



Community Footprint

FY2020 REPORT



wotton
kearney +

A founding member of **LEGALIGN**
GLOBAL

Contents

Introduction	3
2019/20 overview	4
Our pro bono work	5
• Secondments and Internships	6
• Helping Refugees & People Seeking Asylum	7
• Secondment to Settlement Services International	8
• Medevac Case Study	9
• Seniors Rights & Homelessness	10
• Human Rights & Law Reform Advocacy	11
Community partnerships	13
• Community Partners & Our Response to COVID-19	14
How else do we help?	17
Responsible business	20
Recognition and awards	22
Our Team	23



Contribution to our community is a way of life at Wotton + Kearney. It's at the core of how we conduct ourselves and how we do business.

Introduction

At Wotton + Kearney we are committed to making a difference in people’s lives through our Pro Bono and Responsible Business program **Community Footprint**.

Contribution to our community is a way of life at Wotton + Kearney. It’s at the core of how we conduct ourselves and how we do business.

Community Footprint was established in January 2012 and is led by Wotton + Kearney Partner Heidi Nash-Smith, recognised as Pro Bono Partner of the Year by Lawyers Weekly in FY19 and FY20.

Community Footprint has since become a key initiative across the firm’s offices. Through our pro bono legal work we assist those who are unable to obtain legal aid or afford legal representation, while our responsible business initiatives enable us to contribute in other ways to charitable organisations.

We have formed long-term partnerships with community legal centres and charities across Australia, New Zealand and beyond, to make sure that our work is targeted to addressing greatest needs and driving positive change in society.

We have pro bono opportunities in each of our Australian offices. There is something for everyone, whether it’s seeing clients in a regular clinic, taking on ad hoc referrals, or contributing to law reform research and writing, and advocacy.

Our responsible business initiatives in the community provide another way to contribute to the work of our charity partners, and a better future for our local and global community and the environment.



By any measure 2020 has been an extraordinary year. Amongst all the challenges in ensuring the viability of our core business, we are delighted and appreciate how our team has continued to engage across the board in moving our Community Footprint program forward in recognition of the significant difficulties that many in our communities have faced across a broad range of topics including mental health.

We are pleased to provide this report on Wotton + Kearney’s pro bono and responsible business activities for the financial year from 1 July 2019 to 30 June 2020. We also outline our program for 2020/21 and our ongoing partnership with Black Dog Institute to raise awareness and break stigma around mental health.



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2019/20 overview

1895

PRO BONO HOURS
LAWYERS + PARALEGALS

95

LAWYERS + PARALEGALS
DOING PRO BONO

1410

COMMUNITY HOURS
LAWYERS + PARALEGALS

221

COMMUNITY HOURS
SUPPORT TEAM

3000+

PRO BONO +
COMMUNITY HOURS
LAWYERS + PARALEGALS

55%

LAWYERS DID PRO
BONO WORK

15 charities provided financial
support through our philanthropy program

9

PRO BONO
CLINICS

3

PRO BONO
INTERNSHIPS

2

PRO BONO
SECONDMENTS



54%

NEW MATTERS FOR
NOT-FOR-PROFITS

46%

NEW MATTERS FOR
HELPING INDIVIDUALS

140

CLIENTS ASSISTED

REFUGEE SUPPORT

Contributed over
780 pro bono
hours to help refugees.



Provided 11 vulnerable people



Represented 37 people
evacuated to
Australia from Nauru
or Manus Island for medical
treatment and to prevent
their deportation.



with pro bono representation in
judicial review of their refugee
status decisions.

Supported Parliament
on King's soup kitchen
through
fundraising
\$650 = 310
soups.



Addressing mental health
issues in the workplace in a
lasting and positive way.



> \$21,000

RAISED FOR
BLACK DOG INSTITUTE



8
MENTAL HEALTH
PRESENTATIONS &
WORKSHOPS

22
MENTAL
WELLBEING
COMMS

OUR COMMUNITY IMPACT

8 LOU'S PLACE BREAKFASTS

22 VOLUNTEERS

60 KINDNESS CALLS



> \$45,000
RAISED FOR OUR
CHARITY PARTNERS

153 TOYS & BOOKS
DONATED TO SMITH
FAMILY APPEAL



34 BOXES / BAGS
OF IN-KIND
DONATIONS MADE

150 XMAS BAGS
DONATED TO LOU'S PLACE
& LAUNCH HOUSING



Our pro bono work

OVERVIEW

Wotton + Kearney's pro bono practice is central to its commitment to access to justice and to reducing inequality.

The firm has invested in a dedicated pro bono team, including a pro bono partner, special counsel, consultant and administrative assistant. The pro bono team is supported by pro bono champions in each Australian office, the broader firm and the resources of our Legalign Global alliance.

Refugee rights is the focus of more than a third of our pro bono program and includes legal representation, advocacy, policy work and law reform through our partnerships with organisations including the Refugee Advice and Casework Service, the Human Rights Law Centre, Refugee Legal and Refugee Council of Australia.

Seniors rights and elder abuse is an increasingly visible area of unmet legal need and an area we are investing in through our partnerships with the Seniors Rights Service NSW and Justice Connect.

Human rights and the rule of law is a growing focus of our work, engaging in advocacy through our pro bono partnerships.



PRO BONO CLINICS

Wotton + Kearney was involved in 9 clinics in FY19/20 which provided opportunities for our lawyers to advise on a wide range of pro bono matters and assist vulnerable people while alleviating unmet legal need. Our volunteer lawyers provide legal information, advice and self-help strategies. Lawyers have continued to undertake many client appointments during the COVID-19 period remotely.



It means a lot to me that I get to give back and serve people who perhaps find themselves in tough and confusing situations in their lives. It may sound idealistic, but I believe every person should have equal access to representation and justice – so when I became a lawyer it felt natural to always get involved in pro bono projects.

Knowing that W+K backed pro bono work, which is so evident from the amazing pro bono program & team, was honestly one of the biggest draws to the firm for me.

YEN TAN, W+K ASSOCIATE

Our pro bono work

SECONDMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS

We regularly offer pro bono internships to law students across universities in Sydney who provide invaluable support to our pro bono program. Our interns also spend time each week with the Seniors Rights Service, adding capacity to the Service.



With the increase in pro bono need arising out of COVID-19, we provided a Senior Associate on secondment to one of our community partners, Settlement Services International, working remotely to help SSI's response to COVID-19.

We also started a paralegal secondment program to Economic Justice Australia to boost its capacity and that of the Welfare Rights Centre.



Completing an internship at Wotton + Kearney has enabled me to get involved in a wide range of pro bono matters and assist vulnerable members of our community. This includes attending the Seniors Rights Service for four hours a week where I was able to take part in the Senior Rights Service Pro Bono Clinic and an Inaugural Legal Intern Intake Program. As well as, working on tasks to support pro bono work the firm is doing for self-represented litigants, refugees and non-for-profit organisations.

Being able to gain this client access was a valuable and rewarding experience as I had the opportunity to help individuals through the legal process. As a law student, this has provided me with valuable exposure to a variety of current issues in our society. Overall, the work Wotton + Kearney does to empower and support vulnerable members of our community is truly inspiring and it was a privilege to be able to contribute to this.

JENNIFER DORIA, W+K INTERN



Our pro bono work

HELPING REFUGEES & PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM

Refugee rights and assisting people seeking asylum is a large focus of our pro bono program and includes legal representation at hearings, advocacy, policy work and law reform through our pro bono partnerships.

We profile three key initiatives in FY2019/20 from providing a secondment to Settlement Services International, our work with Refugee Legal responding to the repeal of the Medevac legislation, and our advocacy and submissions work as part of our growing human rights practice (see page 11).

- Prepared a submission to UN Human Rights Committee on Australia's treatment of refugees and people seeking asylum.
- Successfully advocated for refugee and asylum seeker clients to be released from immigration detention into the community, including reuniting family members.
- Helped refugees with Status Resolution Support Services debts.
- Provided not-for-profit sponsorship to The Kaldor Centre Conference, enabling community partners to attend and engage in the conference.
- Partnered with CareerSeekers to provide internship opportunities to refugees.
- Provided a guest speaker for University of Technology Sydney Refugee Law & Practice students.
- During World Refugee Week, W+K supported social enterprise Parliament on King, which provides employment to refugees and people seeking asylum. We fundraised to donate over 300 soups to people in need through The Soup of Human Kindness' - their pay-what-you-can soup kitchen.



780+

pro bono hours

contributed to help refugees, through partnerships with Refugee Advice and Casework Service, the Human Rights Law Centre, Refugee Legal & Refugee Council of Australia.



11

vulnerable people

Were provided with pro bono representation in judicial review of their refugee status decisions.



37

people evacuated

to Australia from Nauru or Manus Island for medical treatment and to prevent their deportation were represented.

Our pro bono work

SECONDMENT TO SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL

April to September 2020 saw one of our Senior Associates, Michael Fung, seconded to Settlement Services International (SSI), a community organisation and social business focused on assisting the vulnerable, including refugees and people seeking asylum.

Michael Fung worked together with SSI's in house legal team as a much needed legal resource during the COVID-19 period.



I am currently doing a part time pro bono secondment in SSI's legal team as a legal counsel. I have come into SSI as a legal counsel during unprecedented times – being COVID-19. In fact, my first day was to come into SSI's office and take a laptop to work from home!

I provide advice to SSI's business units, ranging from 'business as usual' matters to COVID-19 related matters and no two days are the same. I will take on board the lessons learnt from seeing firsthand how a business operates and how the advice impacts the business. There are many legal arguments being tested and novel issues cropping up as COVID-19 continues to affect our lives.

I am grateful I have the opportunity to assist SSI when its resources are stretched in dealing with COVID-19 related issues. I also enjoy the challenge of dealing with the breadth of issues and mitigating the legal risks for non-for-profits. I will be on the lookout to see how I can continue contributing to the W+K Community Footprint Program.

MICHAEL FUNG, W+K SENIOR ASSOCIATE



SSI recently had Michael Fung, a Senior Associate from Wotton + Kearney, on secondment. Michael worked as part of SSI's in-house legal team on a part time basis from April to September 2020. This secondment was most definitely helpful and useful as it enabled SSI to respond to numerous legal issues which arose out of COVID-19, as well as other commercial law matters the legal team ordinarily advises on. As a NFP we operate in circumstances where every bit helps.

**KOUSAI ELALI, HEAD OF LEGAL –
SETTLEMENT SERVICES INTERNATIONAL**

Our pro bono work

MEDEVAC CASE STUDY

Helping the transfer of critically ill refugees and people seeking asylum in offshore detention to Australia for urgent medical treatment.

In November 2019, a team of lawyers and paralegals across our Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane offices urgently assisted a number of men on Nauru and Papua New Guinea in critical medical condition needing transfer to Australia for treatment under the Medevac legislation.

The Medevac legislation was passed by the Australian Government in early 2019 to provide critically ill refugees and people seeking asylum held in offshore detention a pathway to be temporarily transferred to Australia for urgent medical treatment which could not be provided offshore, on the recommendation of 2 independent doctors.

Our work in advocating to the Minister and preparing applications to the Federal Court was time critical as this was the only pathway for medical evacuation with only days to assist before the Medevac legislation was repealed on 4 December 2019.



I wanted to take a moment to recognise the incredible work done by the Wotton + Kearney team in partnership with Refugee Legal this year – you provided us with capacity when we were not able to place referrals and ultimately, obtained outcomes for 4 clients who would not have otherwise had an opportunity to have their cases heard.

This contribution was critical in our efforts to assist the most vulnerable people on PNG and Nauru. Thank you so much again for your willingness to step up to the challenge and be an essential part of the solution.

BIANCA DETOMA, VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR, REFUGEE LEGAL



I was part of a team which helped a number of men in Papua New Guinea in critical medical condition who needed Medevac transfer to Australia for treatment. I helped a young man from Iran who had been detained on Manus Island since August 2013. He arrived when he was 18 years old. Since that time, his mental state had deteriorated significantly. He had lost weight. He felt hopeless and he had suicidal thoughts. He had told mental health care workers that he had been subjected to trauma and torture in the past. He also had a variety of other medical conditions that were not being adequately treated whilst in PNG.

My role was to advocate for him to ensure the department heard his application for Medevac transfer. Our work was particularly time sensitive because of the pending repeal of the medevac laws. Ultimately, we had all of our matters heard.

I feel I effected real change doing work that felt important and made a real difference to somebody's life. Wotton + Kearney obtained outcomes for vulnerable people who otherwise would not have had the opportunity to have their cases heard.

EMMA BRAY, W+K SENIOR ASSOCIATE

Our pro bono work

SENIORS RIGHTS & HOMELESSNESS

Seniors rights and homelessness is an increasingly visible area of unmet legal need which we invest in through our pro bono partnerships with the Seniors Rights Service NSW and Justice Connect.

In Sydney and Melbourne we accept referrals of matters concerning seniors' rights and homelessness. In addition, our Sydney office has partnered with the Senior Rights Service to assist vulnerable older people, particularly where they have been subject to abuse.

Our lawyers regularly provide advice to older persons through a pro bono telephone advice clinic on a range of legal issues. We regularly provide additional support to Seniors Rights Service through our pro bono internship program.



I am involved in assisting one of our pro bono clients in relation to a property dispute. As a result of the dispute, she became homeless. While it is not clear if we will be able to resolve the property dispute in her favour, I have been able to assist her in other ways including to advocate on her behalf in relation to housing and utilities issues (as she struggles to speak on the phone), as well as investigate her situation under the Guardianship and Administration Act.

The impact for her is that we have provided her with a safe space and one where she feels heard and reassured. Although to us making a phone call might seem insignificant, for her it has given her a voice.

LAURA JEAN, W+K ASSOCIATE



Wotton + Kearney has assisted the Seniors Rights Service to increase its capacity to help protect the human rights of vulnerable older people, particularly where they have been subject to abuse. Their lawyers assist with our pro bono Telephone Advice Clinic which assists with a range of issues including wills, power of attorney, guardianship and elder abuse. This assistance, which W + K provides, in taking action to overcome discrimination or infringements of human rights within Australia has a positive and direct effect on the lives of elderly vulnerable people.

The firm has also taken on pro bono referrals of more complex matters where SRS resources are too constrained to offer the full legal service that particular cases of abuse or financial exploitation demand. Wotton + Kearney have also assisted our service with pro bono legal advice that has helped our own operations.

W+K has facilitated a specialist internship program where interns have been placed in the SRS office. We have found this to be a valuable experience and so too have the interns themselves who have now nominated to become volunteers at SRS.

THOMAS COWEN, PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR – SENIORS RIGHTS SERVICE

Our pro bono work

HUMAN RIGHTS & LAW REFORM ADVOCACY

This year saw continued growth in our work to support community partners engaging in human rights and law reform advocacy, in areas including refugee rights, climate justice, economic rights and disability rights.

Our knowledge of refugee law, developed through years of undertaking client casework, helped us to prepare a detailed report for the Refugee Council of Australia to use as its civil society submission to the United Nations Human Rights Committee. This 80-page report assessed the extent to which Australia has implemented the recommendations made by Committee in its most recent concluding observations to bring Australia in line with its international human rights obligations. We also engaged in research to support the work of the Human Rights Law Centre in Australia on refugee family separation, and the International Refugee Assistance Project in New York which is mapping options across the globe for refugee reunion.



Pro bono is highly supported by W+K. I have been able to provide legal assistance relating to significant events that have affected Australia – being the catastrophic bushfires and COVID-19. Being able to prepare a submission to the Bushfire Royal Commission, undertake research in respect of climate emergencies and prepare a legal brief to the UN, as part of the Universal Periodic Review of Australia’s human rights record, has been highly rewarding. The brief I prepared on the human rights implications of the COVIDSafe App, has now been published by Digital Rights Watch.

JOHANNA LAWLOR, W+K ASSOCIATE

An emerging area of focus, particularly in light of the catastrophic bushfire season in Australia, is climate justice and human rights. We assisted the Climate Justice Programme by preparing content for their submission to the “Bushfire Royal Commission” and assisted with the research and drafting of an article on the human rights implications of calling a climate emergency, expanded to include consideration of emergency powers in the context of COVID-19. We also assisted Economic Justice Australia (EJA) with the design of a factsheet on bushfire-related emergency payments

With the explosion of social security legal need as a result of COVID-19 job losses in Australia, we have started a secondment program to EJA. One morning a week, paralegals support the efforts of EJA to rapidly communicate changes in law and policy and how these changes impact on people needing income support. We also assisted EJA with preparing a draft submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on homelessness.

We prepared a brief on human rights implications of COVIDsafe App and contributed to the gender equality section of Australia’s civil society report to the United Nations, the Universal Periodic Review of Australia’s human rights record.

To assist with developing new pro bono referral pathways, we prepared a research paper on the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the accessibility of the review process for NDIS decisions. To assist with the establishment of a new clinic to facilitate access to justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people we drafted a memorandum of understanding between National Justice Project and various universities which plan to provide lawyer supervised student legal complaint-writing clinics.

All of our work in this area relies on the expertise of our community partners which have increased capacity to drive effective advocacy with our support. We were proud to amplify the advocacy messages of our community partners in Law Week communications focusing on the legal needs of refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia, people experiencing homelessness, domestic violence and older people during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Community partnerships

We partner with one main charity each year to focus our advocacy, fundraising and volunteering efforts.

Recent partnerships have included International Justice Mission Australia, OzHarvest and So They Can and have seen Wotton + Kearney staff and clients travel to Cambodia for a cycle challenge, Kenya for the Maasai Mara Marathon as well as providing hands on support and volunteering here in Australia and New Zealand.

PARTNERING WITH BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Our charity partner from July 2019 through to the end of 2021 is Black Dog Institute. Black Dog Institute is a world leader in the diagnosis, prevention and treatment of mood disorders such as depression and bipolar.

By partnering with Black Dog Institute, each of our offices have the opportunity to fundraise, advocate for the Institute and be educated about mental health. This is providing us with a real opportunity to address mental health issues in the workplace in a lasting and positive way.

Fundraising for Black Dog Institute in FY2019/20 has ranged from office bake sales, Christmas themed activities, sausage sizzles, half marathon moonlight walk, Melbourne fun run and #14DaysYourWay challenge seeing W+K staff in friendly competition with client DUAL raise over \$10,000 while undertaking individual physical and creative challenges. We are also holding regular presentations on mental health issues.

In August 2021, a team from Wotton + Kearney is looking forward to undertaking the Larapinta Trail, with the firm aiming to raise \$100,000 for Black Dog Institute and to do our part in creating a mentally healthier world .

Alongside the partnership with Black Dog Institute, our New Zealand offices have set up a mental health awareness charity, Life Squared Trust, in memory of its former partner Andrew McIntyre.



Thanks to both teams [in the #14DaysYourWay Challenge], Black Dog Institute will be able to continue to develop practical evidence-based resources that provide individuals, workplaces, schools, and health professionals with the tools they need to cope in the face of uncertainty.

The team at Black Dog have been so impressed by how engaged and supportive the DUAL and W+K participants have been in the challenge.

CAITLIN BLOOR, COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING OFFICER - BLACK DOG INSTITUTE

Community partnerships

OUR RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Wotton + Kearney has a strong culture of community contribution through volunteering and charitable giving that is targeted to reducing inequality.

COVID-19 hits people particularly hard when they are already at risk or vulnerable. We assist some of these people through our pro bono practice, such as refugees and people seeking asylum, people at risk of homelessness, those experiencing domestic violence and the elderly. We have been able to pivot our pro bono response so that we can continue this work, including clinic work, whilst working remotely. You can read more about this work here:

<https://www.lawyersweekly.com.au/biglaw/29163-supporting-vulnerable-people-during-covid-19>

While some charity events couldn't go ahead as planned, we found other ways to continue to support our charity partners during this period.



LAUNCH HOUSING

Donated grocery vouchers to Launch Housing's Southbank centre to provide to clients experiencing homelessness



LOU'S PLACE

Proceeds from W+K's inaugural Charity Tennis Tournament were used by Lou's Place to meet its COVID-19 response.

Donated essential items via an online grocery shop so Lou's Place can continue to provide support to their clients. Our staff provide **Kindness Calls** to at-risk women who are socially isolated.



SHARE THE DIGNITY

W+K **purchased over 60 Period Briefs** through Share the Dignity's partnership with LoveLuna. 100% of the briefs were donated to Share the Dignity's clients.

LOCAL OFFICE CHARITY PARTNERS

We support our local office charities by regular donations, fundraising and volunteering opportunities all year round. During Homelessness Week we run an additional donation drive and raise awareness how we can support those at risk or experiencing homelessness.

LAUNCH HOUSING

Melbourne

Launch Housing supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness including through their crisis accommodation centre in Southbank.

We support Launch Housing to help the homeless in our community. We provide regular donations of toiletries and good quality used clothing.



Thank you so much for your generous donations for Launch Housing Southbank. These donations support vulnerable people in your community who are experiencing homelessness and makes a huge difference to the lives of the people we work with.

ANDREW KOEHRER, COORDINATOR OF OPERATIONS – LAUNCH HOUSING SOUTHBANK

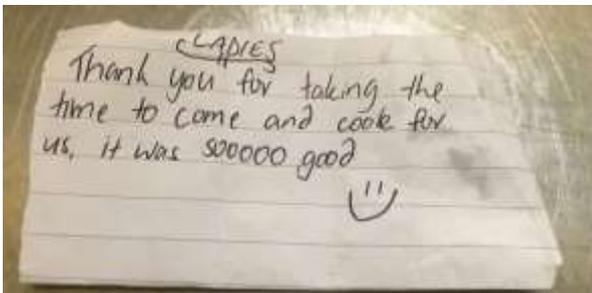
Community partnerships

LOU'S PLACE

Sydney

Lou's Place is a day time women's refuge in Kings Cross, providing assistance and support for women in crisis and who have often experienced complex trauma, domestic violence and homelessness.

We support Lou's Place with regular donations of toiletries and good quality used clothing. We cook breakfasts for Lou's Place clients once a month, and provide additional support on key dates such as Valentine's Day where the women need extra love.



Thank you for the contribution you have made to us throughout the year. As a community based, privately run facility, we rely on the generosity and commitment from those who are as concerned as we are for the disadvantaged women part of our community. We are very grateful for your donations and on site cooking each month. Thank you for your wonderful support.

CAROL BERG – THE MARMALADE FOUNDATION WHICH FUNDS & OPERATES LOU'S PLACE

INAUGURAL CHARITY TENNIS EVENT

We hosted our Inaugural Charity Tennis Event in October 2019 in Sydney raising over \$16,000 for Lou's Place. Over 150 people attended including many of our clients: Allianz, Baker Tilly, Goodman, GSA Insurance Brokers, Lloyd Warwick International, Mason Stevens, McLarens, MDD, Mirabelle, Sedgwick, Charles Taylor Adjusting, SURA, Procure Group, Crawford & Co, Vero, Chubb and Integra.



Community partnerships

SHARE THE DIGNITY

Brisbane & Perth

Share the Dignity brings dignity to women and girls doing it tough by collecting & distributing sanitary items to women in need going without basic essentials. We support Share the Dignity, to help support women in need. We regularly donate sanitary items, with both offices running fundraisers.



GRATIS FREE STORE

Auckland

Our staff volunteered at Gratis Free Store in Auckland by helping to collect unsold perishable food from local cafes and eateries and distributing them the same evening to those who need it.



SHOE BOX CHRISTMAS

Auckland

Each year our staff volunteer to provide a shoe box full of presents to children in need. Shoebox Christmas delivers Christmas presents, wrapped in shoeboxes to kids who could do with an extra smile on Christmas Day by working alongside low decile schools, pre-schools, Women's Refuges, and community organisations.

PORIRUA COLLEGE

Wellington

Porirua College is a restorative, multicultural school which works through a learning coach system to develop positive relationships and solve problems. Since 2014 the Wellington office have focused their volunteering initiatives to work with Porirua College Students. Out of this relationship, the Andrew McIntyre Memorial Scholarship was created.

Andrew McIntyre was a founding partner of Wotton + Kearney's Wellington office. Andrew passed away in 2016.

The Wellington office had been developing its relationship with Porirua College students for some years prior. After Andrew passed away, the Firm set up a scholarship in memory of Andrew and his commitment to the students at the school.

The scholarship provides to one chosen student each year, a \$1,000 payment for three years towards their university fees. Each year the scholarship will be awarded to a student who has excelled at school and has been accepted at a tertiary institution.



How else do we help?

CANCER COUNCIL'S AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST MORNING TEA

Every year our offices come together for Australia's Biggest Morning Tea. This year each of our offices hosted a virtual morning tea, wearing a 'pop of colour' to fundraise and raise awareness.



INNER CITY LEGAL CENTRE 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In October 2019, we hosted Inner City Legal Centre's 10th anniversary of their Safe Relationships Project (SRP), with Attorney-General Mark Speakman MP as the keynote speaker. SRP is a court and legal support service for LGBTIQ people who are experiencing domestic violence.



MOVEMBER

We support **Movember** each year to raise awareness of men's health issues, such as prostate cancer, testicular cancer, and men's suicide. We ran fundraising morning teas during November 2019 to support W+K men and their 'mos' and to continue the conversation and raise funds for men's health.



OZ HARVEST COOKING FOR A CAUSE

In September 2019, our Melbourne team, along with client AIG took to the kitchen, transforming rescued food into restaurant-quality meals that were then delivered directly to disadvantaged communities.



How else do we help?

RUOK DAY

Every year our offices come together and host a morning tea to raise awareness about RUOK Day and suicide prevention. We ran a workshop, in partnership with Black Dog Institute, presented by David Westgate.



SOLAR BUDDY LIGHT LUNCH

In September 2019, our Brisbane team came together over lunch and assembled solar lights which were gifted to children living in remote communities in Papua New Guinea to enable them to study after dark.



SYDNEY PEACE PRIZE

Each year we support the Sydney Peace Prize, awarded by the Sydney Peace Foundation promoting peace with justice and the practice of nonviolence. In November 2019, we along with Steve Lancken of Negocio, hosted a pre-drinks event before the lecture, inviting members of our pro bono and charity partners.



THE SMITH FAMILY TOY & BOOK APPEAL

Sadly thousands of kids go without a Christmas present simply because their family can't afford it. Our offices collected over 150 toys and books to help bring a smile to a child's face on Christmas Day. Our Perth office additionally ran a bake-off raising \$300.



How else do we help?

W+K COMMUNITY WEEK

W+K Community Week runs together with Law Week 18-22 May 2020, and is a time to reflect on and celebrate the contribution that W+K makes to its community. During this week we profiled 5 solicitors and an intern about the pro bono and community work they had engaged in at W+K.

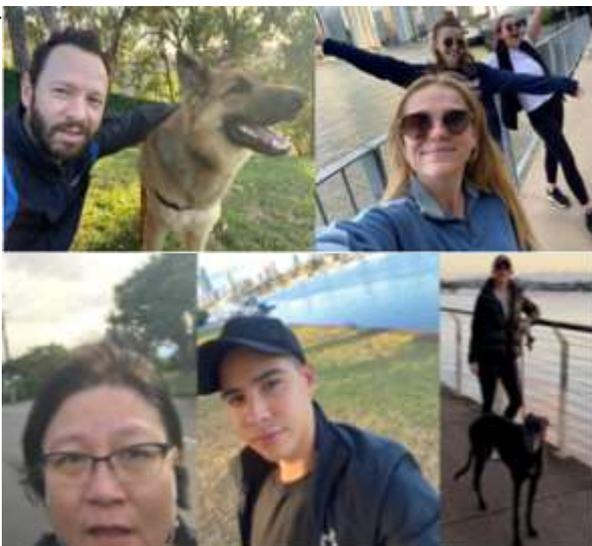


Even an hour of work on a project really can help make a difference. It really is a valuable experience to learn, give back and collaborate, so everyone is a winner.

NICOLE HARTLE, SOLICITOR

Walk for Justice

During W+K Community Week, staff from our Brisbane office joined the LawRight virtual Legal Walk raising funds to ensure Queenslanders have access to justice.



Blog Posts & Features

In light of the impact of COVID-19 on those most vulnerable in our community, we published a series of blog posts on LinkedIn to highlight the work that our pro bono and community partners do to support people affected by the pandemic in some of our key areas of focus: seniors rights, homelessness, domestic violence, and refugees and people seeking asylum.

[Homelessness, Domestic Violence, Seniors Rights and Refugee Rights](#)

W+K Website, May 2020

[Pro bono practice supports vulnerable people during the pandemic](#)

Lawyers Weekly, July 2020

[Supporting vulnerable people during COVID-19](#)

Lawyers Weekly, August 2020

Responsible business

At Wotton + Kearney we take seriously our role as a responsible global citizen and playing our part to help protect our environment, eradicate modern slavery and encourage diversity and inclusion through our own business practices through which we aim to lead.

UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FY2020/21 will see us aligning our Community Footprint program with the UN Sustainable Development Goals with the following key areas of focus – Gender Equality, Reduced Inequalities, Climate Action, Peace Justice and Strong Institutions.



MODERN SLAVERY

Through our 2018/19 charity partnership with International Justice Mission Australia, a global anti-slavery organisation with the rule of law at its core, we provided pro bono legal advice, including a legal secondment. This work was done in the context of the anticipated passage of Modern Slavery legislation in Australia, which has now become law.

We are committed to reviewing our own supply chains to ensure socially responsible choices. We run firm-wide training and client presentations to educate and help create the change needed to stop modern slavery and human trafficking.

ENVIRONMENT

Our Environment & Sustainability Committee meets every quarter. Some of our key environmental initiatives include:

- **Ethical Suppliers** - supporting ethically, environmentally and socially responsible suppliers
- **Recycling Print Cartridges** - offices have special recycling bins located next to the printer for all empty print cartridges
- **Stationery & pen recycling**
- **Document destruction** - secure destruction of documents through recycling
- **Plant life in the office** - improving air quality, reducing stress and just looking good!
- **Volunteering** - various volunteering initiatives that try to further our environmental focus
- **General kitchen recycling bins including for takeaway coffee cups**
- **W+K Keep Cup** - in November 2019 W+K Keep Cups were distributed to the firm to reduce use of disposable coffee cups



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The wonderful mix of personal traits, experiences, skillsets and perspectives that make up Wotton + Kearney are assets to be leveraged. We are committed to the following actions to develop a culture where everyone thrives:

- A clearly articulated D&I commitment and strategy that is visibly driven by senior leaders and the W+K Diversity Council.
- A review of Firm policies and practices relating to recruitment, performance evaluation, talent management, remuneration, and promotion.
- Level and role-appropriate training and capability development programs around diversity, unconscious bias, and inclusion that reach all employees in positions of leadership/supervision, and any staff involved in recruitment, performance evaluation and promotion decision-making.
- A mainstream FLEX policy available to all employees, for any reason.

We have incorporated our refugee focus area into our D&I initiatives by partnering with CareerSeekers to provide internship opportunities to refugees and by recruiting staff from a refugee background through the Asylum Seeker Centre and the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre.

Our sponsorship of the Lloyds Dive In Festival signals our commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in the local insurance market. In 2019, we co-sponsored the first industry-wide survey ever undertaken in the insurance market on inclusion. You can access the *Deep Dive on Inclusion: Inclusive Culture Survey* [here](#).



EMPOWERING OUR WOMEN

International Women's Day

We celebrated **International Women's Day** in March 2019 in conjunction with Ladies@AILA by keynote speaker Tanya Vaughan-Jackson of Dress for Success and panellists Belinda Spiers (Suncorp Head of Legal), Susan Donaldson (Berkshire Hathaway Head of Claims) and Sean O'Connor (W+K Partner). We also enjoyed a presentation "I am a woman, hear me roar".



Working Mother's Program

W+K offered the 'How Do You Do It?' program to working mothers to assist them to achieve success at work and home and to create a network of mums across the firm.

Thrive

W+K launched **Thrive@W+K**, a leadership program designed to empower our amazing women to fulfil their potential and progress their careers.

In December 2019 we ran two networking events in Melbourne and Sydney whilst supporting our local office charities. We sourced, packed and donated 150 Christmas gift bags for Lou's Place and Launch Housing to provide to people experiencing homelessness.



Recognition & awards

We are honoured to be recognised through the following awards for making an impact that matters for our clients, communities and people.

WINNER:

PRO BONO PARTNER OF THE YEAR 2018 AND 2019
PARTNER OF THE YEAR AWARDS (HEIDI NASH-SMITH)

FINALIST:

PRO BONO LAWYER OF THE YEAR 2018 AND 2019
Women in Law Awards (Heidi Nash-Smith)

FINALIST:

PRO BONO LAWYER OF THE YEAR 2019
30 under 30 Awards (David Frew)

FINALIST:

PRO BONO PROGRAM OF THE YEAR 2019
Australian Law Awards



Community footprint team



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