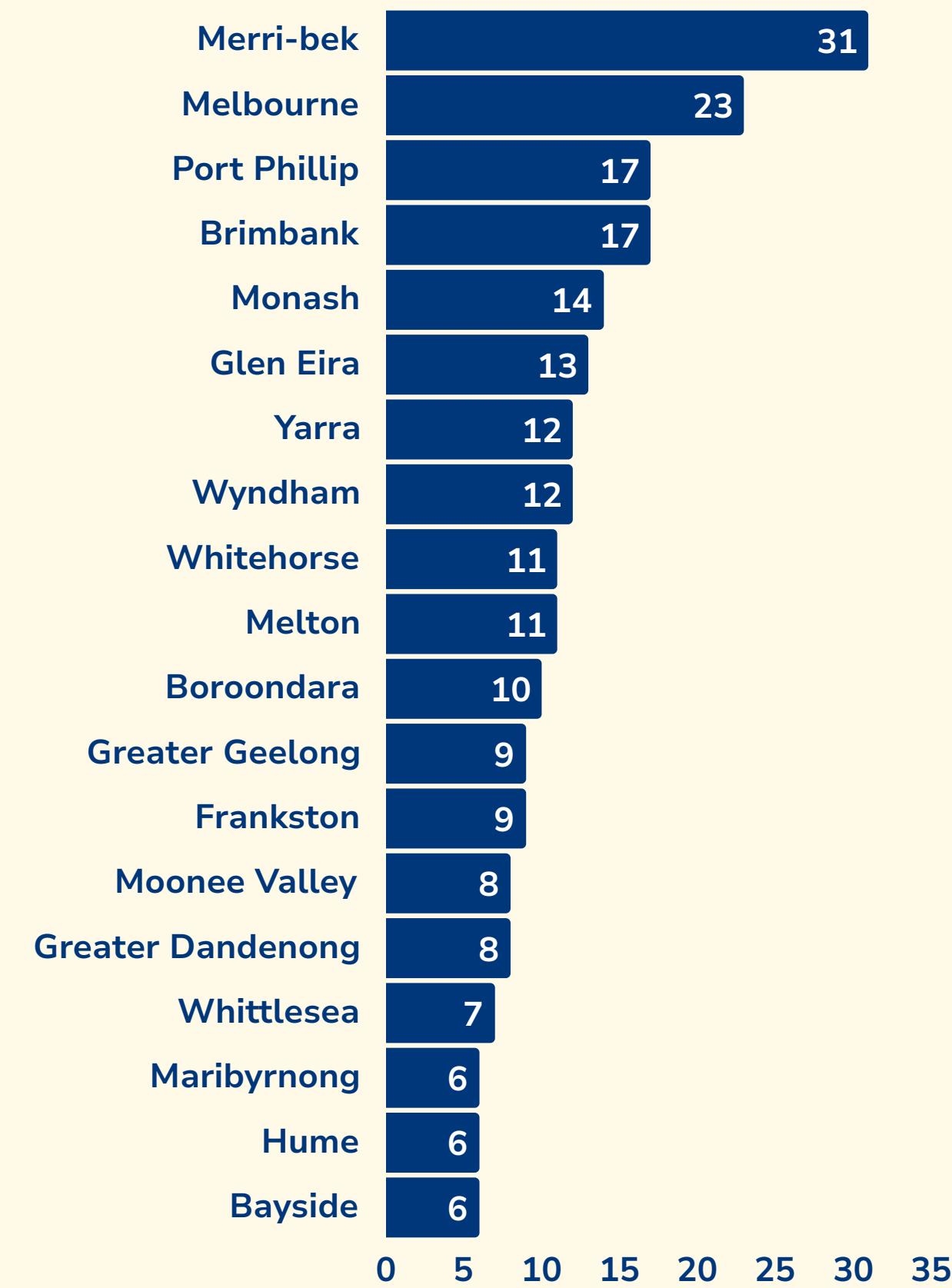
Gender identity



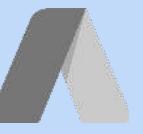
Employment status



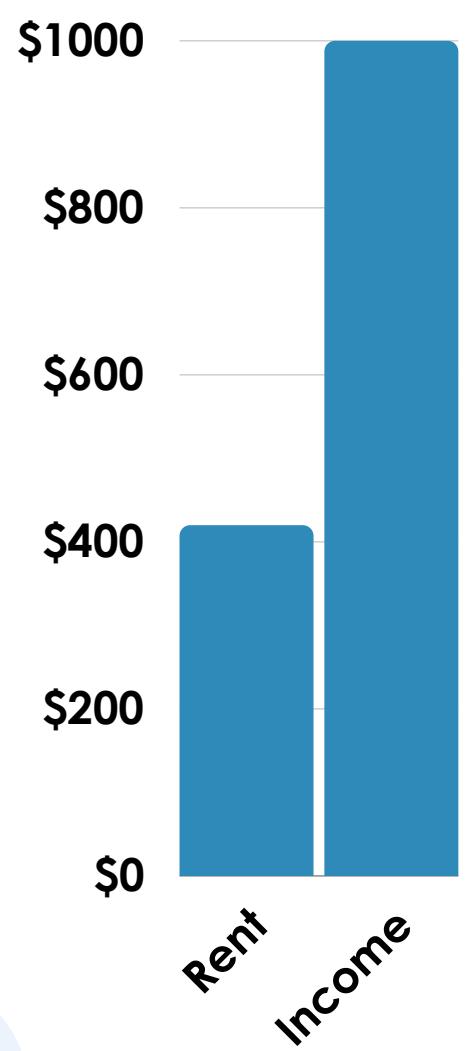
Clients numbers by local government area



The people we help



Rent vs income

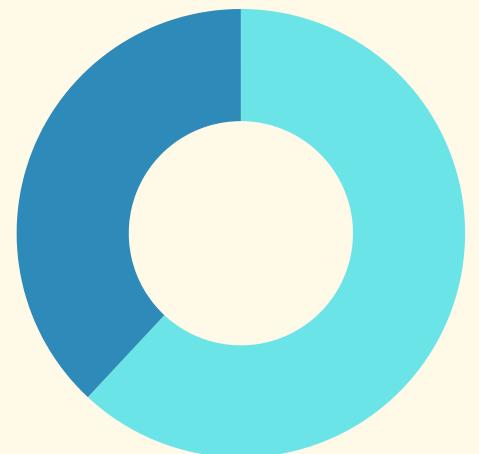


42%
median percentage
of income spent on
rent

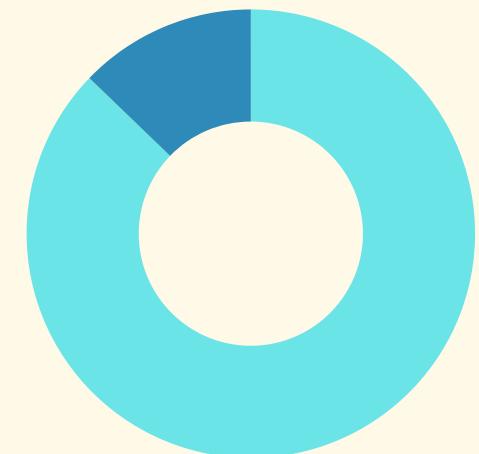
\$420
median
weekly rent

\$1000
median
weekly income

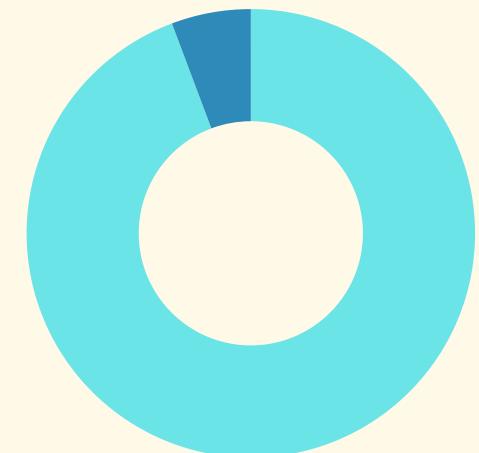




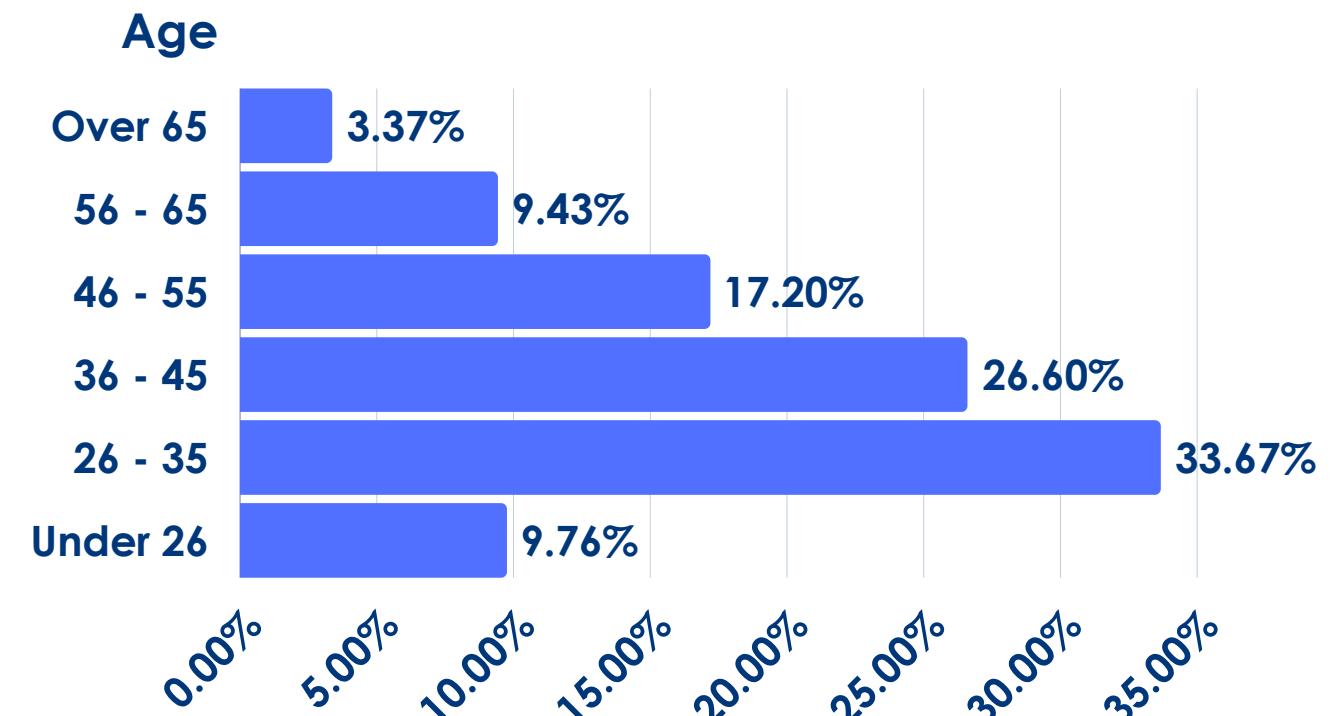
38% speak a primary language other than English



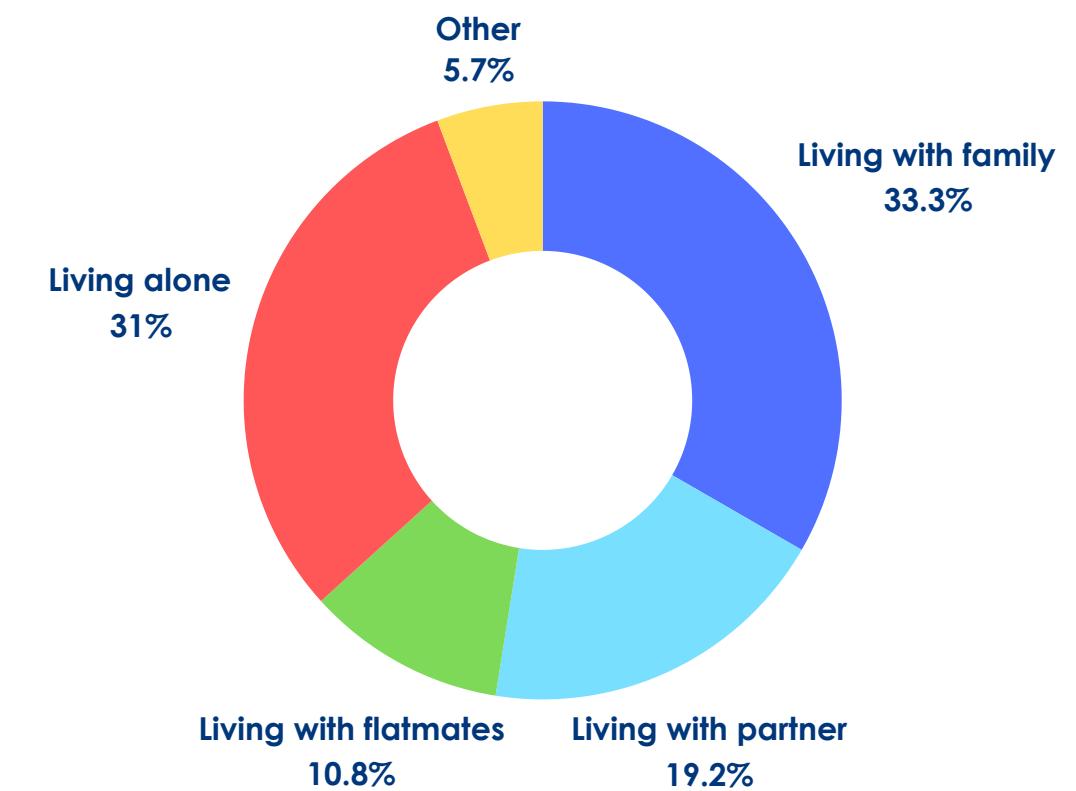
12.8% report having a mental illness



5.8% report having a physical disability



Living situation







297

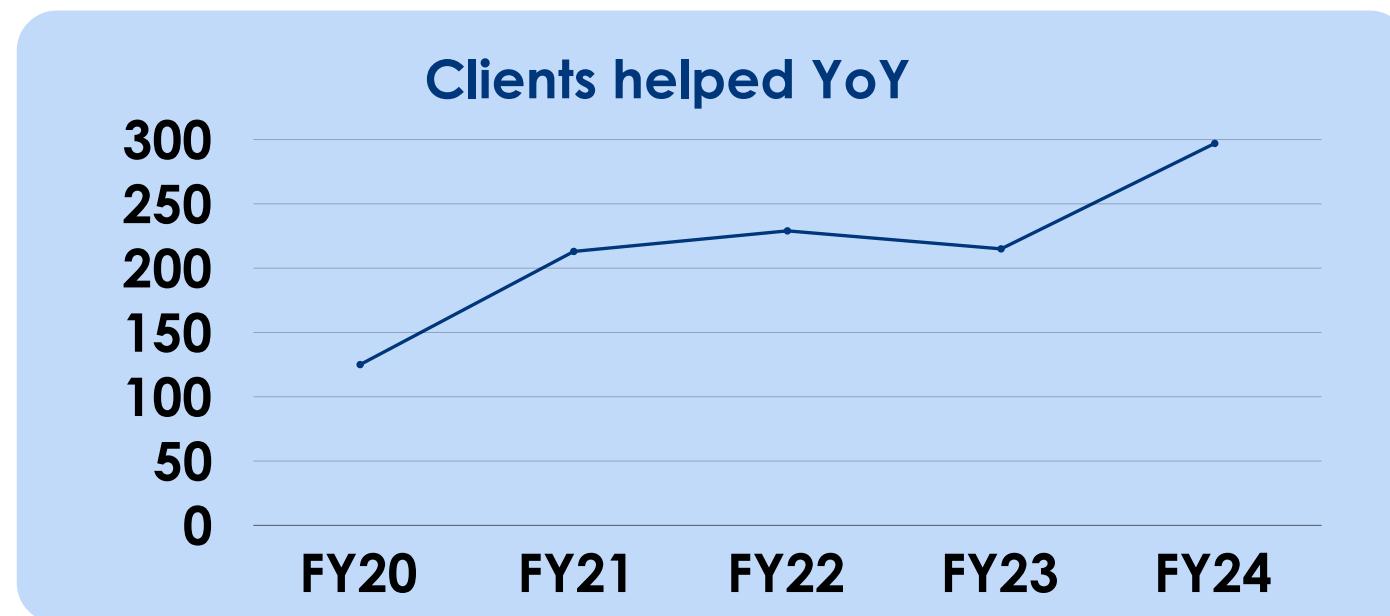
renters provided with free
legal support in FY24

166

166 bond
recovery cases

131

131 repairs
cases



20K+

views of our online rental
rights resources in FY24

6,288

How to transfer your lease

3,040

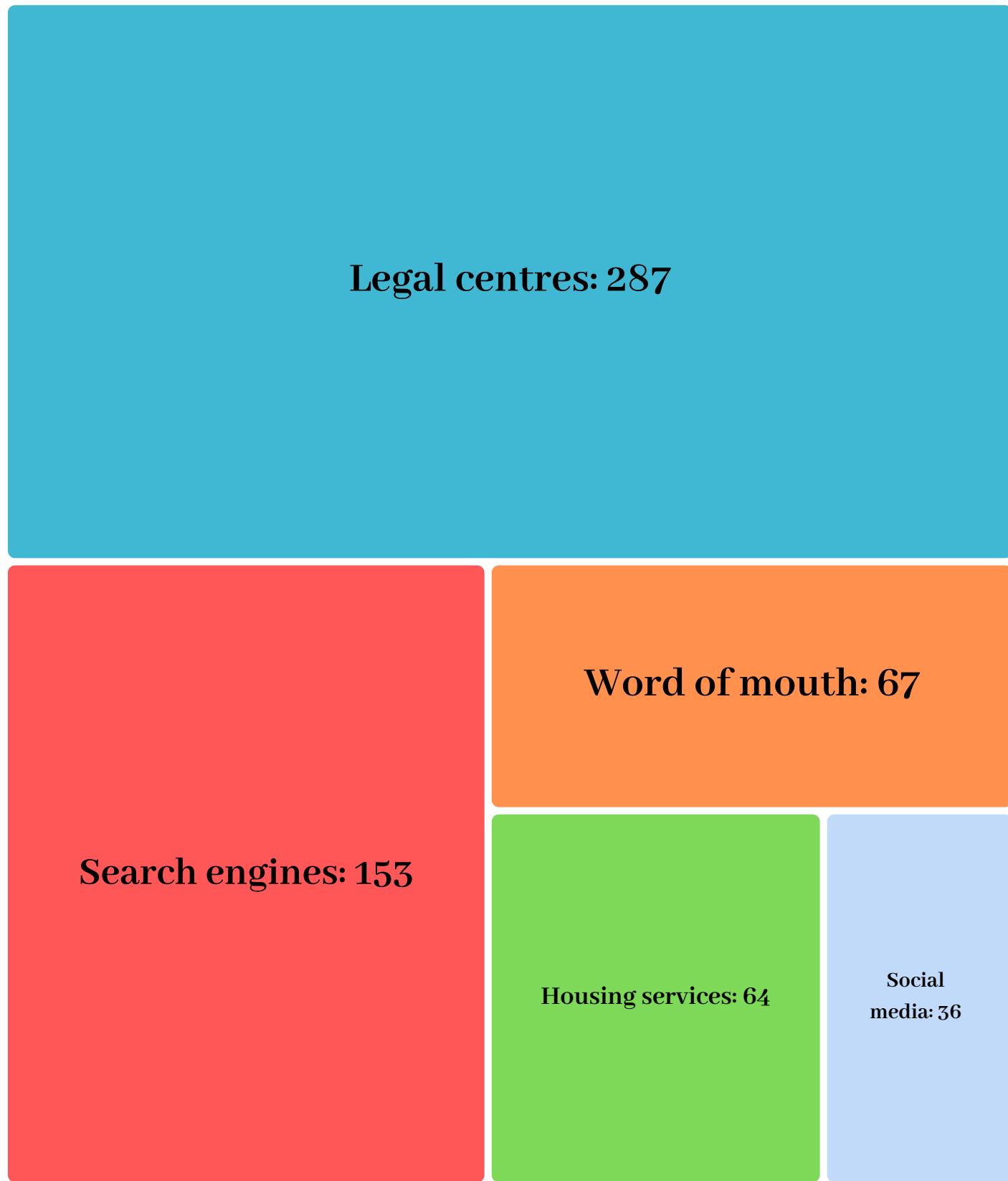
4 steps to claim your bond
from the RTBA

2,223

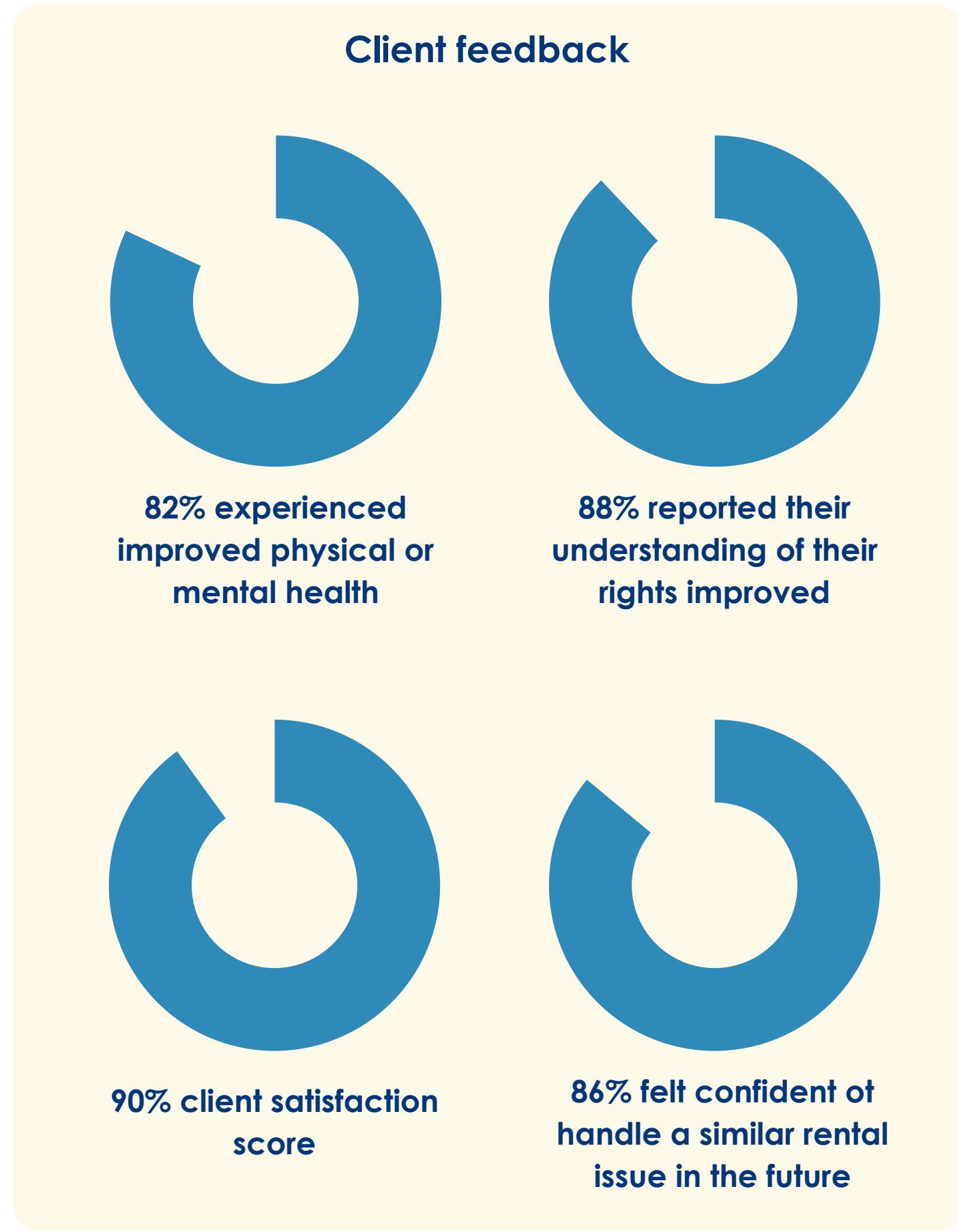
What do I do if my landlord
didn't lodge my bond with
the RTBA?



Source of referrals



Client feedback





Rental Repairs

Access to a safe, liveable home is every renter's right, yet many live in properties needing urgent repairs, fearing retaliation for raising issues. Anika Legal's Rental Repairs Service empowers Victorian renters by helping them:

- Understand their rights
- Negotiate with landlords or agents
- Apply to VCAT or Consumer Affairs Victoria
- Prepare to self-represent at VCAT hearings if needed

FY24 Key Outcomes

- 347 repair enquiries received
- 131 renters supported with repair cases

Through our support, renters can secure healthier and safer living conditions, improving both physical and mental well-being.

"I couldn't have done it without the advice and work of Anika. Although stressful, talking to someone to understand the situation and my rights was incredibly helpful."

- Robert, repairs client

Bond Recovery

Losing part or all of a rental bond due to unmeritorious claims is a reality for many renters, often leaving them without crucial funds while waiting for lengthy hearings. Anika Legal's Bond Recovery Service supports Victorian renters by helping them:

- Assess whether to dispute bond claims
- Negotiate with landlords or agents
- Prepare to self-represent at VCAT hearings

FY24 Key Outcomes

- 288 bond enquiries received
- 166 renters supported in bond disputes

Our service empowers renters to reclaim their bonds, ensuring fairness in a challenging system.

"I felt comfortable knowing that someone was looking at my case and guiding me through the process."

- Sanjay, bonds client



Rental Information Hub

Anika Legal's blog is a comprehensive online resource designed to empower renters with accessible, practical legal information. Covering key topics such as bond disputes, repairs, and eviction rights, the blog provides clear guidance to help renters navigate common tenancy issues. Regularly updated with new articles, including insights from Anika's systemic advocacy work, the blog also features multilingual content to ensure inclusivity for diverse communities.

By addressing the most pressing concerns faced by renters, the blog not only supports individuals in resolving their housing challenges but also contributes to raising awareness of broader systemic issues in the rental market.



Introduction to renting in Victoria for international students



How do I find free legal help for a rental problem?



How do I find an affordable rental property in Victoria?



What common reasons do landlords use to claim your bond?



当我在维多利亚省遇到租赁问题时应如何获得免费法律援助？



我入住承租房产后发觉与预期不符 - 我该怎么办？

Chinese Language Resources

We understand the importance of designing services that meet the diverse needs of renters. With the return to a new "normal," there has been a significant increase in Chinese-speaking international students renting in Victoria. To better support these communities, we collaborated with Chinese-speaking students over the past year to redesign and expand our Chinese-language blogs.

This user-centred research led to key improvements in how our multilingual resources are structured and the development of several new blogs addressing the unique challenges faced by Chinese-speaking international students. Supported by a Victoria Law Foundation Small Grant, we conducted targeted workshops, published 7 new blogs, and translated 22 existing blogs into Simplified and Traditional Chinese. These resources, promoted via social media and partnerships, resulted in a 600% increase in views, with 80% of surveyed users reporting greater confidence in asserting their rental rights. This project underscored the importance of multilingual resources and informed future strategies for supporting migrant communities.



Robert

Robert, a retiree, endured significant challenges in his rental property following the passing of his wife. Over a 12-month period, he faced two rent increases and persistent maintenance issues, including a dishwasher that remained broken for nearly two years despite repeated requests for repairs.

Seeking support, Robert reached out to Anika Legal. With our guidance, he successfully brought the repair issue to VCAT, which ruled in his favor. However, his landlord replaced the dishwasher with an unsanitary unit, and subsequent repairs resulted in a substandard model that frequently tripped the power. Encouraged by Anika Legal, Robert returned to VCAT, where he was advised to pay rent into a special account overseen by the tribunal. Despite complying, his real estate agency issued an eviction notice for unpaid rent.

Anika Legal challenged the eviction notice, securing its dismissal. When the agency attempted a second eviction, we supported Robert in having this notice quashed as well.

“I couldn’t have done it without the advice and work of Anika. Although stressful, talking to someone to understand the situation and my rights was incredibly helpful.”

Today, Robert is thriving in a new rental property, empowered by his understanding of renter rights and justice achieved with Anika Legal’s support. His case underscores the increasing pressures renters face and the critical role Anika Legal plays in safeguarding vulnerable renters’ rights.





Sanjay

Sanjay faced unexpected challenges when his garage door was damaged through no fault of his own. Acting responsibly, he promptly informed the real estate agency and kept detailed records of their interactions. However, months passed without a response, leaving the issue unresolved.

As Sanjay's family needed to relocate for health reasons, he gave proper notice and moved out, completing the lease. Despite this, the landlord unfairly demanded payment for the damaged garage door. Sanjay sought assistance from Anika Legal, who supported him in challenging the claim at VCAT. With Anika's guidance, VCAT ruled that Sanjay was not liable for the damage.

“I felt comfortable knowing that someone was looking at my case and guiding me through the process.”

Sanjay's story highlights the importance of legal support in navigating disputes and ensuring fair outcomes for renters.





Anika Legal's **flexible secondment model** is a cornerstone of our approach to scaling impact sustainably while fostering collaboration with the legal profession. This innovative model enables law firms to contribute their expertise by seconding lawyers to work with Anika on a flexible, part-time basis. The model not only supports renters in need but also strengthens ties within the legal community, creating a network of professionals committed to housing justice.

How It Works

- **Flexible Contributions:** Lawyers participate in secondments tailored to their availability, allowing them to balance firm responsibilities while contributing meaningfully to Anika's work.
- **Shared Workloads:** Firms can allocate teams of lawyers to collectively provide a set contribution, ensuring no single individual is overburdened.
- **Pro Bono Impact:** Seconded lawyers supervise our student interns, and help renters address critical housing issues.

The Value of Flexible Seconds

This model allows Anika to:

- Scale services sustainably by leveraging pro bono legal expertise.
- Provide renters with high-quality legal support, even in complex cases.
- Foster a culture of collaboration and social responsibility within the legal profession.

Looking Ahead

As we expand our flexible secondment model, we look forward to partnering with more firms to grow this impactful initiative. Together, we can create a more just housing system and inspire the next generation of legal professionals to champion renters' rights.

Maddocks: A Partnership in Action

Maddocks is a prime example of the model's success. Through their secondment arrangement, a team of lawyers shares a 0.2 FTE pro bono workload, collectively contributing their expertise to Anika's mission. By distributing responsibilities across multiple lawyers, Maddocks demonstrates how collaboration and flexibility can deliver meaningful impact for renters while maintaining efficiency for the firm.

'The partnership between Anika Legal and Maddocks to create the "Flexible Secondment Model" is a wonderful example of our teams collaborating and harnessing technology to innovatively answer a core area of need in our community.'

Over the past year, lawyers from the Maddocks Development team have assisted 71 renters with claims relating to repair works required under the Residential Tenancies Act.

With demand for Anika's services increasing as the rental crisis in Victoria has continued, it has been truly rewarding as a lawyer to help facilitate access to justice and empower renters to thrive in safe homes. We look forward to continuing our partnership in 2025.'

Claudia Vasile
Lawyer
Maddocks





Anika Legal's **student program** is central to our mission of creating a fairer housing system. By empowering law students to contribute to real cases under the supervision of experienced lawyers, we not only scale our services but also shape the next generation of socially responsible legal professionals. This innovative model enables students to make meaningful contributions to renters' rights while gaining invaluable practical experience.

Key Highlights from FY24

Real-World Impact

In FY24, 108 law students participated in the program, assisting with cases involving rental repairs and bond recovery. Their contributions allowed Anika Legal to handle 297 cases, a 38.14% increase from the previous year, demonstrating the scalability of our student-powered model.

Skill Development

The program equips students with vital skills, including legal research, client communication, and case preparation.

- 100% of students reported feeling more prepared to contribute to Access to Justice (A2J) initiatives.
- Students rated their experience at 9.8 out of 10, reflecting high satisfaction and the value of the program.

Fostering a Justice-Oriented Profession

By exposing students to systemic issues in the rental market, we cultivate a deep understanding of renters' challenges. This experience instills a commitment to addressing inequalities through the legal profession.

Partnerships for Success

Collaborations with education providers like Deakin, RMIT, and Leo Cussen, as well as legal firms, enable us to provide a sustainable and impactful program. These partnerships ensure that students are well-supported and that Anika Legal can continue delivering high-quality services.

'As an online student juggling study with work and parenting, I was really concerned about how I would access internships – especially as I currently live in a different state. When I saw the opportunity to intern with Anika through my university's WIL program I applied immediately and was thrilled to be accepted. I was also nervous too: I had zero experience in the legal profession and I really had no idea what to expect.'

Thankfully it turned out that I had no cause for worry because Anika is such a welcoming and professional environment - the induction process and case manuals make it easy to hit the ground running. Even though making that first client call still felt like a big deal, knowing that the supervising lawyers and paralegal leads were available and open to questions or providing advice gave me reassurance.

When I finished my internship I took the opportunity to become a volunteer and then was thrilled to be asked to become part of the Paralegal Lead team. It's been great working with Anika lawyers, incoming interns and other paralegal volunteers to help our clients and helpseekers get the assistance they need - whether that's through Anika or by referring them to other services.

The experience Anika has provided, such as the opportunity to manage case files from start to finish, has given me so much confidence as I embark on my new career. I have also found a great deal of satisfaction helping renters with their tenancy matters - housing is a human right!'

Pip Stafford
Student Volunteer
Anika Legal







At Anika Legal, advocacy is central to our mission of driving systemic reform to create a fairer housing system. In FY24, we focused on amplifying renters' voices and contributing to critical policy discussions through submissions, legislative recommendations, and events. Our advocacy work ensures that the challenges faced by renters inform decision-making and lead to meaningful change.

Key Highlights from FY24

Submission to the Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership (2020 - 2025) regarding the role of technology in addressing unmet legal need.

Anika Legal, and the Access to Justice & Technology Network, made a submission examining how technology can be used to enhance service delivery, legal operations, and systemic advocacy. Our recommendations included:

- Acknowledging the importance of digital technology in delivering the NLAP's intended outcomes.
- Quarantining funding specifically for innovation and building the sector's digital capability.
- Accounting for the cost of the sustained use of technology within the funding allocation model.

Submission to the Federal Inquiry into the Worsening Rental Crisis in Australia.

- Anika Legal made a submission highlighting the experience of renters in the current rental crisis. Our recommendations included:
- Funding regular national research into the quality of rental homes in each jurisdiction, the impacts of poor quality homes on tenants, and the circumstances/demographics who are most at risk.
- Investing in partnerships between legal service providers so that the co-occurrence of separate legal issues, and their impacts on renters, can be captured and addressed.
- Providing greater funding to renter support services.

Submission to the Inquiry into the Rental and Affordability Crisis in Victoria.

Anika Legal's submission to the Victorian Rental Inquiry focused on addressing systemic challenges within the rental market and advocating for reforms to ensure fairer outcomes for renters. Key recommendations included:

- Streamlining bond return processes.
- Strengthening enforcement of rental standards.
- Expanding funding for legal assistance.
- Enhancing renter protections.



Housing Justice Forum

In October 2023, we hosted the Housing Justice Forum, themed "Housing Crisis: Drivers and Solutions." This panel discussion brought together experts from the legal, housing, and advocacy sectors to examine systemic challenges facing renters. Discussions highlighted the need for:

- Treating housing as an essential service.
- Implementing regulatory reforms to ensure secure and affordable housing.
- Exploring innovative and cross-sector solutions to the housing crisis.

The event fostered meaningful collaboration and inspired actionable strategies to address systemic issues in the rental system.

Our Impact

Through these initiatives, Anika Legal played a vital role in shaping policies that prioritise renters' needs and rights. Our advocacy efforts amplify the lived experiences of renters and drive long-term, systemic change to ensure safe and secure housing for all.



Clerk

This financial year we made major improvements to our bespoke case management system Clerk.

Accommodating our expanded volunteer and secondee lawyer program
We made major improvements to Clerk to accommodate the rapid growth of our Volunteer and Secondee Lawyer program. As we continue to scale our impact, we will continue to review our tech-enabled processes, to ensure that Clerk continues to meet our needs.

Improving our data capability

We also made major improvements to our data collection to ensure we are seamlessly collecting more meaningful data, and that this data can be accessed and analysed more easily. This important work is a critical enabler of our data-driven advocacy.



Impact
Fund 2024

Collaboration for Justice





Education

We work with universities and education providers to equip future legal professionals with the practical and technological skills to support real clients and innovate for a world where everyone can access justice. We gratefully acknowledge our education partners for their role in empowering law students to truly make a difference in renters' lives.





Corporate

We collaborate with corporate partners in a range of different ways. In FY 24 we worked with partners to engage employees through matched giving, corporate volunteering and events. We also worked with law firm pro bono teams who seconded their lawyers to assist with the provision of free legal support. Our “flexible secondment” model allows a team of lawyers to share the role of one part-time Seconded Lawyer, making pro bono casework more accessible.

Our corporate partners have significantly amplified our impact, and we look forward to finding innovative new ways of working together.

'If we're going to make access to justice real, and if we're going to use the legal system to help as many people as possible, we need to think differently. One of the great things about Anika Legal is that it's not just doing frontline legal service, but it's taking the knowledge gained through that service to advocate for better policy.

That just makes it a very attractive proposition for partnering as a corporate sponsor. You know that your money is getting put to good use, your own people will be inspired by their story, and hopefully, it opens up your own imagination about the ways that legal services can be delivered.

I can't recommend working with Anika Legal enough.'



Jacob Varghese
CEO

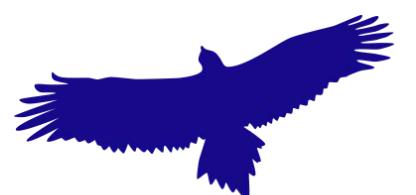
Maurice Blackburn Lawyers





Community

We work with partners across the community legal and housing sectors to ensure renters seeking help receive the most appropriate support and develop a coordinated, cooperative approach to providing access to justice. Their commitment to working together to maximise our collective impact has been invaluable.



council of
single mothers
and their
children



FEDERATION
OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES VIC

'Anika's work is creating powerful change for people who rent. As a think tank, CPRC loves partnering with Anika as an organisation that deeply understands the challenges that people face with bonds, evictions and basic repairs in rentals. Our work with Anika this year has uncovered the harms caused by energy inefficient rental properties and identified reforms that would make it easier for people to get basic repairs done to their homes.'

The Anika team are brilliant - they are creative, collaborative and use tech in clever ways to genuinely help people.

Congratulations on a year of huge impact Anika!

Erin Turner
CEO
Consumer Policy Research Centre





Philanthropy

Philanthropic support is the backbone of our ability to deliver impactful services and drive systemic change. Generous contributions from trusts, foundations, and individual donors enable us to expand our reach, innovate our services, and advocate for a fairer housing system. By investing in Anika Legal's mission, our philanthropic partners play a vital role in empowering renters and shaping a more just housing landscape for future generations.

"The Australian Communities Foundation (ACF) is proud to partner with Anika Legal and invest in their work enabling justice for renters. After supporting its Victorian legal services, the ACF donor community supported the seeding of Anika Legal's "A Place to Call Home" initiative as a large grant recipient of ACF's 2024 Impact Fund. We are excited to support this critical work, and look forward to continuing to engage with the Anika Legal team as they further their systems change work at a national scale."

Laura Mannix
Philanthropy Lead
Australian Communities Foundation





Our team is the driving force behind our mission. This year, we were proud to welcome several outstanding new members who bring a wealth of expertise and dedication to our organisation.

Dale Walker joined as our Head of Partnerships & Fundraising and a member of the executive team, strengthening our strategic capacity to build impactful collaborations and secure sustainable funding. Luca Vari came on board as our Lead Software Developer, enhancing our technological capabilities and driving innovations like our case management system, Clerk.

We also welcomed three new members to our Board of Directors: Maggie Hill, Jacinta Lewin, and Kim Shaw. Their leadership, insight, and commitment to housing justice will be instrumental as we continue to grow and deliver on our mission.

Together, our staff, volunteers, and board members are the backbone of Anika Legal, working tirelessly to ensure Victorian renters receive the support they need and deserve.

Leadership Team



Noel Lim
Director & CEO

Noel drives the direction of our organisation and ensures that each portfolio is successfully managed.



Zoe Chan
Principal Lawyer

Zoe is our Principal lawyer, and is responsible for developing and delivering the legal service we provide.



Dale Walker
Head of Partnerships & Fundraising

Dale leads our partnerships, fundraising, and marketing functions, ensuring that Anika can continue to grow sustainably.



Jacqui Siebel
Head of Operations

Jacqui leads Anika's operations portfolio, keeping the engine of our practice running.



Board of Directors



Denis Nelthorpe AM
Chair

Denis brings a wealth of experience from over 40 years in the legal assistance sector including as the CEO of WEstjustice and other leadership roles.



Kim Shaw
Director

Kim is an experienced Board Director. She is an Executive Director and the Division Head of Personal Legal Services at Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, as well as a member of the RMIT Law Advisory Board.



Noel Lim
Director & CEO

Noel is the Founding CEO of Anika Legal. Noel is a 2025 Westpac Social Change Fellow, and a finalist for the Victorian Young Australian of the Year and NFP Emerging Leader award in 2023.



Michael Choong
Director

Michael has over seven years of experience across the technology, retail, and not-for-profit sectors. He is currently a Senior Strategy Manager at SEEK.



Jacinta Lewin
Director

Jacinta is a Principal Lawyer in Maurice Blackburn Lawyers' Social Justice Practice, and a board member of the Victoria Legal Services Board + Commissioner.



Maggie Hill
Director

Maggie has fifteen years of specialist communications, and marketing experience. She has worked as an executive within the Victorian Government, and as a ministerial media advisor.



David Mandel
Director

David is a non-executive director for both ASX listed and not-for-profit organisations with a portfolio across the healthcare, technology, e-commerce and sport sectors.



Volunteers

Interns

Our student interns are on the frontlines, channelling their skills to fighting for our clients. They leave us excited for what the next generation of legal leaders will achieve.

Volunteers and secondees

Our 90 volunteers comprise professionals and students from a variety of disciplines, from accountants to marketers. We are continuously impressed by their energy, and incredibly grateful to them for generously donating their skills and time. Our average volunteer tenure of over 18 months is a testament to their commitment and dedication.



Advisory Council

We are fortunate to receive guidance from brilliant minds across the non-profit and private sectors. With their support, we've built a model many thought impossible, and taken many strides closer to our vision of a world where everyone can access justice.



Alan Peckham
Head of Legal at
Australian Institute of
Company Directors and
former Chief
Administrative Officer at
Herbert Smith Freehills



Brendan Lacota
Lead Social Impact
Programs at ANZ and
Independent Consultant



Helga Svendsen
FAICD
Host of Take on Board
podcast, Leadership &
Executive Coach & Non
Executive Director



Gary Adler
Chief Digital Officer at
MinterEllison



Madeleine Dupuche
Director of Education
Strategy and Design at
Leo Cussen Centre for
Law



Anika Legal's financial position reflects our commitment to delivering impactful legal services and advocacy for renters while ensuring sustainable growth. This year, we introduced a more comprehensive financial reporting process by including the value of in-kind support, reflecting the significant contribution of donated services to our operations. You can access Anika Legal's reviewed financial report [here](#).

Income

- Total income (excluding in-kind contributions): **\$467,889** (18.64% increase from FY23).
- In-kind contributions (valued according to Victorian Government standards): **\$394,923**.
- Total income (including in-kind contributions): **\$862,812**.

Expenditure

- Total expenditure (excluding in-kind contributions): **\$547,129**.
- In-kind contributions (valued at \$394,923) accounted for a significant portion of operational capacity.
- Total expenditure (including in-kind contributions): **\$942,052**.

Net Operating Loss

- Including in-kind contributions: **\$74,884**.

In-Kind Contributions

This year, we have valued and included the significant support provided through donated services. Volunteers and pro bono contributions were instrumental in scaling our services, particularly in legal practice, operations, and technology. Including these contributions in our financial statement highlights the true extent of resources supporting renters and Anika Legal's mission.

A Year of Growth and Resilience

Despite operating at a loss, FY24 marked a year of financial growth and operational efficiency. Increased private funding and corporate partnerships enabled us to expand services, support more renters, and strengthen advocacy efforts. The inclusion of in-kind contributions underscores the community's trust in our mission and the broader value of collaboration.

Looking Ahead

Anika Legal will focus on diversifying funding streams, securing multi-year grants, and expanding partnerships to ensure sustainable growth. By leveraging financial and in-kind support, we aim to continue providing impactful services while advocating for systemic change.

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