

# #STAND WITH US

 Human Rights  
Law Centre

Annual Report 14/15



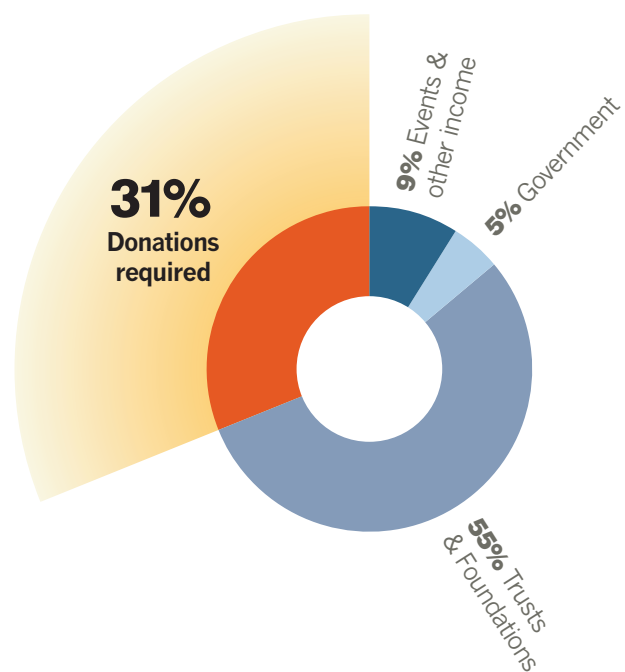
# INDEPENDENT FUNDING IS VITAL TO OUR SUCCESS

The Human Rights Law Centre is proudly independent.

Our ability to advocate – to speak plainly and strongly whenever needed – is directly linked to our independent sustainable funding.

In 2015/16, only 5% of our budget will come from government. We need to fundraise the rest, mainly from trusts and foundations and from donations. These independent funding sources are critical to our impact.

[See the inside back cover for information on how to donate](#)



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ABN: 31 117 719 267

2	Chairperson and Executive Director's message	18	Events & seminars
3	In the courts	20	Our donors & funders
6	At the United Nations	22	The Human Rights Law Centre team
9	In Parliament	23	Recognition
13	In the community	24	Financials
16	Media and communications impact		Donation form (inside back cover)

# #STAND WITH US



Annual Report 14/15

The Human Rights Law Centre protects and promotes human rights in Australia and beyond. We do this through a mix of strategic legal action, evidence-based advocacy, quality research and targeted capacity building.



## IN THE COURTS



## AT THE UNITED NATIONS



## IN PARLIAMENT



## IN THE COMMUNITY

#StandWithUs  
[www.hrlc.org.au/donate](http://www.hrlc.org.au/donate)

# CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Sometimes, we need to look back to look forward.

Today, we can look back and be shocked by attitudes, laws and policies that allowed, or actively promoted injustice like the Stolen Generations, the White Australia policy, the criminalization of homosexual conduct or entrenched gender and other discrimination.

But in 50 or 60 years, how will people look back on our time?

We believe people will look back and be shocked by the cruelty we are inflicting on people seeking asylum, by Indigenous imprisonment rates that are 15 times higher than non-Indigenous rates, by entrenched family violence, disability discrimination and much more.

Yet progress on human rights isn't linear and it certainly can't be taken for granted.

Changes in laws and policies are often the product of years or decades of hard work. Sometimes that work is focused on resisting steps backward. Sometimes it is laying the groundwork for future steps forward. And sometimes it is celebrating genuine progress.

The Human Rights Law Centre exists to bring about human rights progress and to defend the gains that have already been made.

We're proud of our work over the 2014-15 year. From resisting changes that would have given a green light to racial vilification to holding the government accountable for the harm being done by its asylum seeker policies, the Human Rights Law Centre's work has generated enduring positive impacts.

We are a relatively new organisation; we turn ten in January. And we are a relatively small organisation with a budget of around \$1 million and just ten staff.

But we have an impact well beyond our size and that's because of our proven model.

Our model multiplies the support of our funders by drawing on substantial pro bono resources provided by law firms and barristers and by targeting our resources on systemic changes to laws and policies.

None of our work is possible without the generous support of the people who fund us, the pro bono lawyers who work alongside us and the individuals and organisations we partner with to advance shared human rights goals.

To the many individuals and organisations that stand with us, as you read this report, recognize that our success is equally yours.

**Michael Kingston and Hugh de Kretser**



# IN THE COURTS

Working in partnership with pro bono lawyers, we take strategic legal action in the higher courts to bring justice for individuals and promote systemic change

## Challenging the harmful treatment of people seeking asylum

We commenced a major ‘test case’ in the High Court challenging the power of the Australian Government to run and fund offshore detention. The case is being run on behalf of over 240 vulnerable people – including children, women sexually assaulted on Nauru and 25 babies – who have been temporarily returned to Australia but are facing imminent removal back to Nauru or Manus. The case has temporarily prevented the group from being returned and will examine the role Australia plays in depriving people of their liberty in the territories of other countries.

## Reining in excessive police powers & standing up for Indigenous rights

On behalf of the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency, we challenged the Northern Territory’s unjust ‘paperless arrest’ laws in the High Court. The laws sought to give police excessive powers to lock people up for trivial offences like undue noise, swearing or failing to keep a front yard clean. The NT Attorney-General called the laws “a form of catch and release” - likening the work of the NT police to sport fishing. The idea was to take people “out of circulation” and bypass the courts. In their first eight months of operation, the laws were used over 2,000 times. Around 80% of people locked up were Aboriginal. Tragically, in May, artist Kumanjayi Langdon, a senior Warlpiri man, died in custody after being arrested under the laws for a minor liquor offence carrying a maximum penalty of a \$74 fine.

## Ensuring legal and democratic scrutiny of secretive boat turn-backs

We challenged the Government’s secretive detention of 157 Tamil asylum seekers (including 50 children and a pregnant woman) on the high seas for a month beneath the deck of an Australian Customs ship. Our High Court case helped to

*Australia shouldn't be warehousing vulnerable people on remote islands. People seeking asylum need a real solution – settlement in a safe place where they can rebuild their lives.*

“” DANIEL WEBB  
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL ADVOCACY

*The bottom line is that more Aboriginal people in the lock up means more deaths in custody. We shouldn't be arresting Aboriginal people for such trivial offences.*

“” RUTH BARSON  
SENIOR LAWYER

*157 people were detained on the high seas in secret until this case was brought. As one of the young mothers told us, 'If it wasn't for this case, no one would have even known we existed.'*

“” HUGH DE KRETZER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

prevent the group from being returned without having their refugee claims assessed and established important limits on the government's powers at sea. The case also ensured vital legal and democratic accountability over the way our clients had been treated - it took this case for the government to break its silence and confirm these 157 people were in its custody.

## Protecting women's rights to safely access abortion services

Women should be able to safely access reproductive health services. Our case in the Supreme Court of Victoria sought to compel the local council to address the ongoing harassment and intimidation of women accessing a Melbourne abortion clinic. The case has been the catalyst for law reform in the Victorian Parliament to establish safe access zones for abortion clinics across the state.

## Securing freedom from arbitrary detention for children seeking asylum

Two unaccompanied children were being processed in the community until the Minister (who was also their legal guardian) suddenly re-detained them on the basis that they were 'of interest' to police. Neither child was ever convicted, charged or even interviewed by police. They were indefinitely detained on the basis of a suspicion that was never even put to them. The police subsequently confirmed the boys were no longer 'of interest' but the Minister still refused to release them. We took action in the High Court challenging the boys' detention. The Minister released both boys prior to hearing. The case achieved a great result for our clients and ensured vital scrutiny and accountability over the Minister's detention powers.

## Shining a light on the darkest corners of Australia's offshore detention network

When an appeal, funded by the Australia Government, halted an important and powerful PNG National Court human rights inquiry into Australia's detention centre on Manus Island, we assisted Amnesty International in the Supreme Court of Papua New Guinea to push for the inquiry to resume. This work built on the inspection of Manus that our Director of Legal Advocacy, Daniel Webb, participated in.

*Establishing safe access zones around abortion clinics is a sensible solution to ensure women can access reproductive health services without intimidation, abuse and harassment.*

“”

EMILY HOWIE  
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY  
AND RESEARCH



The tragic reality is that since Australia announced the PNG Refugee Resettlement deal, more men have died on Manus than been resettled.  
[@DanielHRLC](#)

# AT THE UNITED NATIONS

We hold Australia accountable to the fundamental international human rights law standards it has promised to comply with

ORATEUR ONG



## Holding Australia to account on the world stage

In conjunction with the National Association of Community Legal Centres and Kingsford Legal Centre, we coordinated a coalition of nearly 200 organisations to prepare comprehensive materials for the nation representatives conducting the review of Australia's human rights track record at the United Nations Human Rights Council. This 'Universal Periodic Review' which occurs every four years, recognises Australia's human rights achievements, but also highlights areas of concern and the various ways the Government isn't meeting the human rights obligations Australia has promised to uphold.

Similarly, when an expert UN committee reviewed Australia's compliance with the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, we harnessed the expertise of 24 organisations to produce a detailed joint report warning that Australia's standards are sliding when it comes to preventing mistreatment

## Ensuring Australia is held responsible for its unlawful treatment of people seeking asylum

Following our request for urgent action to the United Nations, an independent UN investigator found that a number of aspects of Australia's asylum seeker policies violate the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The UN's findings received widespread media coverage both in Australia and internationally and made plain the falsehood of the government's claims that it always abides by international law.

Separately, we delivered several statements briefing the UN Human Rights Council on Australia's use of ever more radical measures to prevent people seeking its protection and the alarming increase in the Government's disrespect for the UN human rights system.

Each time the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other UN experts criticised Australia's treatment of people seeking asylum, we ensured that the message was heard in Australia through our media advocacy.



Australia's potential to be a human rights leader is being completely undercut by its tremendously harsh treatment of people seeking asylum  
[@AnnaHRLC](#)

*Australia signed up to the Convention Against Torture 30 years ago. We did so because as a nation we agreed with the important minimum standards of treatment it guaranteed. Yet here we are 30 years on, knowingly breaching those standards and causing serious damage to our reputation.*

“ ” DANIEL WEBB  
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL ADVOCACY

## Standing up for the rights of Indigenous people

Through various statements at the UN's Human Rights Council, we've highlighted Australia's rapidly increasing imprisonment rates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and called on the Council to urge Australia to take effective steps to address the social crisis.

## Challenging life in prison for children with no genuine possibility of parole

The UN Human Rights Committee – the UN authority on civil and political rights – ruled that Australia had violated the human rights of two children sentenced to life imprisonment without any genuine possibility of parole. We brought the complaint on behalf of two boys, Bronson Blessington and Matthew Elliott, who were 14 and 16 when they were sentenced for the murder and rape of Janine Balding. After being sentenced, the NSW Parliament passed laws that denied them any realistic chance of parole, with the then Premier saying they would be “cemented in their cells”. The Committee recognised that children must be sentenced differently from adults and ruled that sentences imposed on children must allow for “a possibility of review and a prospect of release, notwithstanding the gravity of the crime”.

## Advancing the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people

Working with advocates from around the world, we encouraged the UN Human Rights Council to adopt a landmark resolution on combating violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In addition to pushing for the Federal Government to commit to ending discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people in all areas of Australian law, we've been encouraging it to take a leadership role in the protection of LGBTI rights worldwide.

## Human rights accountability for business

We worked with a UK organisation to lodge a formal OECD complaint against multinational security contractor G4S for failing to meet international standards and committing serious human rights violations in relation to conditions and abuse of asylum seekers detained at the Manus Regional Processing Centre.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are one of the most incarcerated groups in the world and the problem is getting worse  
**@BenHRLC**

*No one is questioning the terrible nature of the crimes committed, but an effective and lawful response to children committing such crimes requires more than simply locking them up and throwing away the key.*

“” RUTH BARSON  
SENIOR LAWYER

*This is a modest but crucially important step towards building an international consensus on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people and ensuring sustained and systematic attention on these issues.*

“” ANNA BROWN  
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY  
AND LITIGATION



# IN PARLIAMENT

We work with Ministers, MPs and public servants to advance the protection of human rights through laws and policies and defend the gains already won

## Addressing the legacy of unjust homophobic laws

Although homosexuality has been decriminalised in all Australian states since 1997, the injustice of such laws continue to haunt many men who were charged for consenting homosexual activity. Left-over convictions from these unfair laws can have negative impacts on everyday life - creating hurdles to travel, working and volunteering in the community. Working with politicians across the political spectrum, we secured historic legislation in Victoria to create a process in which men with historic gay sex convictions could apply to have their names cleared.

We then played an important role in replicating the successful campaign in other states, helping to secure the passage of similar legislation in New South Wales and contributing to law reform efforts in Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

## Defending democratic freedoms

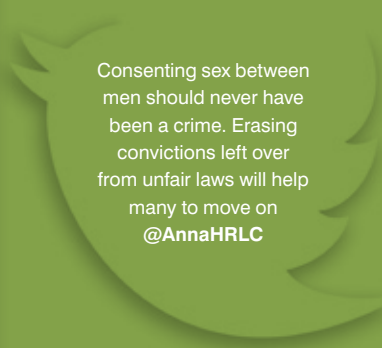
Across Australia, we played a leading role in efforts to defend fundamental democratic freedoms including the right to vote and protest rights.

In Queensland, we led successful Parliamentary and public advocacy to repeal Queensland's misguided voter ID laws that threatened to suppress the vote of Queenslanders less likely to have access to ID, including the elderly, the young, the disabled and Indigenous peoples.

At the Federal level, we stood up for the voting rights of people with cognitive disabilities by leading efforts to remove archaic discriminatory voting restrictions from electoral laws.

In Victoria, we made important contributions to the campaign to repeal excessive police "move on" powers that threatened protest rights. In Tasmania, we helped to mitigate the worst aspects of Tasmanian anti-protest laws and in Western Australian we opposed proposed vague and unnecessary laws that would criminalise legitimate protest.

We coordinated advocacy and capacity building around the eight-year review of Victoria's Human Rights Charter, proposing



Consenting sex between men should never have been a crime. Erasing convictions left over from unfair laws will help many to move on  
**@AnnaHRLC**



Across Australia, protest rights are being threatened by laws that undermine free speech and assembly rights.  
**@HughdeKretser**



reforms to make the Charter more accessible, more effective and easier to enforce.

We also opposed a suite of excessive Federal national security laws, including metadata retention laws, that undermine the very democratic values the laws seek to defend.

## Promoting human rights in Australian foreign policy

We made principled and practical contributions to various parliamentary debates and committee hearings regarding Australian foreign policy. We warned that Australia's ambition for an armed drones program must be tempered with far greater transparency and safeguards. We also proposed amendments to the Australian Federal Police Act which would ensure Australian authorities could not share information with foreign police services when there was a risk the death penalty would be imposed.

## Advancing equality

In coalition with community groups we provided evidence to the independent review of Victorian adoption laws and pushed for discrimination against same sex couples to be eliminated. In Federal Parliament we presented to the Senate's Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee on why and how the Recognition of Foreign Marriages Bill should address the current maze of legal uncertainty for same sex couples married overseas. We also coordinated a major national audit of laws that discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and intersex status and successfully sought the Federal Government's commitment to ensuring states and territories comply with federal discrimination protections for LGBTI people.

*As a community we shouldn't be preventing people living with a disability from participating in our democracy. We should be providing the necessary support to ensure everyone has an opportunity to have their say by casting their vote.*

“ ” EMILY HOWIE  
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH

Chan & Sukumaran lost the chance to show they learned from their mistakes. We owe it to them to learn from ours. Changing the AFP Act is a good start.  
@ DanielHRLC



## Resisting regression and advocating for change in the way we treat refugees and people seeking asylum

There were some truly regressive pieces of migration legislation introduced into the Federal Parliament over the year. We had our work cut out trying to halt the regression and bring some compassion and perspective to the debate.

We strongly advocated against proposed changes to the Migration Act which would have seen people returned to a place where there would have been a 50/50 chance they'd be killed.

We led advocacy against a package of reforms that marginalised international law, limited the ability of Australian courts to scrutinise the Government's actions, brought Temporary Protection Visas back and introduced a new risky system for processing asylum claims.

We also led calls for law reform to ensure refugees have the same right as everyone else to appeal ASIO assessments instead of being indefinitely detained on the basis of secretive decisions which they can't appeal.

Finally, we provided evidence – gathered from Daniel Webb's inspection of Australia's detention centre on Manus – to the Senate's investigation into the 'eminently foreseeable' violence at the centre which led to the death of Reza Berati.

TPVs are just tip of the iceberg. Lurking beneath surface is a suite of appalling changes to how Gov can treat people seeking asylum here & at sea @TomHRLC

*A woman 50% likely to be the victim of an honour killing would be forced to go home and take her chances. Someone at the centre of a blood feud, 50% likely to be executed on return, would also be sent packing. Our own Government would assess these people as being in serious danger and then send them straight back to it. We shouldn't even be contemplating this proposal.*

“ ” DANIEL WEBB  
DIRECTOR OF LEGAL ADVOCACY

# IN THE COMMUNITY

We partner with organisations  
working on the ground to advance  
shared human rights goals

## Stopping the repeal of Australia's racial vilification laws

We played a leading role in the successful campaign to stop the effective repeal of Australia's racial vilification laws. We engaged in prominent public advocacy, created various resources for the community to understand the proposed changes and helped to mobilise efforts against the changes.



## Promoting a smarter criminal justice system that improves community safety and addresses the crisis of Indigenous imprisonment

After playing a key role in forming an unprecedented national coalition of organisations to tackle the crisis of Indigenous over-imprisonment, we were pleased to participate in the launch of the coalition's Change the Record campaign in April. We worked with the campaign and various frontline services to address a range of troubling practices in our justice systems.

We highlighted the various shortcomings of housing child offenders in the Northern Territory's run down adult prison. We raised awareness of the worsening prison statistics when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women – one of the most incarcerated groups in the world. And we promoted smarter ways to keep the community safe such as 'justice reinvestment' programs that seek to address the inequality that often fuels crime.

We also worked with the Aboriginal Legal Service in Western Australia to support the family of Ms Dhu, a 22 year old Yamatji woman who tragically died in custody three days after being locked up for unpaid fines.



*We know that community-based sentencing options can work better than prison and we know that early intervention is more effective and far less costly. Money spent outside of prisons on social services would go a long way as it helps prevent crimes from occurring in the first place.*

“ RUTH BARSON  
SENIOR LAWYER



## Safeguarding democracy

The political attacks on the Australian Human Rights Commission and its President Gillian Triggs were unprecedented and deeply concerning. The Commission's important report on the harm being done to children in immigration detention prompted the attacks which included slashing its funding and seeking to procure its President's resignation. We responded swiftly by condemning the attacks in the media and pointing out the growing gap between what Australia was saying about the importance of national human rights institutions at the UN and what it was doing at home. We also started work on our Safeguarding Democracy Project which joins the dots between the attacks on the Commission and the erosion of a range of other vital democratic and human rights safeguards like press freedom, protest rights, the rule of law and the ability of NGOs to advocate freely. Our report will be launched in the coming year.

## Supporting the campaign for marriage equality

Following on from our work in 2013 on the High Court marriage equality case, we continued to provide important legal support for the marriage equality campaign including promoting the inclusion of transgender and intersex people.

## Standing with remote Aboriginal communities

Announcements by Federal and state governments that foreshadowed the forced closure of remote Aboriginal communities rightly prompted outrage. We joined a coalition of organisations to respond to the planned closures to coordinate advocacy, ensure communities had access to legal support and to scope potential legal challenges to ensure proper consultation and compliance with racial discrimination laws.



*As the government erodes our rights & freedoms, it's also slashing funding to the institutions that hold the government to account.*

“ ” EMILY HOWIE  
DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY  
& RESEARCH

PM Abbott wrong to dismiss oldest continuous culture on planet & 40,000 years of connection to land as a mere "lifestyle choice"  
@TomHRLC

# 22,700

Twitter followers

Facebook supporters

# 8,200

## Extending our media and communications impact

When it comes to prosecuting our messages in the mainstream media, it's safe to say the HRLC has an impact well beyond our size. Over 500 individual media interviews resulted in more than 5,000 appearances in publications at home and overseas.

In addition to securing quality media coverage, we utilise our growing social media network to activate supporters and amplify our message in the community.

We produce eleven editions of *Rights Agenda* annually, an email newsletter containing human rights news, opinions, alerts, and various resources including detailed casenotes of recent local and international human rights judgments – which are then kept in our caselaw database with over 750 casenotes freely available online.

*Daniel Webb*

### **AUSTRALIA MUST NOT SEND ASYLUM SEEKERS TO PLACES WHERE THEY RISK TORTURE OR DEATH**

Herald Sun

*Ruth Barson*

### **JUSTICE TARGETS NEEDED TO REDUCE INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE**

The Canberra Times

*Daniel Webb*

### **THE FLAW IN AUSTRALIA'S DETERRENCE-BASED ASYLUM POLICIES: THEY JUST GIVE PEOPLE WHO LACK OPTIONS ONE LESS**

Guardian Australia



*Hugh de Kretser*

### **ATTACKS ON OUR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ARE PART OF A BROADER DISTURBING TREND**

The Age

# 193,590

Website visitors



Emily Howie

## AUSTRALIA NEEDS TO BE TRANSPARENT ON ARMED DRONES

The Diplomat

Tom Clarke

## INDONESIA LIFTING BAN ON FOREIGN JOURNALISTS IS A STEP FORWARD FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Age

Rachel Ball

## TRUE CONFESSIONS OF A DOUBLE-DIPPER

The Age

Ruth Barson

## ABORIGINAL DEATHS IN CUSTODY MUST END

The Australian

Tom Clarke

## DAWN OF THE JOKO ERA BRINGS OPPORTUNITIES FOR AUSTRALIA

The Australian

Emily Howie

## SRI LANKA IS A REFUGEE-PRODUCING COUNTRY. HERE'S WHY

Guardian Australia

Daniel Webb

## ANOTHER LOOK NEEDED FOR CRIMES BY CHILDREN IN WAKE OF BLESSINGTON, ELLIOTT CASE

Sydney Morning Herald

Daniel Webb

## BALI 9: TIME TO DEATH PENALTY-PROOF OUR AFP

The Drum



# EVENTS & SEMINARS

As well as staff speaking at over 70 events, the Human Rights Law Centre hosted and organized a number of events and seminars which drew together leading thinkers on a broad range of important and topical human rights issues.



**A**t our 10th Annual Human Rights Dinners, Professor Gillian Triggs delivered a keynote address on recent developments in Australia's approach the rule of law and democracy. The two dinners held in Melbourne and Sydney are key events for the human rights community to come together to celebrate achievements and look ahead to challenges. Co-hosted with our friends at Justice Connect, the dinners raised over \$100,000.

**O**ur Ben Schokman joined with Meena Singh, the Principal Legal Officer of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, for a public conversation with Patricia Karvelas, the host of RN Drive, concerning the need to pursue smarter policies that address the causes – rather than the symptoms – of crime in order to break the cycle of Aboriginal over-imprisonment.

**W**e co-hosted a panel of international and Australian experts in discussions in Sydney and Melbourne on the perils of refugee protection for LGBTI refugees and asylum seekers.

**L**eading academic and UN expert Professor Philip Alston addressed the question 'Could Australia really become a police state?' at a free public lecture co-hosted by us, the Melbourne School of Government and the University of Melbourne Law School.



**W**e co-hosted a panel discussion on striking the balance between freedom of religion and equality under the Victorian Equal Opportunity Act featuring Federal Court Judge the Hon. Justice Debbie Mortimer, barrister Kate Eastman SC, Angus McLeay, a leading Christian voice on human rights, theology and sexuality, and our own Anna Brown.



**W**e collaborated with the Wheeler Centre to host a packed event titled ‘Tackling crime the smart way’, featuring a panel with former Attorney-General Rob Hulls, former Commissioner Queensland Corrections Marlene Morison, Magistrate Pauline Spencer, and Aboriginal lawyer, Eddie Cubillo, facilitated by the Law Report’s Damien Carrick.

**W**e collaborated with other organisations to hold the ‘Human Rights Under the Charter’ Conference at which distinguished domestic and international speakers including Lord David Neuberger and Sir Anthony Mason presented a thorough judicial and academic analysis of Victoria’s human rights jurisprudence under the Victorian Human Rights Charter.



**I**n conjunction with the Castan Centre for Human Rights, we hosted a presentation by academic and UN human rights expert Professor Olivier De Schutter on the topic “Towards a New Treaty on Business and Human Rights”.



**T**om Calma AO, a prominent indigenous rights leader, joined Ron Merkel QC, a leading human rights barrister and former Federal Court judge, at one of our public seminars to lead a discussion concerning a range of human rights issues faced by Indigenous Australians.





# OUR DONORS & FUNDERS

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 Natalie Hickey  
 Lauren Hodes  
 Keran Howe  
 John & Helen Howells  
 Andrew Hudson  
 Chris Humphreys  
 Emma Hunt  
 Melinda Jackson

Anne Keely  
 Timothy Kelly  
 Claire Kenna  
 Hannah Kent  
 Stu Knibbs  
 Kelly Lane  
 Jan Lang  
 Kerin Leonard  
 Geoffrey Mabin  
 Rebecca Mackinnon  
 Katie Miller  
 Emma Newnham  
 Mary Nicholson  
 Sally Nicolson  
 Mark Nottingham  
 Michael O'Donovan  
 Mark Orr  
 Mary Petr  
 Avery Poole  
 Juanita Pope  
 Chris Povey  
 Ian Pyman  
 Matthew Racovalis  
 Janis Ramshaw  
 Isabelle Reinecke  
 Lee Rhiannon  
 Janet Rice  
 Brendan Rock  
 Maija Rove  
 Mike Salvaris  
 Arun Saravanamuthu  
 Gerhard Schulz  
 Perambalam Senthoooran  
 Hodaka Shibata  
 Jason Singh  
 Joe Slaven  
 Emma Smallwood  
 Michael Stanton  
 Malcolm Stephens  
 Helga Svendsen  
 Samuel-Thambiah  
 Thaninayakaputhra  
 Claire Toner  
 James Turnbull  
 Anastasios Velkou  
 Rosalind Wallis  
 Georgia Webster  
 Peter Whish-Wilson  
 Eugene White  
 John Williams  
 Catherine Wood

## Pro Bono Support

Pro bono support from leading law firms and barristers is crucial to our impact. Law firms we worked with over the year provided over **7,600 hours** of pro bono legal work to support the HRLC including undertaking legal action, research, writing casenotes and seconding lawyers to us. The value of this work was **over \$3.8 million**. Barristers at the Victorian and NSW bars provided substantial additional pro bono support.

## Major law firm pro bono supporters

**Allens  
 Ashurst  
 Baker & McKenzie  
 Colin Biggers & Paisley  
 DLA Piper**

**Gilbert & Tobin  
 King & Wood Mallesons  
 Lander & Rogers  
 Maurice Blackburn  
 Slater & Gordon**

## Pro bono barrister support

**Matt Albert  
 Emma Bathurst  
 Elizabeth Bennett  
 Sarala Fitzgerald  
 Kathleen Foley  
 Peter Hanks QC  
 Claire Harris  
 David Hume  
 Tim Goodwin  
 Simona Gory  
 Amy Knox  
 Craig Lenehan**

**Eugenia Levine  
 Brendan Lim  
 Rachel Mansted  
 Therese McCarthy  
 Ron Merkel QC  
 Mark Moshinsky QC  
 Alistair Pound  
 Chris Tran  
 Kristen Walker QC  
 Julia Watson  
 Peter Willis SC  
 Nick Wood**

## In kind support

Thank you to Qantas for donating flights for our keynote speaker for the 2015 Human Rights Dinners. Thank you to the many other friends, family and organisations who provided in kind support – donating auction items, agreeing to be auctioned, hosting events and much more.

# THE HRLC TEAM

## The Human Rights Law Centre

### Our staff

Hugh de Kretser – Executive Director

Ben Schokman – Indigenous Rights Unit Director

Rachel Ball – Director of Advocacy

Emily Howie – Director of Advocacy and Research

Tom Clarke – Director of Communications

Anna Brown – Director of Advocacy and Litigation

Daniel Webb – Director of Legal Advocacy

Ruth Barson – Senior Lawyer

Rachael Hambleton – Fundraising Coordinator

Amy Frew – Lawyer

### Seconded lawyers in 2014/15

Amy Frew – Community Legal Centre Graduate  
Lawyer Scheme

Emma Newnham – King & Wood Mallesons

Rhys Ryan – King & Wood Mallesons

### Our volunteers in 2014/15

Anja Wiersing

Thalia Botsis

Jane Doyle

Asher Hirsch

Beatrice Paull

Rebecca Mackinnon

Andre Dao

Maree Skalistas

### Our Board

Michael Kingston (Chair) – Solicitor

Jamie Gardiner – Vice-President, Liberty Victoria

Melanie Schleiger – Manager, Equality Law,  
Victoria Legal Aid

Fiona McLeay – CEO, Justice Connect

Jon Webster – Partner, Allens

Ilana Atlas – Non-executive director

Catherine Branson – Former President of the  
Australian Human Rights Commission and former judge  
of the Federal Court of Australia

Carolyn Creswell – Founder & Managing Director,  
Carman's Fine Foods

### Our Advisory Committee

Chris Sidoti – International human rights consultant  
and former Australian Human Rights Commissioner

Daniel Creasey – Special Counsel, Colin Biggers  
& Paisley

Vanessa Lesnie – Impact Investing Australia

Professor John Tobin – University of Melbourne  
Law School





# RECOGNITION

Each year our impact and staff are recognised by various organisations. This year, we received three awards and a prestigious fellowship to undertake important research.

## **GLBTI Person of the Year**

Our Director of Advocacy and Litigation, Anna Brown, was declared Victorian GLBTI Person of the Year at the inaugural GLOBE (Gay and Lesbian Organisation of Business and Enterprise) community awards. The awards celebrate outstanding and exceptional achievement in Victoria's GLBTI community and were judged by former High Court judge Michael Kirby, Lady Mayoress Emma Page Campbell and *Sunday Age* political state editor Farrah Tomazin. The award recognised that Anna's fingerprints are on almost every legal or political win for the state's gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex residents in the past few years.

Anna was also short listed for an individual award in the Australian Human Rights Commission's 2014 human rights awards. The Tony Fitzgerald Memorial Community Award recognises individuals with a track record in promoting and advancing human rights in the Australian community on a not-for-profit basis.

## **Migration Institute of Australia**

Our outstanding work defending the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers was recognised with the 2014 Migration Law Award by the Migration Institute of Australia and The Australian National University Migration Law Program.

"Whilst opinions on policy may differ, there are at least two things on which all of us should be able to

agree. Firstly, Australia, as a wealthy, developed and fundamentally decent nation should never return a person to serious harm. Secondly, the only way to ensure we don't is to fairly and thoroughly assess individual protection claims. Yet these are the basic principles we've had to go to the High Court to defend," said our Director of Legal Advocacy, Daniel Webb, when accepting the award

## **International Festival of Language and Culture Award**

Hugh de Kretser was presented with the Social Justice and Human Rights Award at the International Festival of Language and Culture in Melbourne, organised by Sirius College and supported by the Australian Intercultural Society.

## **Myer Innovation Fellowship**

In 2014, our Director of Advocacy, Ben Schokman, was awarded a prestigious nine-month Myer Innovation Fellowship to research and design new and innovative approaches to address the over-imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Australia.

The fellowship involved examining "justice reinvestment" initiatives operating overseas and considering their potential application in the Australian context. With the support of The Myer Foundation, Ben travelled around Australia as well as to the United Kingdom, Norway, Germany and the United States to examine best practice examples of community-led initiatives, service redesign and alternative funding models that enable communities to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and, as a consequence, reduce crime and imprisonment rates. Ben's research continues to contribute to various community-based projects being conducted in communities around Australia, as well as the national Change the Record campaign to reduce Indigenous imprisonment and promote safer communities.

THIS IS AN EXTRACT OF THE HRLC'S AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2015.  
FOR A FULL VERSION VISIT WWW.HRLC.ORG.AU

# FINANCIALS

2015 2014

## Statement of Profit or Loss and Other Comprehensive Income for the Year ended 30 June 2015

	\$	\$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Indigenous Rights Unit (Perpetual Trustees; Ron Merkel & Beth Charles; SKAR Foundation; Reichstein Foundation; Trawalla Foundation; Rae & Peter Gunn Family Foundation; Shulu Foundation, Nordia Foundation, Danielle & Daniel Besen Foundation)	111,390	134,667
Asylum Seeker & Refugee Rights Unit (Planet Wheeler Foundation; Australian Communities Foundation, Grenet Foundation, Andrew Sisson)	67,083	
The Myer Foundation – Strategic Litigation Grant	62,834	62,400
Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation	52,464	78,480
Equity Trustees – Phyllis Connor Trust	49,000	
Legal Services Board of Victoria	34,997	179,810
Safeguarding Democracy Project (Reichstein Foundation, The Myer Foundation, Graeme Wood Foundation)	27,328	
R E Ross Trust		10,000
Australian Communities Foundation		15,000
Other Grant Income	24,744	6,984
Private Donations	223,553	121,378
Corporate Donations	64,567	63,431
Interest	9,704	16,997
Event Registrations	3,980	4,164
Human Rights Dinners	96,012	20,827
Other Income	28,584	17,764
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>856,240</b>	<b>731,902</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Occupancy expenses	31,163	29,580
Operational and administration expenses	173,877	125,651
Employee benefits	730,005	691,146
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>935,045</b>	<b>846,377</b>
<b>Total Comprehensive Income</b>	<b>- 78,805</b>	<b>- 114,475</b>

## Statement of Financial Position as at 30 June 2015

<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	611,866	444,459
Trade and other receivables	60,750	41,976
Total current assets	672,616	486,435
<b>Total assets</b>	<b>672,616</b>	<b>486,435</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Trade and other payables	36,603	38,827
Provisions	51,843	53,441
Grants received in advance	279,839	34,997
<b>Total current liabilities</b>	<b>368,285</b>	<b>127,265</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provisions	32,010	8,044
<b>Total non-current liabilities</b>	<b>32,010</b>	<b>8,044</b>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>400,295</b>	<b>135,309</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>272,321</b>	<b>351,126</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Retained earnings	272,321	351,126
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<b>272,321</b>	<b>351,126</b>

# DONATE

Invest in principled human rights leadership. Invest in the Human Rights Law Centre.

With only 5% of our funding this year coming from government, your support is absolutely vital to our work. Donations to the Human Rights Law Centre have been ranked in the Top 50 Philanthropic Gifts ever made in Australia, recognising the incredible impact we've had on Australia's human rights landscape.

The quality, volume and impact of the Human Rights Law Centre's work is only possible because of our partnerships with people like you who understand the importance of principled human rights leadership. All donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible.



**Human Rights Law Centre**

ABN: 31 117 719 267

Level 17  
461 Bourke St  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
Australia

**Fax:** (03) 8636 4455

**Email:** [hugh.dekretser@hrlc.org.au](mailto:hugh.dekretser@hrlc.org.au)

## I want to support the work of the Human Rights Law Centre

- I would like to make a one-off donation  
 I would like to make a recurring donation
- \$50    \$100    \$250    \$500  
 \$1,000    \$2,500    \$5,000    \$10,000  
 Other .....

## Personal Information (\*required information)

First Name\* \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name\* \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to remain anonymous

Phone Number (     ) \_\_\_\_\_

## Credit Card Information

Name on Card\* \_\_\_\_\_

Card Type\* \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Card Expiry\*                      CCV Number\* \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$\* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible

Alternatively, you can make your donation by cheque. Just send it to the address to the left with details of who to make the invoice out to along with a return address.

We stand up for human rights. Over the past year we have:

## IN THE COURTS

- Challenged unjust Northern Territory police powers which disproportionately affect Aboriginal people.
- Contested the Government's power to run and fund offshore detention centres.
- Taken action to ensure women can access reproductive health services without being harassed and intimidated.
- Established important limits on the Government's powers to detain and turn back asylum seekers at sea.

## IN PARLIAMENT

- Secured historic legislative reforms to erase unjust criminal convictions left-over from when homosexuality was a crime.
- Defeated Queensland's unnecessary and discriminatory voter ID laws.
- Pursued greater transparency for Australia's involvement in covert US drone strikes.
- Pushed for law reform to ensure Australian authorities aren't complicit in the death penalty abroad.

## AT THE UNITED NATIONS

- Alerted the UN to how Australia's asylum seeker policies systematically violate the Convention Against Torture and other ill-treatment.
- Highlighted Australia's failure to protect the human rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Supported the passage of a landmark UN resolution on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people.
- Held the Government to account for its increasing disrespect for scrutiny by the UN system.

## IN THE COMMUNITY

- Established an unprecedented coalition of national organisations to 'change the record' on the crisis of over-imprisonment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
- Successfully campaigned to retain strong and effective protections against racial vilification.
- Provided expert legal support for the push for marriage equality.
- Led advocacy against government attacks on institutions and safeguards that protect our democracy and human rights.

### #StandWithUs

[www.hrlc.org.au](http://www.hrlc.org.au)

[www.twitter.com/RightsAgenda](https://twitter.com/RightsAgenda)

[www.facebook.com/HumanRightsLawResourceCentre](https://www.facebook.com/HumanRightsLawResourceCentre)



Human Rights  
Law Centre

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