

Court Network



# Court Network Annual Report



2017-2018

**“Without your service I am not sure how I would have coped on the day and in the lead up to my court matter. The volunteer who supported me on the day helped keep me grounded and eased my fears – she had a magical presence and calmed me down”**

– Court user

## About Us

**Court Network’s community service is an important component of access to justice, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged people who may be attending court for the first time, lack knowledge about what is expected of them, feel frightened or unsafe, are representing themselves, or just need someone to listen, provide support, and assist them to navigate the court system.**

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### **Our Vision**

To provide the community with volunteers who stand beside, empower and instil confidence in all court users.

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### **Our Mission**

To provide support, information and referral to persons attending court and to advocate for the needs of all court users.

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# The President & Executive Director's Report

Dear colleagues, friends and supporters,

It is our great pleasure to present to you Court Network's 2017-18 Annual Report. As you will see, it has been another rewarding yet challenging year.

While the foundations of our unique service model remain the same, the ever changing and complex landscape in which we operate puts an onus on us to be agile, responsive and highly professional. The development and implementation of the Service Charter has given Court Network the opportunity to evolve and adapt as an organisation. It has also been an opportunity for both Networkers and staff to re-engage with our mission and vision and what is at the heart of what we do – helping court users to feel empowered along the pathway to accessing justice.

The Service Charter captures the universal elements of our service model. It sets out the standards that the community can expect from Court Network and provides guidance to Networkers about their role and responsibilities. It is a framework that drives and enables consistency and high-quality service provision. Over the past financial year, the Court Network team delivered workshops across Queensland and Victoria that were attended by over 250 Networkers. Further implementation and consolidation of the Service Charter will remain our key focus in the coming year.

Any change, even when for the better, can be unsettling and is often accompanied with challenges. As our change process continues, it is vital now more than ever, that every member of the Court Network team commits to collaboration, trust and mutual respect. As Carmel Benjamin, our Founder, states in her book when reflecting on the 'dream to reality' journey: "As in all dreams, its vision had been effortless. Turning it into reality, had been exciting and at times very demanding." Leading the organisation through change has had its difficulties, however, it has been made easier through the support of such an amazing and committed team – our Networkers and paid staff - who throughout the past year have remained unwavering in their commitment to Court Network's vision and the work that they do.

Last year was also marked by a significant renewal of the workforce with 99 new Networkers trained and supported through a framework that comprehensively covers the learning and development needs of Networkers across the lifespan of their volunteering with us – from recruitment to retirement.

Innovation and service enhancement continue to sit at the core of our work. In Victoria, our efforts in improving access to justice in the area of family violence resulted in exceptional achievements, from securing funding from Court Services Victoria that integrates the Court Network enhanced family violence model within the Specialist Family Violence Courts roll out, to our collaboration with Victoria Legal Aid in the implementation of Family Advocacy and Support Services at Melbourne and Dandenong Family Courts.

In Queensland the Court Network team had to deal with the threat of a funding reduction as a result of proposed changes to Commonwealth Legal Aid funding. At one point it appeared that this would require withdrawal of our services in the Queensland Supreme and District Courts and in QCAT but fortunately

changes to the Commonwealth decision made this unnecessary. We were also assisted by a grant from the Queensland Public Trustee of \$50,000 per year for three years to support services for vulnerable tribunal users at QCAT. We would like to thank the Honourable Justice David Thomas, now President of the Commonwealth Administrative Appeals Tribunal, and Ms Mary Shortland, the former Executive Director of QCAT, for their helpful advice and moral support in obtaining this grant.

Funding provided by the Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney General has enabled the Queensland Court Network team to strengthen its services in the area of family violence. It now provides services in the Townsville Specialist Domestic Violence Court and has an enhanced role in the Brisbane Domestic Violence Court at breach and contested hearings.

Another important initiative has been the development of the publication "Guide to Supporting Victims of Crime through the Court Process" which will assist independent support persons to be able to provide better service to adult victims of crime in regional areas. The publication was produced by the Queensland Victim Support Unit, through its Outreach Link Project.

Our efforts to improve our practice model through innovating and continuously building the capacity of our workforce has been recognised through the second cycle of the Court Network Accreditation Assessment process conducted in December 2017. Court Network has met all requirements of the Human Service Standards and Governance and Management Standards specifically under (i) Building Quality Organisations and (ii) Sustaining Quality External Relationships.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to many individuals, but first we would like to thank our Networkers and acknowledge the work that they have done in assisting 190,595 court users in the last financial year. Without you, our organisation would simply not exist. We are grateful and honoured to work with such passionate individuals, who donate their time and energy to assist court and tribunals users across Victoria and Queensland - and help change for the better not only their experiences of the justice system but, quite often, their lives too.

We also wish to acknowledge the ongoing support of many Court Network friends and supporters, in particular our founder, Carmel Benjamin AM, who continues to inspire us all every day and reflect on the significance of our mission in the work we do. Barbara Rozenes has also played a valuable role as our Court Network Ambassador and we would like to thank her for her tireless work.

We were honoured during the year to have the Honourable Anne Ferguson, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria join our esteemed group of patrons - Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, Governor of Victoria and former Family Court judge and the Honourable Catherine Holmes, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland. We also wish to acknowledge our outgoing patrons, the Honourable Diana Bryant AO, former Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia and the Honourable Marilyn Warren AO, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Victoria. We are most grateful for our patrons' continuing support.

Our thanks also go to our many partners and stakeholders – our funders, heads of jurisdictions, members of the judiciary, court staff and our broader community partners and organisations who support us and with whom we work closely.

And finally, to our Board and paid staff – thank you for your diligence, commitment and hard work.

The end of the last financial year also marked an end of a significant period in the history of Court Network with the farewell of Dr. Melanie Heenan, the outgoing Executive Director of the Court Network. We want to express our deep appreciation for Melanie's hard work, passion and professionalism. She has made an immense contribution to Court Network over the last six years and has been the driving force behind all that we have achieved. Melanie led us through a period of far-reaching change and from which we have emerged stronger and well positioned as a valued and respected court service. Thank you, Melanie.

We look forward to continuing to innovate our services and working with our staff, networkers and partner organisations to improve the experience of thousands of court users.

**The Hon Marcia Neave AO**

President

**Maya Avdibegovic**

Executive Director

**"As I step away from Court Network, I see a workforce which remains steadfastly committed to the needs of people coming to court. And I take with me the magic of seeing it done by volunteers who each day in 33 courts across Victoria and Queensland take on the role of navigating people through the rigors of a system they know almost nothing about. They empower, they instill confidence, they stand staunchly beside them and say – 'I can help'. It's been magic to watch."**

– Dr Melanie Heenan  
Former Executive Director of Court Network

## From Our Founder

**"We share the same dream. The dream of a fairer world, one in which disadvantaged and frightened people have the support and assistance that will help them manage their lives more successfully."**

**Your presence in the court has increased the social capital of our community beyond measure. By this I mean that individually and collectively you are contributing to the social good by helping, supporting and caring for others. You enrich the community by your gentle presence in the formality of the court. Each and every one of you, by being there, by offering yourself in a non-judgmental manner and with genuine kindness and concern to distressed people who are compelled to appear in the sometimes hostile adversarial environment of the court, provides a community enrichment beyond measure.**

**To the organisation you are a treasure! You are all that is precious in our community as you give yourself with concern for the sometimes dispossessed and disadvantaged. By your presence in the court, you represent selflessness in a society that is so often seen as the ME community. In the old fashioned sense you represent goodness and compassion believing that defendants and their families, witnesses, victims and their families are entitled to equal care and concern."**

– Carmel Benjamin AM, Founder  
Address to Court Networker volunteers,  
November 2017

THE COURTS

Helen Garner

## The comforters

**I couldn't work out** who they were, but on days when none of them passed, I missed them: quiet middle-aged women who moved with a light tread along the corridor of the Supreme Court of Victoria, where I sat waiting for the long, sad trial I was following to resume. Sometimes one of them would pause near my bench. They never launched into taxing conversation, but merely offered me a moment of their company. I thought of them as the comforters. Once another of them brought me a spare lamington on a plate. The heavy timber door through which she disappeared was labelled "Court Network". I wondered if I would ever have the nerve to knock on that door.

**A young African man**, very black and very slender, is sitting alone in a sunny foyer on the ninth floor of Melbourne's County Court. She's spotted him, the court networker who's letting me shadow her for a morning, but right now she's in a huddle with two lawyers and an angry woman who in her staggering, mythological beauty resembles a goddess in Homer – Athena disguised as a human. Her son, a drug dealer and ice user, is about to be dealt with inside the court for taking his girlfriend against her will, skull-dragging her, bashing her and fracturing her nose in a small-town Coles Express. He is pleading guilty to a list of charges that fills half an A4 page in a tiny type. His solicitor, a pale young hipster, lays out for the mother the four principles of sentencing. The goddess turns away – oh, her noble profile, her half-closed eyes, her exquisitely curled lips. She could not give a shit that general deterrence is one of the pillars of the system. The barrister tactfully suggests that her son's violent deeds were "out of character". "No," she says, raising her chin. "He's a very fiery person." The networker is forbidden to offer legal advice, but she is trying to make the goddess see that it won't help her son if she blows her top in court: the networker offers to sit with her in the foyer when the CCTV footage of his rampage is screened.

While she is hosing this down I glance over at the African man. He gives me a nonchalant grin. Soon the networker approaches him. Is he a witness? Does he need any help? "No," he says with a cheerful shrug. "I'm an interpreter." They both laugh and she steps back.

Many an assumption is overturned here, many a knockback delivered. Networkers touch down, offer a connection, and if it's declined they withdraw – though often, later in the day when the strain has begun to tell, a court user may be grateful to see a familiar face. Eighty per cent of court network volunteers are women, but more men are joining, and more are needed, especially in the growing area of family violence. It's not a job for the faint-hearted, but there's a delicacy to their skill. They call these approaches "outreach". It awes me to watch them scan a foyer full of confused and frightened strangers, and dive in cold.

**A white man** is standing with his back against a glass balustrade in the lobby of the courts where family violence matters are heard. His arms are folded across his chest and his feet planted wide – the posture that says *Do not fuck with me*. My instinct is to pass at speed, but my networker makes a beeline for him. She runs through her patter. He tilts his head as if listening, but his eyes are fixed on the floor, and his face with its weather-beaten skin and bristly little moustache is as hard as a fist. I'm embarrassed by our bourgeois niceness, but the networker quietly waits. He drags his eyes up and hits her with a cold stare. She doesn't flinch. He mutters between clenched teeth that he doesn't need anything – his ex is in that court over there and he's waiting to be called in. I'm about to take a step back when the networker leans forward a fraction of an inch, keeping her eyes on his, and suddenly he starts to blurt out lumps of speech. He's a Hells Angel. Hells Angels are *not* a gang. He's been "reviled and discriminated" all his life. He had three houses and two bikes and he's had to sell the lot because his ex ... all his stuff was on the footpath ... he lost his whole life that day ... and his son ... his little boy ... "How old's your boy?" "Eight." He twists away to hide his writhing mouth, then turns to us a face shockingly transformed: his eye sockets and lids and upper cheeks have melted as if in an oven.

**The nature of the crime** is irrelevant to court networkers, and their service is nonpartisan: they will approach an offender or a victim with equal openness. Their aim is to help court users navigate what could be the worst day of their lives. They are trained to listen. At a sentencing they are particularly alert to the bewilderment of an offender's family, people so traumatised they are not even able to hear. They know how to explain procedure, to allay panic with factual information, to refer lost, stunned people to social services they've never heard of. In conversation, acronyms roll off their tongues – DV for domestic violence, VT for vicarious trauma – but though they are carefully screened and trained, they are volunteers, not case-workers, thus most of them limit their work to one day a week, to avoid being drawn into continuing entanglements that they are not professionally qualified to handle. They are a frontline service and this is their strength.

**My networker**, searching for a shaky old couple whose son's case has not yet come up, puts her head into a court. Here, a 20-year-old man has pleaded guilty to the serious charge of culpable driving. Trying to get his mate away from a pub brawl that had turned vicious, he threw a wild U-turn in the car park and accidentally ran down another friend, who sustained a brain injury. The defendant's counsel is arguing for a community corrections order. He presents his client as "a person who's well loved". The room is packed with his earnest cohort, 29 very young men who, with their straggly hair and boots, look like students or new tradies. His early childhood was marred by family mental illness and frightening violence; he and his younger sibling often had to roam the streets all night. But he has worked, he has studied and got his ticket. He has done everything in his power to atone for his terrible mistake: stopped drinking, undertaken every available driving course. He has faced up to his victim: "The two men embraced." The victim has even come to court: a lanky bloke with a man bun raises his hand, and when he turns his head I see that one eye has the very slightly wild cast to it, the brief delay, that I have seen in a friend's son who was felled by a gang of thugs one night in the city. The networker can't stay for the decision. She is due in the foyer. As we slide towards the door, the rows of young men sit motionless, holding their breath, intent upon the brooding magistrate.

**We enter unchallenged and take seats right behind the cardinal. He is hunched like an old buffalo.**

**My networker is tall.** She must have abs and quads of steel, for when she approaches a seated court user she jackknifes forward and flexes her knees to get down to their level. She can maintain this half-crouch without a quiver for minutes at a time. She loves courts, she tells me, because "they're hectic".

**A broad-cheeked**, smiling little woman in her 40s, with her thinning hair in a ponytail and a loop of plastic tube visible under the hem of her loose flowery shirt, asks the networker to help her fill out a form. It's an application to revoke an apprehended violence order that the police took out a few months ago against her "friend", after a "domestic incident". The networker shows her how to deal with the document's boxes and lists, and the woman signs it. Then she tells us, with a sweet glow, about the wonderful treatment she's had at the new cancer hospital, the kindness of the nurses, the beautiful cafe on the roof – they've got palm trees and everything, anyone can go in! You don't even have to be a patient! She rattles off her story: "He come round and smashed the windows

of me car, front and back. It was only his jealousy. We're still in love. With m' cancer he was there by m' side, to help me. When I'm sick he wants to be near me. But because of the AVO he can't come to my house. He's cut the drinkin'. He paid for me windows. I'm from WA. I haven't got family here. His family accept me – his mum's a lovely old duck. 'Cause he's white, and you can see what I am."

**On our way out** at lunchtime we pass a court with a sign that forbids entry without ID. The networker slows near a line of three mature-aged men in identical black suits, disposed on foldable chairs. One look at their dog collars and closed expressions tells us who is within: a cardinal up on historical sex abuse charges, half a world away from the gilded palaces of the Vatican. The air of the foyer is charged with a shimmer of power. This is the first time I have seen a networker hesitate. She flicks a look at me. She makes no approach to the priests, with their warning mien, but swerves towards the door. We enter unchallenged and take seats right behind the cardinal. He is hunched like an old buffalo. I conquer a Pilates urge to put my knee to his thoracic spine and pull his shoulders back, to whisper, "Open out that chest." But how would a networker address a prince of the church? Your Eminence? Your Grace? Father? Sir? Plain old Mister? How about Fellow-sinner? Or Fellow-sufferer? Or perhaps the greeting that men use out there in the anxious foyer: Hey, bro? Now he's down in the muck with the rest of us, would he answer to that? **M**

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# Highlights of 2017-2018



\*Total People Assisted in Victoria

# 125,322

Top three client groups assisted/supported

# 32,491

DEFENDANTS

28,627  
FAMILY / FRIENDS

24,100  
APPLICANTS



# 81,775

People assisted/supported  
in Magistrates Courts

Top three matters heard



# 40,322

People assisted/supported  
for criminal matters

# 38,590

People assisted/supported  
for family violence matters

# 9,735

People assisted/supported  
for civil matters



# 25,232

Information offered  
via Court Info Desks

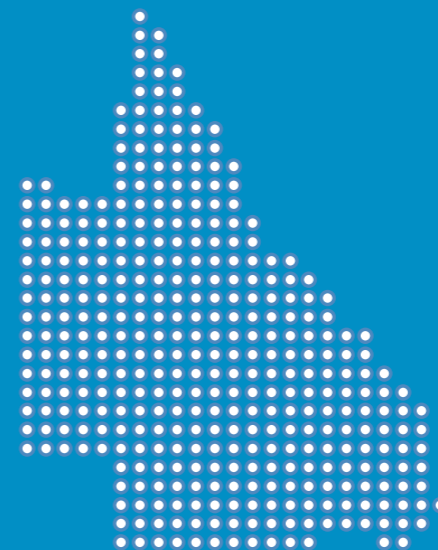


# 2,514

People assisted/  
supported  
in Family Courts

\*Total People Assisted in Queensland

# 65,273



Top three client groups  
assisted/supported across  
QLD courts

# 7,434

UNREPRESENTED  
DEFENDANTS / LITIGANTS

# 4,279

FAMILY / FRIENDS

# 2,767

REPRESENTED  
DEFENDANTS / LITIGANTS

# 14,810

People assisted/supported  
in Magistrates Courts

Matters heard

# 15,152

People assisted/supported  
for criminal matters

# 4,007

People assisted/supported  
for civil matters



# 45,601

Information offered  
via Court Info Desks



# 11,876

People assisted/supported  
in Arrest Court  
(inc Arrest Info Desk)

# Victorian State Manager's Report

I am very pleased to present the many achievements of our team of volunteers and paid staff in Victoria over the 2017-18 year.

We finalised the Court Network Service Charter, building on the solid foundations of Networker practice over the past 30 years in Victoria in implementing the Court Network mission which is firmly focused on supporting court users. The refreshed mission and vision, reflected in the Service Charter, lays strong foundations for responding to new challenges and demands, whilst aligning with our core purpose and focus.

Our focus on quality and consistency has been recognised with the achievement of accreditation against the Victorian Human Services Standards for the second time. In addition, we have been rewarded for our increasing profile in the courts as a professionally trained and supported workforce with growth in our service delivery funding for Family Violence Support from both the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Family Violence Program and Court Services Victoria (CSV), through the Specialist Family Violence Courts program.

The continued strength of patronage and support for our work from the judiciary, courts staff, and our funders – CSV, DHHS and Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) – has enabled us to be the very best that we can be and continue to focus on the non-legal support needs of court users.

**We could not do any of this without the positive and enthusiastic engagement of our front-line volunteer staff: our 'Networkers' – who are the public face of Court Network. I particularly want to pay tribute to our Networkers for embracing the opportunity to participate in change and enhancement activities within their courts. It has not been an easy process, but Networkers have stayed strongly focused on court users and embraced the modernisation of practices and processes in order to be well aligned with current day expectations.**

I also want to acknowledge the contribution of our Networkers who have taken on the role of mentoring new trainees in the courts. Thank you for your leadership in supporting our quality Networker intake training program.

## Our highlights in Victoria for 2017-18 included:

- Networker training in family violence progressively rolled out to all the Court Network volunteers through intake training and continuing education
- Commencing Shepparton Specialist Family Violence Courts related volunteer training
- Partnering with VLA in the implementation of the Commonwealth-funded Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS), an integrated service based at the family courts in the Melbourne and Dandenong registries (CN was not funded for this)
- Continuing our partnership with Victoria Police to deliver non-legal support to over 250 community members via the Victoria Police Electronic Referral (V-Per) process
- Achieving recurrent funding from DHHS for Court Network's model for support of women and children affected by family violence
- Attaining funding from CSV for Court Network's model for support of women and children affected by family violence - to be rolled out as a component of Specialist Family Violence Courts implementation
- Achieving the Victorian Human Services Standards accreditation for the second time

Some of these highlights are elaborated in further detail in other parts of this report. These achievements reflect the combined team effort of our amazing front-line volunteers, our Networkers, our Program Managers in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria who are responsible for managing our volunteer workforce, and the administration and corporate staff at head office, who have all worked together in partnership to support members of the community, our court and tribunal users, during their day in court. A sincere thank you to you all.

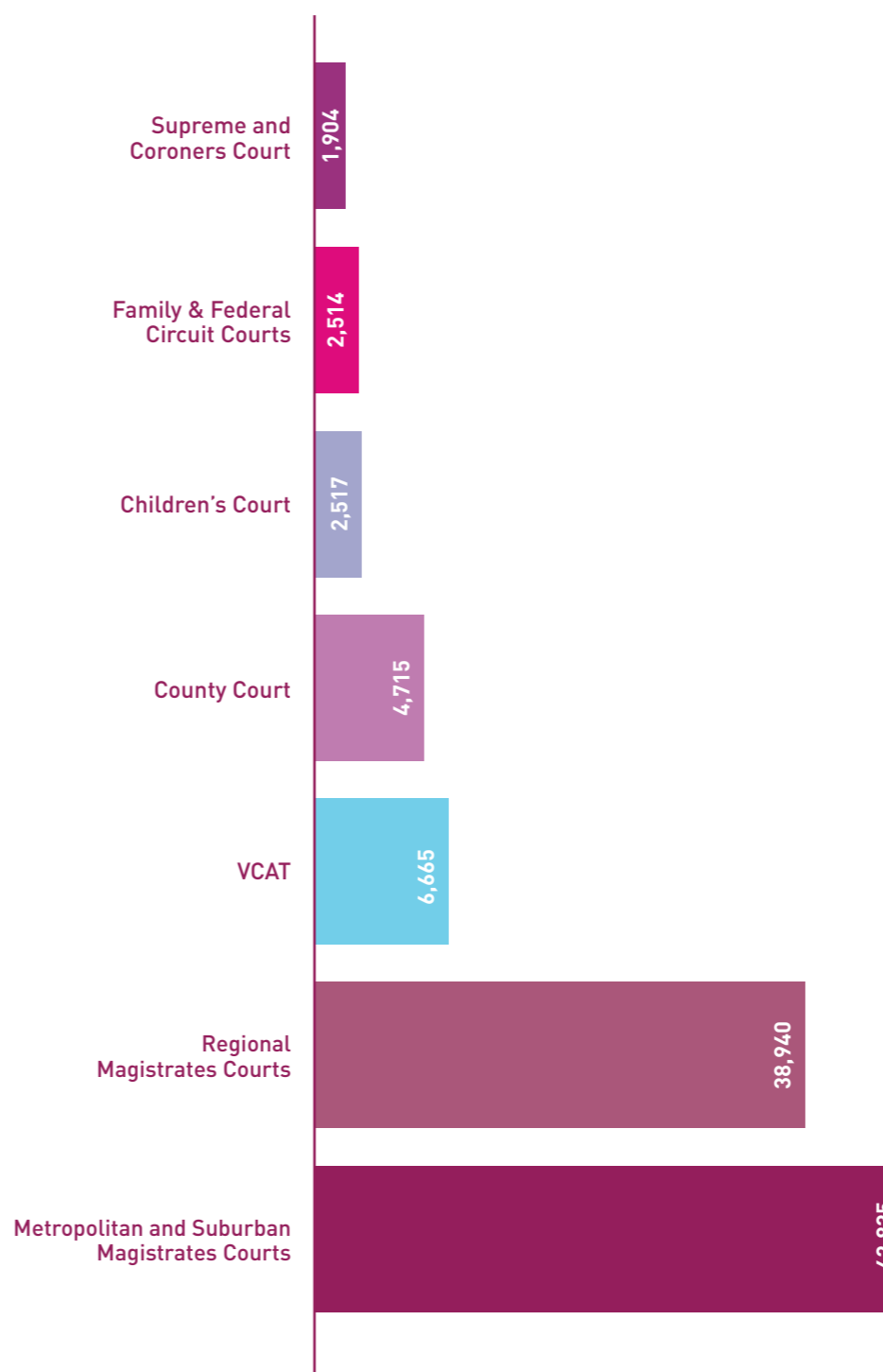
Over this financial year, I was privileged to be able to take five months leave to travel and have now returned, refreshed and ready to lead and support this very capable team through another year of empowering vulnerable members of the community to better access the justice system. My thanks to Rachel Pallenberg who so capably filled in for me during my absence.

Congratulations to all on another significant year of service.

## Bernadette Burchell

Victorian State Manager

## Court users supported per jurisdiction in Victoria 2017-18



**"I experienced wonderful support from the Court Network volunteers. They were enormously grounding in such emotional times and a real voice for reason. They are such an important asset to the community who are experiencing times of extreme distress. I am eternally grateful for the selfless roles they have played. Thank you."**

– Court user, Melbourne Suburban Court



**100,090**

Court users supported in Victoria



**25,232**

Court users offered information at Court Info Desks



**1,286**

People assisted by phone in Victoria



**118**

Women supported through the Sunshine Family Violence Project



**51**

New Networkers trained in Victoria

**180**

Networkers trained in the Service Charter in Victoria

# Queensland State Manager's Report

What a difference a year makes!

Our previous financial year was dominated by the impact of funding uncertainty and it was only on 30 June 2017 that we were confident that we would have full funding for the 2017-20 funding period. In 2017-18 it was a great pleasure to move from survival planning to a focus on consolidation and growth.

I am particularly pleased to recognize the wonderful achievements of our volunteer workforce and paid staff in Queensland, as everyone has worked incredibly hard to restore and enhance the quality services which are so highly valued by court users and our stakeholders.

Our 137 Networkers provided more than 18,000 hours of service across Queensland (the equivalent of 2,414 full-time days). Five administration volunteers provided invaluable 'back-room' support.

An enormous portion of our time and money was directed to training and mentoring 48 new Networkers in Brisbane, Cairns and Townsville. I cannot overstate the importance of the support provided by our experienced Networkers in welcoming and supporting their new team members. On behalf of the whole team I would like to extend our thanks to the experienced Networkers for sharing their networking expertise, your knowledge of the courts and your personal support.

I am also pleased to report that our volunteer retention rate in Queensland is increasing – this is particularly encouraging after the instability in the previous year which was unsettling for many Networkers. It is a tribute to their commitment and loyalty to court users and Court Network that they have continued to volunteer their time to the organisation.

The Court Network Service Charter, which was launched this year, lays the foundation for our way of working, refreshing our focus on the vision, mission and expectations for everyday practice. We ran Service Charter workshops in all locations across Queensland and our intake training program was framed around the Service Charter.

A project officer was engaged to coordinate our Intake Training and our Continuing Education initiatives, enabling us to provide a dynamic and relevant education program. One well-received initiative was the introduction of court-specific induction workshops.

We continue to review and refine our services to ensure they are well-planned and relevant and are responsive to the changing environment. This year we refined and strengthened our services in many ways.

## Our highlights in Queensland for 2017-18 included:

- Establishing a partnership with Victim Assist Queensland in Cairns to provide court support to adult victims of violent crime
- Joining the team of providers in the Townsville Specialist Domestic Violence Court providing non-legal support and information to aggrieved parties
- Our Victim Support Unit working closely with Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group including the development of a Memorandum of Understanding to provide court support to the victim's family/friends
- The Brisbane Arrest Court team receiving five-star feedback about its contributions to court users and the court
- Strengthening and expanding our role in Brisbane Domestic Violence Court, especially in relation to supporting aggrieved parties at breach and contested hearings
- Strengthening partnership agreements for vulnerable clients in QCAT

A number of our major projects are profiled in more detail in the following pages of this report.

The greatest source of satisfaction for me, as a Court Network paid staff member, is to bask in the reflected glory of the wonderful services provided by our amazing volunteer team. This diverse, talented, committed and friendly group of people are the human face of the courts, bringing humanity and care to people who are often intimidated by an unfamiliar and frightening environment.

Behind the scenes we have a small, hard-working and capable team of paid staff who bring boundless professionalism and commitment and I express my sincere appreciation to them as well.

THANK YOU everyone and congratulations on another year of providing our unique and valuable services to our court and tribunal users.

## Annette Hogan

Queensland State Manager

**"I can honestly say that introducing Court Network into the Brisbane Arrest Courts was the best initiative.**

**It was revealed that there was a huge shortfall in our resources when dealing with our clients on a daily basis. We needed assistance with guiding and directing our clients to the courts as this could not be done efficiently by the Registry staff alone. All of the Court Networkers that were based at the Arrest Courts were very keen to learn the way the Arrest Courts worked and how to direct clients to other Stakeholders there. The Court Networkers are also good at acknowledging their own strengths and weaknesses and ask relevant questions of the Registry staff when they need to help and guide our clients in areas other than court appearances – namely when seeking court assistance for clients from external stakeholders.**

**When we held our information sessions, it opened my eyes as to how relevant the Court Networkers were to the day to day running of the Arrest Court. The Court Networkers were very keen to get as much information as possible out of these sessions so they could better help and direct our clients.**

**I would like to say a big thank you for your support at the Arrest Courts."**

– Stakeholder, Queensland



19,672

Court users supported in Queensland



45,601

Court users offered information at Court Info Desks



331

People assisted by phone in Queensland



844

Adult victims of violent crime supported in the VSU: Brisbane (329), Ipswich (258) and Sunshine Coast (85)



48

New Networkers trained in Queensland

76

Networkers trained in the Service Charter in Queensland





# 01. Service

**Work where we are most needed and can make a real difference for vulnerable court users**

## OBJECTIVES

We will:

- **Respond** to the changing needs of court users and the dynamic court environment
- **Develop** our model to improve access to justice in emerging areas such as family violence, victim support and in our work with unrepresented court users
- **Integrate** with other services that operate within and beyond the courts

# Family Violence Program

Through a dedicated Family Violence Program, Court Network has continued to build and strengthen the organisations' capability to respond to family violence and extend the reach of the enhanced family violence service into additional courts. The Court Network family violence program is underpinned and guided by a vision to provide effective support to people affected by family violence through:

- strengthening our capability to identify family violence risk
- complementing the integrated response available to maximise women's and children's safety
- connecting victims and perpetrators with appropriate referral pathways; and
- developing a shared understanding of family violence that accords with others working in the service system

The dynamic and changing response to family violence in Victoria continues to impact on the service Court Network provides. The family violence program is responsive to this changing practice environment to ensure that it meets the needs of court users affected by family violence.

## The Court Network Family Violence Service Model

The ongoing funding of the Sunshine Family Violence Project by the Department of Health and Human Services has allowed Court Network to continue to develop and refine a family violence service model. As the court environment changes, the experienced Networkers at Sunshine Magistrates Court can test and evaluate different ways of working with people who come to court for family violence matters. The Court Network family violence service model includes the following core elements:

### Tailored 3 & 1/2 day Family Violence Training Course

- Topics covered include the nature, dynamics, prevalence, impact of family violence, legal processes & procedures, Common Risk Assessment Framework (CRAF), working with men who use family violence
- The training course is delivered by content experts including Women's Legal Service, No to Violence and the Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria

### Supported Practice to Promote Consistency

- Networkers are supported by a Program Manager trained in providing FV practice support
- Ensures Networkers can reflect on their practice, be aware of the boundaries and limits of their role and receive support for ongoing learning and development

### Broad Service Offer

- Support, information and referral to all court users
- Identify family violence risk and safety concerns in conversations, detailed knowledge of family violence court processes and procedures and greater knowledge of family violence referral pathways

### Feedback and Evaluation

- Regular feedback sought from court users
- Periodic evaluation of family violence program elements

### Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

- Court Network communicates and liaises with stakeholders at court to facilitate information sharing and to streamline referral processes

As the enhanced family violence service extends into more courts, Court Network has implemented the following strategies to ensure the service provided to court users affected by family violence is of high-quality and consistent across the courts in which we operate:

- planned, gradual and considered roll-out of family violence training and practice model
- oversight of the roll-out by a Family Violence Program Manager
- embedding family violence knowledge across the organisation (paid staff and volunteers)
- use of purpose-built family violence practice tools to facilitate Networkers to put their classroom learning into practice
- use of family violence practice support and supervision guidelines by Program Managers to ensure consistent support to Networkers post-training
- data collection and evaluation to ensure the service is meeting the needs of court users

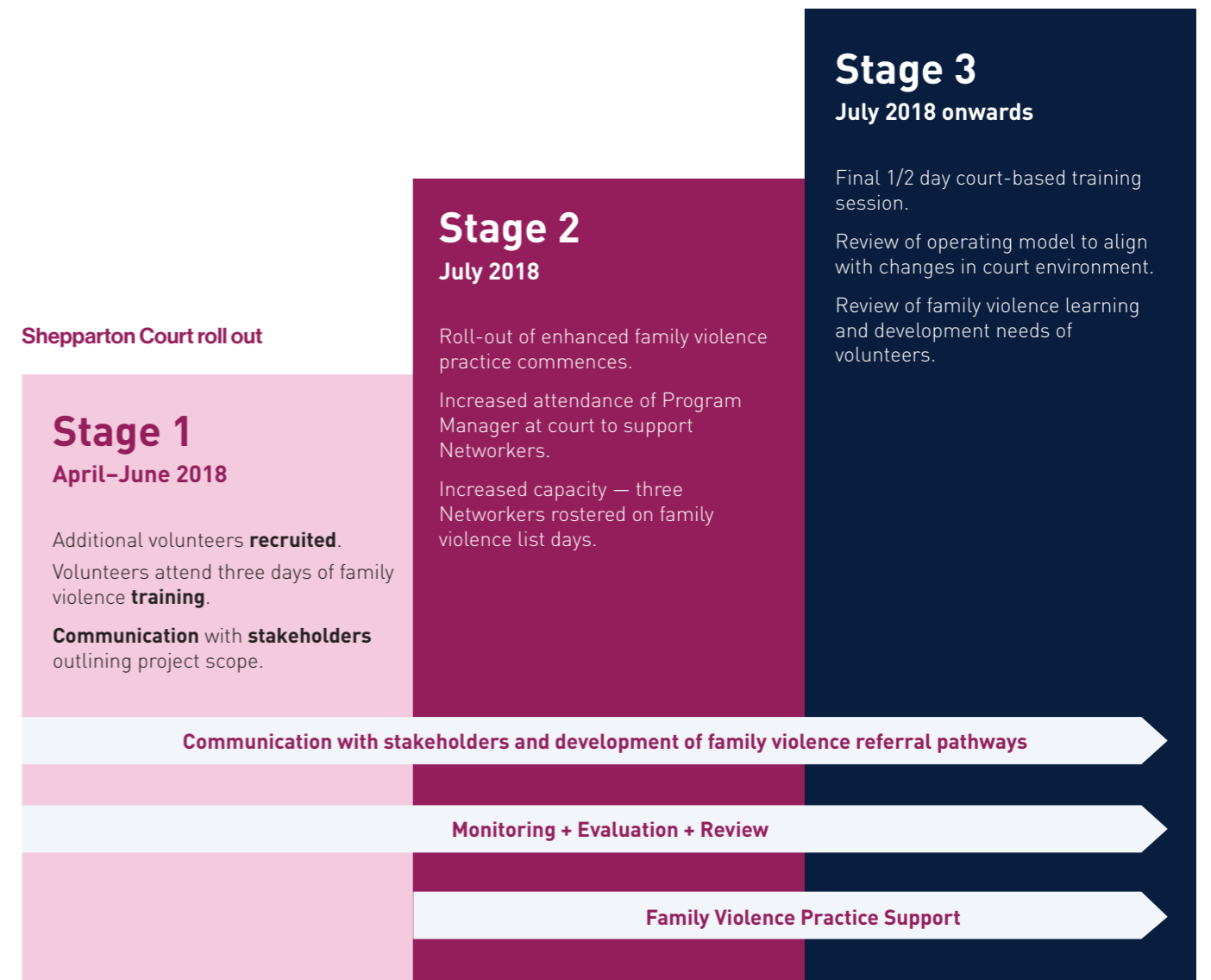
As a mainstream service providing support to court users affected by family violence, Court Network plays a unique and important role in the integrated family violence system. The family violence service model that has been operating at Sunshine since 2015 has now been adapted for other court locations. It builds on the core Court Network service and involves Networkers:

- undertaking a needs assessment
- identifying family violence risk factors
- having conversations about safety planning (particularly if a specialist family violence service is not available)
- providing court users with knowledge about family violence court processes and procedures to facilitate informed decision making; and
- where possible, making warm referrals to specialist family violence services

Operating in 28 courts across Victoria and with at least two Networkers rostered on each day at court, the Court Network service has considerable scope and reach that can complement existing court-based services and fill critical service gaps in an overwhelmed family violence service system. Through assertive outreach, Networkers are able to identify court users who may not have come to the attention of court staff or support services.

## The Specialist Family Violence Court (SFVC) Model

The Magistrates Court of Victoria (MCV) have included growth for the Court Network family violence service response in their plans for the roll-out of the SFVC model at Shepparton, Ballarat, Heidelberg, Moorabbin and Frankston, with the allocation of additional funds over four years to expand our family violence response in these locations. Shepparton will be the first court to commence operation of the SFVC model and Court Network has undertaken considerable planning and work to prepare Networkers and to ensure the Court Network service aligns with the SFVC model.



### Further implementation

Project planning for Moorabbin, Frankston and Heidelberg Magistrates Courts commenced in the 2017-18 financial year. Nearly all Networkers have now attended the 3&1/2-day family violence training course and a Program Manager is supporting Networker practice and liaising with stakeholders to further develop family violence referral pathways.

Project planning for Ballarat Magistrates Court is scheduled to commence in the 2018-19 financial year.

The result of this planned and considered implementation is that Networkers are highly skilled and knowledgeable and can provide court users with information and support which improves their access to and understanding of the justice system. It also contributes to enhancing the safety of women and children by ensuring that more women are linked into specialist family violence services at court.

### Learning and Development

In the past year, Court Network has run 18 family violence training days for volunteers. The intake training provided to new volunteers incorporates two days of family violence training so that new trainees have a shared understanding of the nature, dynamics and definition of family violence and how to respond to family violence within the bounds of the Networker role. Trainees are offered more advanced family violence training (i.e. risk identification) when they have gained more in-court experience.

**Court Network continues to work with family violence content experts to ensure the training provided to Networkers keeps pace with the changing response to family violence in Victoria. We would like to thank No to Violence, Women's Legal Service, Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria, Victoria Police, Magistrates Court of Victoria and Goulburn Valley Community Legal Service for their continued involvement and contribution to the training program.**

### Case Study

A Networker approached a woman [\*Anna] who was in the waiting area. Anna seemed confused and did not understand why she was there. Anna showed the Networker some documents and the Networker discovered that the woman was at court as the police had taken out a Family Violence Intervention Order against her. Anna was listed as the Respondent and her husband was the Applicant.

The Networker asked Anna a couple of questions and during the conversation, started to think that she may be a victim of family violence as the Networker could hear risk factors in her story. When Anna's husband walked past her in the waiting area, the Networker noticed that she became withdrawn. The Networker asked Anna if she was fearful of her husband and she said 'Yes...I am very scared of him'.

The Networker took Anna into the Court Network office so that she did not have to see her husband and asked if she would like to speak to someone about her safety while she was at court. The Networker asked the Family Violence Applicant Practitioner (AP) to see her and after that meeting, the AP referred Anna back to the Networker so that she could support her in court. The AP also asked the Networker to assist the woman to complete an Intervention

Order Application Form as she was the victim of family violence. The woman also saw the Duty lawyer while she was at court.

Anna was granted an interim intervention order and safe accommodation was organised until she had to return to court. She requested Court Network support for her next court appearance.

When the Networker spoke to the Program Manager about this case, the Networker remarked that if she had not approached Anna in the waiting area she probably would not have received support while she was at court as she was too scared to approach someone and ask them for help. Anna had told the Networker 'I did not know there was help available until you approached me'.

\* All names/images have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

# Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS)

Family Advocacy and Support Service (FASS) is a national, Commonwealth Government funded pilot that was developed in recognition of the fact that victims of family violence require a combination of social support, as well as legal help, when navigating the family courts system.

In Victoria, FASS was established by Victoria Legal Aid at Melbourne and Dandenong Family Law Registries. At Melbourne, social support is delivered through partnerships with Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre and No To Violence Men's Referral Service, while Victoria Legal Aid and Family Law Legal Service provide the duty lawyer services. At Dandenong, social support is delivered through partnerships with WAYSS Ltd and Relationships Australia and Victoria Legal Aid and Peninsula Community Legal Centre provide the duty lawyer services.

Court Network is not identified as a funded element of the FASS operation, and therefore represents a variation on how other FASS models may have been implemented in other states. Nonetheless Court Network has been a key service provider throughout the implementation of FASS, particularly in identifying and connecting court users to the FASS infrastructure.

Specifically, that has included:

- providing a link between court users and FASS services by having a physical presence in the foyer area of the court
- our Networkers proactive 'outreach' focus which enables the sharing of information on the services available at court and identifying court users that need to be linked with FASS services
- facilitation of referrals to the Information Referral Officer (IRO)
- the ability to step in to support court users when the IRO, specialist support services and legal services are required to attend to the needs of other court users
- providing in-court support to parties over the duration of the hearing - specialist services are increasingly recognising the important role that Court Network plays in this regard so that they are better able to meet demand
- Networker presence in the safe room to support people who are waiting for their matter to proceed, with opportunities to identify risk and connect or reconnect court users to specialist support services
- the Program Manager's attendance at FASS stakeholder meetings at both Dandenong and Melbourne Registries

All Networkers involved in FASS have undertaken the Family Violence Training Program (adapted to the Federal Circuit and Family Court context) and are supervised in their practice by a Program Manager.

Inside Policy was commissioned by the Commonwealth to undertake an independent evaluation of the pilot sites, including Court Network's role. In addition to interviews conducted with our paid staff and volunteers, a one-month snapshot survey was undertaken in February 2018 in the Melbourne registry of the Federal Circuit and Family Court. The survey found that Court Network supported 126 court users for the month. Of this 126, approximately one third of court users supported by Court Network became clients of the FASS program.

### Sunshine Family Violence Project Statistics



**118**  
women supported

**67**

women were identified by Networkers during 'Outreach'

**86**

women were 'warmly referred' to specialist family violence services at court

**89**

women were not already linked into a family violence service and had not been identified as being at risk

**56**

for 56 women this was the first time they had taken action against the offender and for many the first time they had disclosed the extent of the violence

# Victim Support Unit (VSU) Outreach Link Project

## What is the Victim Support Unit (VSU)?

Established in 2014, the VSU provides a cross-jurisdictional response to adult victims involved in the criminal justice system. An individualised support plan is prepared with the person who has been affected by the crime and a Networker provides ongoing and in-court support to the person. Support may be long-term or a one-off episode of support.

The VSU is led by two professional Program Managers and a team of professionally trained and supported Court Networkers provide the client services. The VSU is based in the Brisbane Courts Complex with a second Networker team based in Ipswich Court and also provides an outreach service to the Sunshine Coast and Gympie.

In 2016 Court Network's Victim Support Unit (VSU) was fortunate to receive funding from Victim Assist Queensland for an Outreach Link Project. The project's objective was to develop the capacity to provide a viable and effective court support service for adult victims of violent crime in the regional areas of Sunshine Coast and Gympie. The services are provided from the VSU's Brisbane base.

Victims of violent crime often have a very challenging experience as they navigate the justice system. They find it particularly traumatic to attend their hearing as a witness or observer. As court is an unfamiliar experience for most of us, it is difficult to anticipate what someone's support needs might be when they are required to attend court.

Victims of violent crime have a further challenge, which is the high risk of being re-traumatised during the court case when they see the alleged perpetrator, listen to graphic details of the crime and may also be cross-examined. Close family and friends can provide valuable support but are likely to be emotionally involved and are therefore unable to focus exclusively on the victim's support needs. It is important to receive practical and emotional support from an independent support person who is exclusively focused on the personal needs of the victim.

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**"I didn't realise how difficult I would find it. I am so relieved that you were able to help me during the hearing."**

- Court user

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## "A Guide to Supporting Victims of Crime through the Court Process"

A key element of the Outreach Link Project was to develop guidelines to provide independent court support (in addition to the support provided by close family and friends) in regional areas. As the VSU teams are based in Brisbane and Ipswich, the VSU is not able to directly provide 'in-person' court support in the Sunshine Coast and Gympie.

Our new publication, 'A Guide to Supporting Victims of Crime through the Court Process' details these guidelines and its purpose is to assist the independent support person with information about, and resources for, their role in supporting an adult victim of crime. It is written in plain language with the target audience being people who have little or no experience within the court system.

The booklet identifies what a support person does and poses questions to help someone decide if they could be a support person. It steps through all the stages of the court case and gives guidance about how to emotionally and practically support a victim (witness).

Key content includes:

- tips about confidentiality
- witnesses' rights
- an outline of court protocols
- information about the Justice system, the various courts in Queensland and what an appearance in each court might mean for a witness
- information about Victim Impact Statements and Financial Assistance Applications
- when to ask for help for the witness or refer them to someone else
- contact details for other support services
- a glossary of the terms mostly commonly used in the Justice System

The Guide is a crucial tool and a useful stand-alone resource. However, it will have even greater impact if it is used as part of a broader, integrated system. In 2018, the VSU is working closely with service providers in Gympie and the Sunshine Coast to build practices to support victims of crime through working in partnership.

A first step is to identify an appropriate independent support person with/for the victim. The appropriate person could come from a wide range of backgrounds as long as they have the capability and availability to focus on the person, rather than the case. Often local support services are well placed to recommend or identify a support person - local knowledge is an invaluable resource. VSU volunteers can then coach the support person in the process of providing court support, using the booklet as a guide. Our volunteers have valuable experience in providing court support and understand the experience of the support person.

VSU's services complement local support services. We will continue to actively refer to local services and to encourage them to refer to us and to work in partnership with them.

Independent support for victims of crime has many benefits. The courts operate more smoothly if witnesses are emotionally prepared for court. The victim and their family or friends have a better understanding of what is going on. Safety planning is improved. Ultimately, the most important benefit of independent support is that it reduces the level of trauma that the victim experiences at their trial.

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**"I would like to thank you both from the bottom of my heart for the support and help through the court process. You both played a HUGE role in decreasing the emotional impact the trial was having on me. If only we were blessed with more individuals like yourselves, victims would feel a lot more supported throughout the process."**

- Court user

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## Case Study

An elderly woman, \*Martha was referred to the VSU by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). Martha had been assaulted by a group of offenders and her bag stolen. Martha suffered a broken hip and leg in the assault and consequently lost her independence - she was forced to sleep in her lounge room as she was unable to use the stairs in her house to get to her bedroom.

A VSU Networker offered telephone support to Martha for almost two years. Initially Martha was frustrated and angry about her situation however the Networker developed a rapport with her and was able to refer her to an aged care service for assistance with transport, shopping, cleaning and showering. The Networker was also able to assist Martha to complete a Victim Impact Statement and a Financial Assistance Application.

After obtaining financial assistance from Victim Assist Queensland, Martha was then able to move to a new residence, without stairs, to access counselling and to pay her medical bills. Martha was extremely thankful for the support she received when preparing her Victim Impact Statement. She was able to tell the Networker her story and describe the impact the crime had on her via her telephone support sessions. The Networker completed the statement and lodged it with ODPP on her behalf which was a great relief to the client. Martha often told the Networker how much happier she felt having of her assistance and support.

\* All names images have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals



# 02. Volunteer Workforce

**Provide high-quality services through a skilled volunteer workforce**

## OBJECTIVES

We will:

- **Implement** the Court Network Service Charter that defines the services delivered by skilled volunteers who share our goal of empowering court users
- **Recruit** and train a diverse and adaptable workforce that reflects the communities we serve
- **Ensure** best practice by linking intake training, continuing education, reflective practice and reviews to the needs of court users

# Service Charter

In recent years, there has been a renewed focus on service quality and consistency across the 33 court sites in which Court Network operates in Victoria and Queensland. Some of this is driven by external forces, such as accreditation and funding requirements, as well as the changing nature of the justice system itself. With all of this in mind, we needed to look inward – at ourselves – to make sure we can shape up to all this change as we continue to evolve as an organisation. We looked to see how we can best communicate about who we are, and what we do in a clear, concise way, and what court users and the courts can expect to see from us every day that we offer a service to them in the courts.

## What is the Service Charter?

The Court Network Service Charter outlines our promise to service users and the community about what they can expect from us no matter whether they are attending a law court or tribunal in metropolitan or regional Queensland or Victoria. It captures what we all know are the key universal elements of the Court Network service model:

- it defines the service scope and the significance of reaching out to every court user on the day as a unique aspect of our service approach;
- it aligns the hours of operation with the court day;
- it clarifies the model as a daily team of a minimum of two Networkers;
- it highlights the importance of reflective practice and continuous improvement;
- it promotes the importance of a healthy team, ably led and supported by their Program Manager, where communication with each other and the relevant Program Manager is integrated into the daily operations.

We have worked through the Service Charter with most of our Networkers and teams, primarily through a participatory training session we called “Ready Set Go Networking” (Victoria) and “From Paper to Practice” (Queensland). This session was designed to provide the opportunity for our experienced Networkers to reflect on and connect anew with our core mission, identify challenges in staying true to mission in the complex and dynamic context of law courts in which they practice, and identify what our managers and organisation need to do to continue to support Networkers.

We believe the Service Charter is a document we can proudly hold up as a manifesto of our service commitment of putting court users at the heart of what we do each day and in helping them to feel empowered along the pathway to accessing justice.

**“Volunteers do not get instant entry to the Court Network program. Each volunteer needs certain skills to perform the tasks. They each undertake a 12 day training program which covers the courts and court process, working with people who are unrepresented, and with accused people and their family members, victims of sexual assault and other vulnerable witnesses. The training also focuses on how to deliver the service according to the Court Network service model, in providing advocacy and support, and in understanding how to assess broader service needs and provide appropriate referrals.”**

- Dr Melanie Heenan, Former Executive Director of Court Network VLF interview, May 2018

## Case Study

\*Matthew was sitting in the waiting area looking very worried and agitated. I approached him with my introduction.

I asked him, “What brings you here today?” He then told me how he stole two pairs of shorts from a store. We talked about how he came to do that and he said it was just a spur of the moment decision and he had no idea why he stole them. We then talked about what I could do for him and that I could support him in court but couldn’t give him legal advice. He said he would be grateful if I could help him as he had an intellectual disability – he could read and write but he read very slowly. Matthew said he had a statement that he had written with the help of his girlfriend that he would like to read to the magistrate.

I took him into court to watch how the process goes in court.

We went into court and when it was his case we both went

up to the bar table. The magistrate asked if I was the lawyer and I said, “No I’m just Court Network and I’m supporting Matthew as he has some difficulties in managing his court process”. The magistrate replied, “You’re not just Court Network you provide a very important service and thank you.”

The case began and Malcolm started to read his statement and quite a few times he became confused and could not read some of the words. I stepped in quite a bit where necessary and helped him get through his statement.

The case concluded with a positive outcome. The magistrate thanked me personally for my input.

Matthew and I had a brief chat outside court and he was very grateful.

\* All names images have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals

# Learning and Development Program

## Renewal

In Victoria we have been recruiting and training new volunteers to provide a daily team of a minimum of two Networkers at each court to align with our Service Charter and enable appropriate service coverage requirements. With a minimum of two Networkers available each day we are able to provide impartial support and have the capacity for both parties of a court/tribunal matter to each be supported by a Networker - this is a key tenet of the Court Network ethos.

A special shout out of appreciation to the following Victorian Networkers who have gone the extra mile and worked with us to mentor trainees over the 2017-18 financial year:

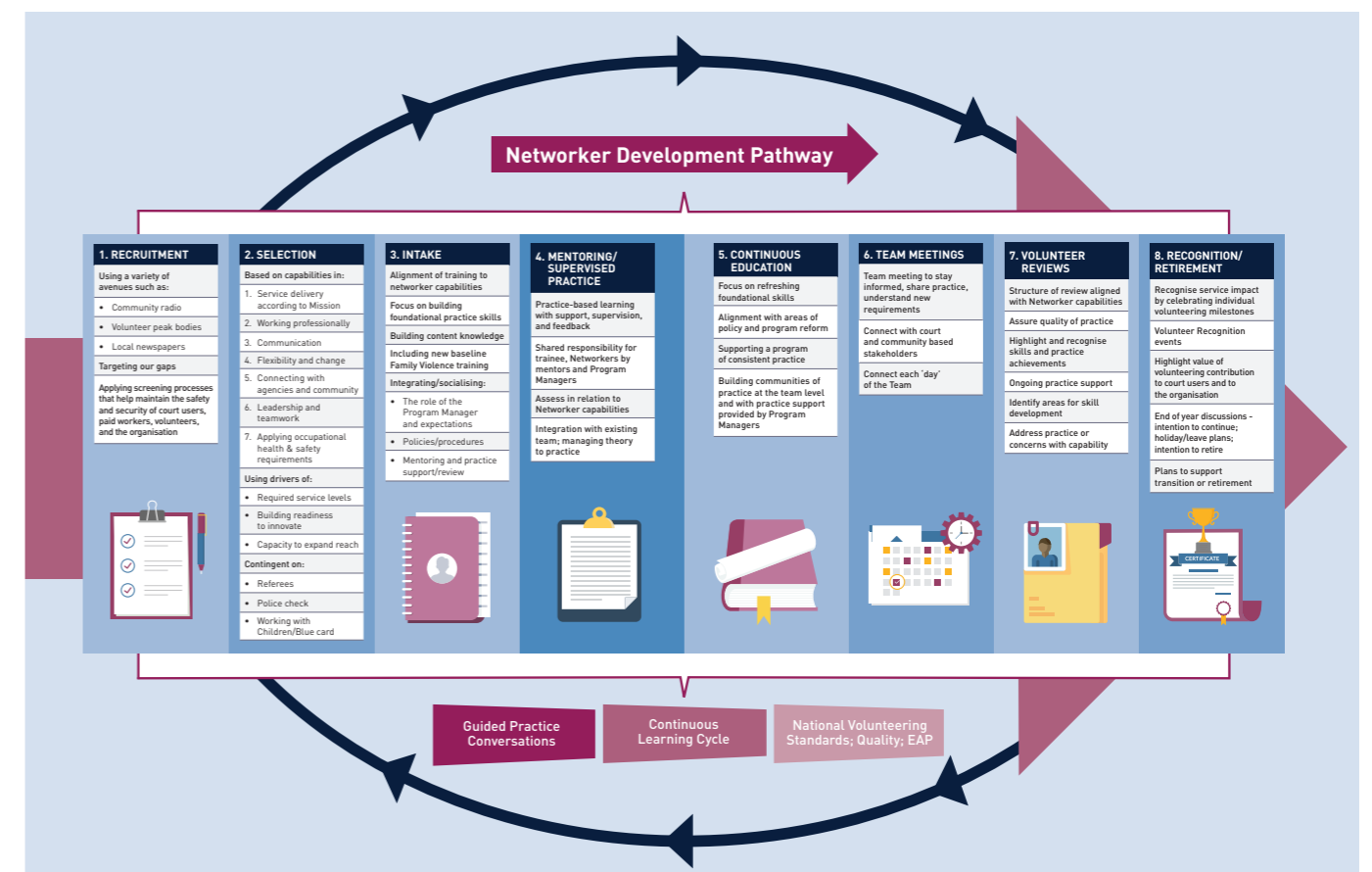
John Albert, Judy Banks, Robyn Canning, Liz Choat, Anne Clark, Jo Dorrington, Peter Dyson, Jane Gilbert, Sue Griffiths, Anne Groom, Jan Halliday, Joan Hassett, Chris Hope, David Howlett, Pam Janssen, Karen Johnson, Carol Johnston, Terry Johnstone, Caroline Judd, Di Keir, Janet Launder, Helen Lehocz, Heather Marmur, Martha Morrow, Bev Mulvenna, Joan Murphy, Faye Pargetter, Kay Pentland, Di Posner, Sue Potter, Anne Prodanovic, Jennifer Rawlinson, Kathryn Rebello, Virginia Reddaway, Pam Robertson, Jane Rollason, Sara Rosenberg, Masha Slattery, Glenys Smith, Glen Stringer, Nigel Toft, Robyn Wall, Nicola Whitehead, Joannna Wriedt, and the Ballarat, Bendigo, Echuca, Mildura, Morwell, Shepparton, Wangaratta and Wodonga teams where mentoring is a whole of team responsibility! Thank you so much! We are so impressed and grateful for your practice leadership and the example you set.

In Queensland, all of our experienced Networkers were involved in providing support and mentoring new trainees as there were large intakes in every team. This was a huge undertaking and we are deeply grateful to every Networker for the support they provided to the trainees, for sharing their expertise and wisdom, and for welcoming their new team members.

## Continuing Education

Court Network continued to build on its Learning & Development Program and the following continuing education sessions were delivered to Networkers across the organisation:

Court Support Services; Mental Health; Police & the Family Violence system; Access, Equity & Diversity; Witness Assistance Service; Referral; Advocacy; Working with Unrepresented Court Users; Working with Clients who have experienced Sexual Assault; Aboriginal Cultural Intelligence; Arrest Court Induction Workshop; Child Protection; Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Refresher; Domestic Violence Training; Domestic Violence Courts & Elder Abuse Prevention; Magistrates Court Induction; State & Local District Court; QCAT Jurisdiction, Induction, Overview & Process sessions; Youth Justice Services and Referral Processes; Supervised Practice; Supporting witnesses and court users; Vicarious Trauma & Self Care; VSU Induction; Working with Domestic Violence Victims as a Volunteer and the Court Network Service Charter.



# Victorian Annual Conference

## “Building Trust in the Justice System”

Over 200 Networkers and stakeholders attended our Annual Victorian Conference in November 2017. We were privileged to have Justice Jennifer Coate, one of the commissioners of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses Child Sexual Abuse, in conversation with the Honourable Marcia Neave AO, our Board President and lead Commissioner for the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Justice Coate spoke of more than 8,000 private sessions that have been held with survivors of child sexual abuse over the five-year life of the Royal Commission, and the importance of the criminal justice response offering a brand of justice that ensures they are not further victimised through the process.

Justice Coate talked about the deeply disturbing history of institutional child abuse and the different experiences and lifelong impact of survivors of child sexual abuse.

Justice Coate emphasized another significant theme which emerged was the power and importance of the victims being heard by someone representing authority – particularly for those whose voices had been lost. Networkers were also reminded of the barriers to disclosure that survivors face - the sense of shame, guilt and fear, fear of repercussions and the fear of not being believed. In addition, Justice Coate noted the importance of our Networkers understanding the court users they may be supporting and that trust is a major issue. Survivors of child sexual abuse expressed the difficulties that they have with trust within their own personal relationships; intimate partner, friendship, social and family relationships all the way through to the support services environment.

Court Network stands ready to support those members of the community who may be involved in future prosecutions and encourage our court-based partners to refer people as early as possible so that we can familiarise and better prepare them for the court processes to come.

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**“It is important to understand that everyone is affected differently and everyone brings a different life experience and deals with trauma differently...the themes that have emerged out of our private sessions, were that people will regularly talk about their sense of low self worth, the terrible affect on self esteem. They will often talk about their rage and anger, developing often much later in life, and as they have come to be an adult themselves, they have started to reframe what happened to them as a child and see it through the adult lens of what was actually done to them. And this rage and anger can often spill over into anti-social and criminal behavior.”**

– Justice Jennifer Coate  
Victorian Annual Conference, November 2017

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Pictured: The Hon Marcia Neave AO, Board President; Carmel Benjamin AM, Founder and the Hon Chief Justice Anne Ferguson, Supreme Court of Victoria

# National Volunteer Week 2018

National Volunteer Week (NVW) is an annual celebration recognising and acknowledging the contribution that volunteers make across Australia in serving their communities. The week represents an opportunity for the courts and our stakeholders to recognize Court Network's volunteers.

Our Victoria National Volunteer Week event was held in May and our guest speaker, Dr Danny Sullivan, Executive Director of Clinical Services at Forensicare, presented on mental health in prisons. Danny has worked in forensic psychiatry in community, prison and hospital settings since 2001. He spoke of what forensic mental health is, recidivism and highlighted sobering statistics regarding the health profile, mental health and sociodemographics of offenders entering the prison system.

Our Networkers often identify mental health issues as an area they want to learn more about, particularly in terms of how knowledge can better assist their practice with court users.

**In the last financial year our volunteers contributed over 95,000 hours of time to support 190,000 court users, often in extremely difficult circumstances.**



Pictured: The Hon Marcia Neave AO, Carmel Benjamin AM, Dr Melanie Heenan & Dr Danny Sullivan

Also during NVW, our Board President, The Honourable Marcia Neave AO and Networker, John, participated in a dynamic panel discussion with Jon Faine on The Conversation Hour where they discussed the role of Court Network in the community and the value of volunteering.

The Honourable Marcia Neave AO spoke of the work of the Court Network Board and the importance of continuing education for our Networkers: "We oversee the whole process at Court Network, we put a lot of emphasis on training so our volunteers can be the most effective volunteers they can possibly be."

**"There are sobering stories that you hear, but you also hear of resilience and humour and the warmth that you get back from it (volunteering)...but it is when you walk out at the end of a day knowing that you actually assisted in bringing justice a little bit closer to the community..."**

- John, Networker  
The Conversation Hour, May 2018



Pictured: Her Honour Judge Suzanne C Sheridan (centre) together with three networkers and Jodie Mullen, Brisbane Program Manager (second from left) attending the QCAT NVW morning tea in May.

QCAT Networkers and other volunteers enjoyed a special National Volunteer Week morning tea in Queensland, hosted by Her Honour Judge Suzanne C Sheridan, Deputy President and Natalie Parker Acting Executive Director and attended by David Mackie, Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney General.

Volunteering North Queensland hosted a social evening with live entertainment, a corporate expo and presentation of the North Queensland Volunteer of the Year Award. This fun night was attended by ten networkers and our Program Manager Madeleine Rudge who participated in volunteer shout outs saying, "Your volunteering efforts are not visible to the wider community, but you provide a crucial service. We couldn't ask for a better team of people to work with."



Court Network volunteers farewelled Dr Melanie Heenan, former Executive Director of Court Network, at an event held in Melbourne in June

# Queensland Graduations



Pictured: Brigita Cunnington, Board Member; Annette Hogan, Queensland State Manager; Justice Martin Daubney (centre), Chief Judge Kerry O'Brien (centre right) and the Hon Marcia Neave AO, Board President, with Brisbane Networkers.

## Brisbane

Our Brisbane office hosted a special event in May, held in the stunning Banco Court, to present service awards and mark the graduation of 39 new Networkers. We paid tribute to four service recipients who have been volunteering with Court Network for over ten years and were grateful to have the Honourable Justice Daubney and the Honourable Chief Judge O'Brien as our special guests of honour. Both spoke with great sincerity and passion about the impact of the work of our amazing volunteers.

## Townsville

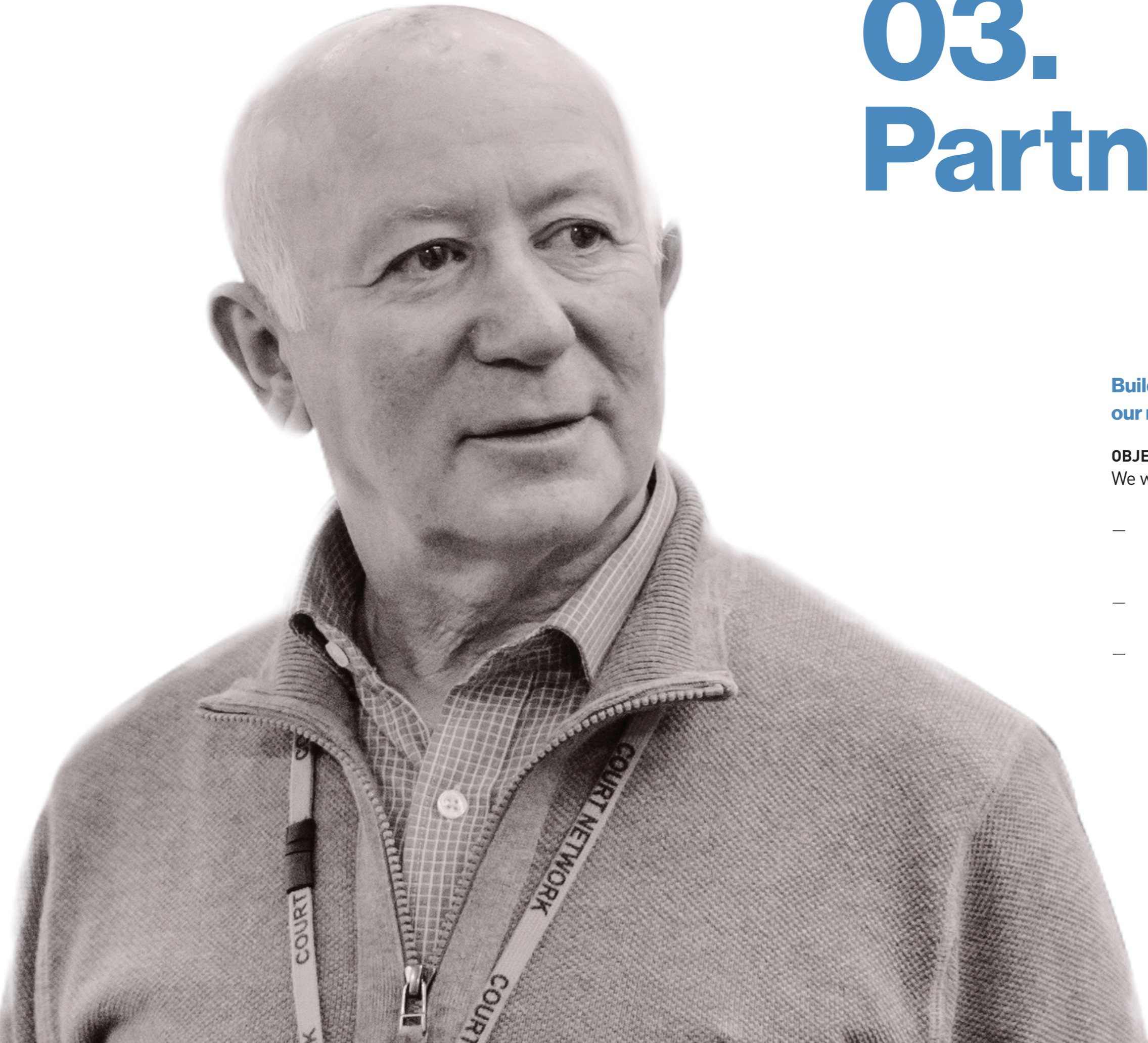
His Honour Justice North was the guest of honour at the Townsville graduation and awards ceremony in October 2017. Fourteen graduates swelled the ranks of the Townsville team. Justice North spoke movingly of the Networkers being the 'human face' of the courts.



Pictured: Justice Martin Daubney (far right) with Brisbane Networkers and Program Manager, Jodie Mullen (second from left)



# 03. Partnerships



**Build strong relationships to expand our reach and influence**

**OBJECTIVES**

We will:

- **Build** our reputation as an evidence-based service provider and a source of quality information
- **Advocate** for court users to improve access to the justice system for all
- **Create** new relationships that advance the needs of vulnerable court users

# Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal (QCAT)

In 2009 Court Network commenced providing services in QCAT, establishing a highly valued 'meet and greet' service for tribunal users. A small, very loyal group of Networkers learnt a great deal about QCAT's processes and assisted tribunal users with information, support and referrals. They provided a warm and friendly welcome and directions as people arrived, supported QCAT's operations and kept QCAT staff informed of tribunal users' arrivals.

In early 2017 a funding crisis threatened Court Network's presence at QCAT, with the anticipated closure of the service. The funding cuts were reversed at the last minute and Court Network was delighted with the news that the Public Trustee of Queensland would be contributing an additional \$50,000 per annum for the period 2017-2020 to establish an enhanced support service for the most vulnerable tribunal users, particularly in matters such as residential tenancy and guardianship.

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**"QCAT aims to resolve disputes and make decisions in a way that is 'fair, just, accessible, quick and inexpensive'. It makes decisions across a range of matters affecting people in their everyday lives from neighbourhood disputes, arrangements for children in care, issues concerning the elderly, the conduct of professionals as well as building disputes. Generally, parties represent themselves in a QCAT matter. Court Network is an important community service for those attending QCAT with tribunal users often telling us that they do not understand what is happening, nor understand the process. For example those involved in residential tenancy express deep concern about possible eviction and the need to find suitable and/or sustainable alternative housing."**

– The Hon Justice Daubney AM, President of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

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## Strengthening our service

In the past year we have focused on strengthening and enhancing our QCAT services. This improvement project has been guided by, and aligns, with Court Network's vision, mission and service framework, as articulated in the Service Charter. It incorporates the established services and extends the range of operations, initially focusing on residential tenancy matters.

As a result our Networkers:

- more actively approach tribunal users to offer information and support
- provide non-legal information to tribunal users about QCAT processes, especially in relation to tenancy matters
- have a stronger understanding of referral pathways in QCAT and the community
- provide support, including in hearing rooms

During this period of enhancement to services, we have also improved our QCAT infrastructure through recruiting new Networkers, developing and delivering continuing education initiatives, and streamlining and strengthening business processes. While these are all important and essential initiatives, the key to successful implementation of the QCAT Project is our partnerships.

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**"The Networker has a kind heart. I felt her presence with me during the hearing which I very much appreciated. She noticed that I needed some time to myself and gave me that space. I also felt comforted by her when she walked out with me. My thanks to the Court Networker for her support in the lead up and on the day."**

– Tribunal User

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## Working in partnership

QCAT Members and staff extended their strong support to Court Network by lobbying for the continuation of our QCAT services. Court Network places a very high value on this support and welcomed the opportunity to build a better service for QCAT users by working in close partnership with QCAT and its affiliated stakeholders.

In the planning phase, the President, Deputy President and Senior Members listened and learned in more detail about Court Network's capability and provided considered advice about the ways in which we could contribute more effectively. Their recommendation was to initially focus on residential tenancy, anticipating that guardianship might follow in 2018/19. We then engaged with Members and adjudicators to explore how the Networker role would operate in relation to their hearings.

Networkers have always related closely to many QCAT staff and through this project we have extended our network, communications and liaison to a wider range of QCAT staff, building a stronger mutual understanding of our roles, capabilities and opportunities.

We have developed linkages and partnerships with key stakeholders, building mutually agreed referral pathways and working arrangements, including the development of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). As a result, our stakeholders now have an enhanced awareness of Court Network services and the Networkers' role. For example,

the partnership with Tenants Queensland, which is underpinned by an MOU, enables tenants to link with Court Networkers to access QCAT processes and information and to receive practical and emotional support during their appearance at QCAT. Through these relationships we have developed referral pathways for legal services and residential tenancy, including associated resource materials for Networkers.

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**"QCAT is, for the vast majority of litigants, where the "rubber hits the road" in terms of engagement with civil litigation. QCAT has an extraordinary breadth of jurisdiction in matters which affect the lives of everyday Queenslanders....In many of those jurisdictions, we are dealing with people who have little, if any, legal experience, and scant capacity to afford legal assistance. And we are often dealing with people who are marginalised or suffering from some form of disadvantage, be that emotional, intellectual or practical. That is why I'm proud to applaud Court Network and thank you for being part of the QCAT family."**

– Justice Daubney, QCAT President, 2018 Networker graduation

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## Case Study

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Following a recommendation from a housing provider, \*Peter referred himself to Court Network. His real estate agent had sent him a notice to leave his accommodation. He was extremely anxious about the possibility of having to find alternative accommodation. Peter was preparing to attend a QCAT hearing about this matter and did not have any support persons who could attend with him.

When he called Court Network's 1800 information line, Peter was provided with general information about what to expect at QCAT and given information about a community legal centre and community housing providers. He was linked to a Court Networker to support him on the day of his matter.

The Networker met Peter on arrival and supported him prior to, and during, his matter. This included a pre-hearing Tribunal tour to familiarise Peter with the environment and to explain what to expect during the hearing. He appreciated

the practical and emotional support provided during the matter and during breaks in proceedings. The outcome of the hearing was that the notice of termination was upheld but there was scope for negotiation about the termination date.

When we followed up with Peter, he expressed his appreciation for the support and information provided to him. It was particularly important to him because he was anxious about receiving a short termination date and because he had past experiences at QCAT when he had not received any support.

\* All names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of individuals.

# Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

**“Tens of thousands of children have been sexually abused in many Australian institutions. We will never know the true number. Whatever the number, it is a national tragedy, perpetrated over generations within many of our most trusted institutions.”**

– Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse final report

After a five-year inquiry into institutional responses to child sexual abuse and 57 public hearings, more than 1,300 witness accounts, 8,000 harrowing personal stories from survivors and 2,575 matters referred to police, the Royal Commission presented its final report in December 2017. The Commission made 409 recommendations in total, with 189 that had not been heard in earlier royal commission releases.

Abuse most commonly took place within an institution managed by a religious organisation – this was reported by 58.1% of survivors. Government-run institutions accounted for 32.5% and non-government and non-religious institutions for 10.5%.

The Royal Commission recommended the Australian Government and all state and territory governments should issue a formal response to the Final Report within six months of it being tabled.

The statistics provided a harrowing picture of survivor experiences:

- almost two in three survivors were male survivors (63.6 per cent)
- 14.9 per cent of survivors identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- 4.2 per cent of survivors identified as having a disability at the time of abuse
- 93.8% of survivors were abused by a male
- the average age of victims when first abused was 10.4 years
- child sexual abuse experienced in institutions continued for an average of 2.2 years

In June 2018, the Australian Government submitted its response. In response to 84 recommendations that deal with redress, the Australian Government has created a National Redress Scheme for people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse. Other key Australian Government’s measures include the establishment of a National Office for Child Safety, National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, Commonwealth Child Safe Framework, Australian Government support for a database to share outcomes of Working With Children Checks, Guiding Principles for Commonwealth entities when responding to civil claims concerning allegations of child sexual abuse and A National Apology to be delivered on 22 October 2018.

Of the remaining 325 recommendations, 122 have been directed wholly or partially to the Australian Government. The Australian Government Response accepted or accepted in principle 104 of these 122 recommendations.



**“We have been exposed to terrible stories of human depravity and seen huge numbers of people of hurt and distressed. But there is a balance to it and importantly it has been a very significant other side to the story for us which is we have also been energized and lifted by the numbers of inspirational people from all walks of life who have showed enormous courage and resilience – courage in speaking out and resilience in the paths that they have led in their lives. And we have also experienced enormous gratitude being expressed to us by many of the people who have spoken to us for the work we are doing.”**

– Justice Jennifer Coate  
Victorian Annual Conference, November 2017

Source: Final information update (<https://www.childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/>)

# Submission to the Review of the Family Law System



In March 2018 the Australian Law Reform Commission released an Issues Paper for its Review of the Family Law System and called for submissions from the public. This has been a first major review since the Commonwealth Family Law Act was introduced in 1975 and commenced in 1976.

Court Network submitted a limited response focusing on 14 of the 47 questions and provided more than 30 recommendations.

One consideration raised in the Issues Paper referred to the introduction of “navigators” to support family court users. Our strong view is that this role of navigators could readily be performed by skilled Court Network volunteers. Within the Melbourne and Dandenong Family Courts in Victoria, Networkers have and continue to play a “navigator” role in assisting court users, particularly those self-representing and first-time court users, to navigate the considerable amount of information and participate in the court process in a meaningful way.

Another key recommendation was to expand the Court Network model to other states across Australia to provide cost effective non-legal support to court users with an emphasis on supporting the increasing numbers of unrepresented people. This should include resources to support continued development of the enhanced model of support to unrepresented people attending a final hearing in the family court and further development of the resource booklet – a resource developed by Court Network and specifically designed for unrepresented litigants. Court Network provides a significant amount of support to litigants who are not represented.

In addition, Court Network’s submission included recommendations in relation to the use of technology; the needs of specific groups such as children, CALD people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; the importance of a transparent and consistent duty lawyer system; the use of alternative venues for family court proceedings; training for judicial staff and specific recommendations related to cases where family violence is identified as an issue.

**“A court user phoned me – she was self representing in the family court and wanted to pass on her thanks for the care and kind words from the Court Network volunteer, who made such a difference to her and how she was feeling during her time in court.”**

– Program Manager, Victoria



# 04. Organisational Capability

**Secure the organisational base  
needed to achieve our Mission**

**OBJECTIVES**

We will:

- **Preserve** existing funding arrangements and expand our funding sources
- **Optimise** our management and reporting systems to ensure we are efficient and effective
- **Build** the capability of our workforce to deliver our strategies

# Accreditation

Standards and independent review processes help to ensure quality services that deliver positive outcomes for court users as members of the community.

As a service provider registered under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 Court Network is externally assessed, or accredited, every three years against the Human Services Standards (Victoria), which consist of four service delivery standards as well as governance and management standards.

**In March 2018 Court Network achieved accreditation against these standards for the second time.**

The final accreditation report noted the following significant achievements and strengths:

- a strong focus on achieving positive outcomes for clients, in particular women experiencing or at risk of family violence
- strong and effective governance
- strong financial governance and management
- effective collaborations with a range of other service providers and government entities
- staff and volunteers that are committed and well supported through training and professional development

A key structure for supporting the quality focus within the organisation has been the establishment of a Quality and Risk Sub Committee of the Board, convened by our Board Member, the Honourable David Harper AM. Significant contributors to our preparation for the accreditation process included our very part time Quality Coordinator, Ileana Guizzo, and the project support and administration provided by Joao Goncalves. It was a true team effort, however, with the Board, management, corporate and administration staff, Program Managers and Networkers all contributing to this significant achievement.

## The Client Service Standards are focused on:

- **Empowerment:** People’s rights are promoted and upheld
- **Access and Engagement:** People’s right to access transparent, equitable and integrated services is promoted and upheld
- **Wellbeing:** People’s right to wellbeing and safety is promoted and upheld
- **Participation:** People’s right to choose, decision making and to actively participate as a valued member of their chosen community is promoted and upheld

## The governance and management standards include:

- governance
- leadership and management
- financial management
- human resources – including pre-employment checks, training and development, supervision and workforce
- continuous quality improvement and feedback processes
- information and knowledge management including confidentiality
- occupational health and safety
- partnerships/service coordination



# New Website

As a part of Court Network’s continuous improvement process, we undertook the redesign and redevelopment of our website and the new site went live in June 2018.

While the new website will certainly contribute to raising the profile of our organisation, we ultimately did all of this to provide a more dynamic user experience by making it mobile-device friendly, directing users to information more easily, updating the sites functional capabilities, improving the online referral form tool, including an online feedback and complaints form, enhancing the volunteer registration process, integrating the Victim Support Unit QLD’s website and building a login portal for volunteers [the portal is currently under development].

# 2017-18 Board of Directors

## Board President | The Honourable Marcia Neave AO

### APPOINTED AGM 2016

Marcia was a Judge of the Court of Appeal Division of the Supreme Court of Victoria from 2006 to 2015, until her appointment as Chair of the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Prior to those roles, she was a legal academic for many years, holding chairs at several Australian universities and was the Foundation Chair of the Victorian Law Reform Commission.

## Vice President | Deputy Chief Magistrate Felicity Broughton

### APPOINTED AGM 2013, RE-ELECTED AGM 2016

Felicity was appointed as a Victorian Magistrate in January 2000 and has been a Deputy Chief Magistrate since 2007. Felicity is currently a Supervising Magistrate for the Family Violence and Family Law Portfolio having been appointed in August 2011. From 2006 to 2012, Felicity was Supervising Magistrate for the court's sexual assault portfolio and for the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal from 2001 to 2004. Felicity is a member of the Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine's Ethics Committee. Felicity was a board member of CASA House from 1989 to 2000 and of the Children's Protection Society (CPS) from 1993 to 2000 serving as their President from 1996 to 1999.

## Treasurer | Don Tidbury

### APPOINTED AGM 2015

Don is an experienced, award winning CEO and CFO who has worked across the public health and not-for-profit sectors. As a qualified CPA and GAICD with extensive experience across hospitals, primary health, disability, residential aged care services, Don has a strong record in transforming organisations to achieve major improvements in the consumer experience, culture, clinical governance, financial performance and stakeholder engagement. Don enjoys contributing to the health, aged and community sectors via other voluntary board appointments including the Central Victorian Primary Care Partnership.

## Secretary | Rudy Monteleone

### APPOINTED AGM 2012

Rudy is currently Project Director, Whole of Government Infrastructure Policy, in the Department of Health and Human Services. Rudy has held various management roles in the Department of Premier and Cabinet, Supreme, County and Magistrates' Courts; the Victorian Multicultural Commission, and was appointed as Victoria's inaugural Juries Commissioner for Victoria in 2002.

## Inspector Anne Rudd

### MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2013, RE-ELECTED AGM 2016

Anne is a serving member of Victoria Police and over the past 16 years she has performed duties within the bayside area, Prosecutions Division, Family Violence Command and more recently, the North West Metro Region. Anne is a lawyer and an experienced prosecutor within the Magistrates' Court and Children's Court where she specialised in prosecuting sexual offences and family violence matters. Anne was a board member of the Therapeutic Treatment Board from 2010-2015.

## The Honourable David Harper AM

### MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2015

David was a Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria from 1992 - 2013, becoming a member of the Appeal Division of that Court in 2009. He was President of the Victorian Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (VACRO) between 1995 and 2012, and is now its patron. He became a Member of the Order of Australia in 2008 for service to law reform, the judiciary, international humanitarian law and the community. In 2015 David chaired a panel which advised the Victorian Government on the management of serious offenders. A result of the panel's report was the establishment of the Post Sentence Authority, to which David was appointed inaugural deputy chair for six months ending in October 2018.

## Nicky Bromberg

### MEMBER & NETWORKER | APPOINTED AGM 2016

Nicky is a current Court Networker, working in the Sunshine Magistrate's Court and the Family Court. Nicky is a trained Social Worker with a degree in Social Work and Criminology and has volunteered as a telephone counsellor at the Post Natal and Ante Natal Depression Association (PANDA) for a period of 18 months. Prior to social work, Nicky had a 25-year career in the publishing and communications industry, including working for ten years at Text Media as Publishing Director and Hardie Grant Magazines as Director of the business as well as serving on the Board. Nicky has extensive experience in the areas of staff and stakeholder management and in all facets of the publishing of printed and online content.

## Joanna Wriedt

### MEMBER & NETWORKER | APPOINTED AGM 2016

Joanna is a current Court Networker, based at Ringwood Magistrates' Court. She has previously worked as a lawyer and as adviser to a Federal Health Minister with responsibility for policy development and strategic negotiation with stakeholders in both public and private sectors. Joanna holds a PhD in

Medical Research and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She is a Director on the National Asthma Council, a Member of the Radiation Advisory Committee, and she is a director and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee for "Fitted For Work", a community organisation that aims to increase workforce participation rates for women experiencing disadvantage. Joanna has just completed a five-year term as Director and Deputy Chair of UnitingCare ReGen, an alcohol and other drug treatment and education agency that provides outpatient, residential and prison services.

## Brigita Cunnington

### MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2017

Brigita is currently the Executive Director of the Magistrates Courts Service in Queensland which provides support and services to ensure the effective operation of the Magistrates Courts. She has extensive experience in the justice portfolio working in various legal, policy and management roles. Brigita was admitted as a barrister of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2000 and practiced in native title law including at Crown Law and has been employed in various roles in Queensland Courts since 2006 including as Director of the Office of the State Coroner and Director of Courts Innovation Program.

## Ian Lang

### NETWORKER & MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2017

Ian is a current Networker at the Supreme and District Court in Queensland. He has had extensive experience in governance roles with other community based not for profit organisations, including sitting on the board of the Mount Gravatt Community Centre for twelve years, with seven of those years as president. Ian is a current member of the steering committee at the Mount Gravatt Police Citizen's Youth Club. Such positions have given Ian strong experience in governance, financial oversight and strategic planning as well compliance with legislation and service agreements. Prior to retirement Ian has worked as a project manager with the Queensland Government and as a Senior Policy Advisor to a Queensland Government Minister.

## Charlene Micallef

### MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2017

Until recently, Charlene worked for the Victorian Office of Public Prosecutions as the Manager of their Victims Strategy and Services. This Unit, which forms part of the Office of Public Prosecutions' (OPP) Legal Practice, and includes the Witness Assistance Service (WAS), is primarily focused on assisting victims, witnesses and family of deceased involved in matters prosecuted by the OPP through the criminal justice system, particularly the prosecution process. Charlene worked closely with Networkers during this time, both at court in assisting court users and providing in professional development to Court Networkers. Charlene is a qualified social worker and is driven by a strong commitment to social justice and empowering people who are disadvantaged or marginalised or who feel powerless or overwhelmed to access, navigate and participate in complex systems such as the criminal justice system. Charlene now works for Eastern Palliative Care as a Family Support Consultant.

## Neil Michael

### NETWORKER & MEMBER | APPOINTED AGM 2017

Neil is a current Court Network volunteer at the Wangaratta Magistrates' Court where he has been providing services to court users for the past eight years. Neil spent his working life in the service industry in Melbourne. Since retirement he has volunteered as a Community Visitor and a Panel Secretary for the Office of the Public Advocate (Disability Stream), a position he has held for ten years. Since retirement, Neil has devoted his spare time to volunteering and to giving back to the community by assisting vulnerable people who find themselves in difficult circumstances.

## Members who resigned or retired from Court Network Board during the 2017-18 financial year:

### JULIE STEEL (IMMEDIATE PAST VICE-PRESIDENT)

Appointed AGM 2011, re-elected AGM 2014, term ended Nov 2017

### GARY GIBSON

Appointed AGM 2014, term ended Nov 2017

### ENID RICHARDS

Appointed AGM 2014, term ended Nov 2017

## 1 July 2017 – 30 June 2018

Name	Year Joined	Meetings Eligible in 2017-18	Meetings Attended in 2017-18
Marcia Neave	2016	7	6
Felicity Broughton	2013	7	6
Don Tidbury	2015	7	7
Rudy Monteleone	2012	7	7
Anne Rudd	2013	7	5
David Harper	2015	7	7
Nicky Bromberg	2016	7	4
Joanna Wriedt	2016	7	5
Brigita Cunnington	2017	7	6
Ian Lang	2017	4	4
Charlene Micallef	2017	4	3
Neil Michael	2017	4	3
Julie Steel	2011	3	2
Gary Gibson	2014	3	2
Enid Richards	2014	3	3

\*Eligible meetings include 2017 AGM



# Our Staff Team



## VIC

<b>Maya Avdibegovic (from Jul 2018)</b> Dr Melanie Heenan (til Jun 2018)	<b>Executive Director</b>
Bernadette Burchell Rachael Pallenberg (Acting Mar-Jul 2018)	Victorian State Manager
Paul Drost (from Jul 2018) Narelle Anson (til Nov 2017)	Victorian Training Manager
Louise Morphett (til Sep 2018)	Victorian Trainer
Jennie Child, Paul Drost (til Jun 2018), Sarah Harris, Fran Lombardi (til May 2018), Julie Toohey, Georgie Cockram (from Jul 2018), Mary Rahilly (from Aug 2018)	Metropolitan Program Managers
Claire Connell, Deb Brown, Chris Howe (from Apr 2018), Vernon Knight (til Dec 2017), Michelle McKay (from Jan 2018), Patricia Mullens, Lyn Wilson	Regional Program Managers
Ming Zhou	Finance Manager
Amber Rose	National Administration Officer
Joao Goncalves	State Administration Officer
Sash Samarasinghe	Receptionist/Administration Support Officer
Ann Barrett	Administration Support Officer

## QLD

Annette Hogan	Queensland State Manager
Jodie Mullen	Program Manager (Brisbane)
Gail Jackson (from Apr 2018) Brenda Masutti (til Apr 2018)	Program Manager (Cairns)
Madeleine Rudge	Program Manager (Townville)
Susan Pickering (til Jun 2018)	Program Manager (Victim Support Unit)
Sandra Scobie	Services Manager (Victim Support Unit)
Renee Dillon	State Administration Officer

We also acknowledge the following staff for their contribution to Court Network during the 2017-18 Financial Year: Ileana Guizzo, Barbel Resinger, Emily Richardson-Brown, Eunice Tang, Maggie Warnick, Luke Cox

# Treasurer's Report for the Year ended 30 June 2018

On behalf of the Court Network Board, I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2018. It has been a year of significant achievement for the organisation whilst it has maintained strong governance and diligent financial stewardship.

For the 2017-18 year Court Network achieved an operating surplus of \$27,587 comparable with the previous year's operating surplus of \$25,712. This was a solid result given the changing landscape that Court Network operates within and reflects well on the Executive's management of Court Network's financial resources.

Court Network generated \$2,414,012 in revenue during 2017-18 which represented an increase of \$210,168 on the previous year. The growth in revenue is attributed to additional funding received from Court Services Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, Victoria's Department of Health and Human Services and the Queensland Department of Justice. Court Network's Executive are to be commended for securing further government funding in a challenging fiscal environment.

Total expenditure increased to \$2,386,425, being \$208,293 up on the previous financial year. The result was primarily influenced by increased wages and on-costs as a result of mandated award pay equity increases, additional staffing required to deliver new projects and increased outlays for volunteer related expenditure.

As at the end of 2017-18 Court Network's Total Current Assets (including cash) were \$1,118,820 which represented a minor decrease of \$49,457 on the previous year. Court Network continues to manage its cash position to ensure the organisation maintains appropriate liquidity levels such that it can fulfil all of its financial obligations whilst retaining enough reserves to accommodate any unplanned emergencies.

The 2018-19 year is looking positive as the Executive team have made strong progress in negotiating with funding providers for the year ahead. I also am pleased to advise Court Network's Board has endorsed a modest surplus budget for the 2018-19 year. In preparing next year's Budget, both the Board and Management have sought to ensure it includes appropriate funds to invest in Court Network's most important resource, being our dedicated and highly esteemed volunteers.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to extend our sincerest appreciation to our funding partners including the Queensland and Victorian Governments, Court Services Victoria, the Department of Health and Human Services Victoria, Victoria Legal Aid, Legal Aid Queensland, Victims Assist Queensland, our passionate volunteers, our industrious employees and the highly competent executive team.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous efforts of my fellow colleagues on the Court Network Board who along with the executive and volunteers continually strive to deliver Court Network's mission: To provide support, information and referral to persons attending court and to advocate for the needs of all court users.

**Don Tidbury**  
Treasurer

# Financial Statutory Statements

## Income Statement

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	NOTE	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>INCOME</b>			
Grants from Government and Statutory Bodies	9	2,393,282	2,183,273
Donations		1,076	2,376
Interest		15,406	12,690
Membership Subscriptions		1,391	1,282
Other		2,857	4,223
		<b>2,414,012</b>	<b>2,203,844</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Audit fees		6,100	5,410
Bank Charges and Fees		899	855
Board and Governance	10	13,432	16,369
Consultants	11	15,438	34,356
Court Supplies		4,655	5,649
Depreciation		4,916	4,888
Insurance		4,721	4,666
IT and Equipment Upgrade		32,210	30,791
Lease Expenses		2,763	2,752
Office Maintenance and Repairs, Minor Assets		5,342	4,649
Payroll Expense		3,982	4,368
Postage, Printing and Stationery		27,637	22,375
Project - Database		7,104	3,725
Project - Website		-	17,000
Provision for Tech & Communication Strategy		-	25,880
Publication & Information Resources		23,402	21,449
Rent		237,139	230,935
Salaries & Wages (including contractors)		1,643,532	1,412,720
Staff Recruitment, Professional Development and Amenities		13,321	20,840
Sundries and Membership		2,759	4,158
Superannuation		141,773	124,987
Telephone		20,483	22,555
Travel		65,118	70,138
Volunteer Expenses	12	86,896	66,011
Workcover		22,803	20,606
		<b>2,386,425</b>	<b>2,178,132</b>
<b>OPERATING RESULT FOR THE YEAR</b>		<b>27,587</b>	<b>25,712</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Financial Statutory Statements

## Balance Sheet

AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

	NOTE	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,110,989	1,163,941
Receivables and Prepayments	4	7,831	4,336
		<b>1,118,820</b>	<b>1,168,277</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Fixed Assets	5	12,029	5,506
		<b>12,029</b>	<b>5,506</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,130,849</b>	<b>1,173,783</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Creditors and Accruals		123,960	162,208
Income in advance	6	202,519	209,899
Provisions	7	207,337	232,230
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>533,816</b>	<b>604,337</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>597,033</b>	<b>569,446</b>
<b>MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>			
Reserve	13	6,079	6,079
Accumulated Surplus		590,954	563,367
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS</b>		<b>597,033</b>	<b>569,446</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.



# Financial Statutory Statements

## Statement of Changes in Equity

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	NOTE	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	RESERVES \$	TOTAL \$
Balance 1/7/2016		537,655	6,079	543,734
Surplus for the Year		25,712	-	25,712
Transfer to/ (from) Reserves		-	-	-
<b>BALANCE 30/6/2017</b>		<b>563,367</b>	<b>6,079</b>	<b>569,446</b>
Surplus for the Year		27,587	-	27,587
Transfer to/ (from) Reserves		-	-	-
<b>BALANCE 30/6/2018</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>590,954</b>	<b>6,079</b>	<b>597,033</b>

Funds set aside in the Reserve is for the on-going maintenance of Networkers Online Database.

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

## Statement of Cash Flows

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

	NOTE	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Grants from Government and Statutory Bodies		2,148,763	1,886,149
Interest		15,406	12,690
Other		5,324	8,564
<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
Employment Expenses		(1,847,905)	(1,585,772)
Supplies		(363,101)	(362,403)
<b>NET CASH (USED IN)/ PROVIDED FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>(41,513)</b>	<b>(40,772)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payments for purchase of plant and equipment		(11,439)	(7,560)
<b>NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>(11,439)</b>	<b>(7,560)</b>
<b>NET (DECREASE)/ INCREASE IN CASH HELD</b>		<b>(52,952)</b>	<b>(48,332)</b>
<b>CASH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>		<b>1,163,941</b>	<b>1,212,273</b>
<b>CASH AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,110,989</b>	<b>1,163,941</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2018

The financial statements cover Court Network Inc as an individual entity. Court Network is a not-for-profit association incorporated in Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) ('the Act')*. Court Network is registered with the ACNC under the *Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission Act 2012*.

The principal activities of the Association for the year ended 30 June 2018 were providing personal support, non-legal information and referral to those in contact with the justice system. The Association provides support, information and referral to persons attending court and advocates for the needs of all court users.

The functional and presentation currency of Court Network Inc is Australian dollars.

Comparatives are consistent with prior years, unless otherwise stated. Where required, comparative figures have been adjusted to conform to changes in presentation for the current financial year.

The financial statements and Committee's Report have been rounded to the nearest one dollar.

## 1. Basis of Preparation

In the opinion of the Committee of Management, the Association is not a reporting entity since there are unlikely to exist users of the financial statements who are not able to command the preparation of reports tailored so as to satisfy specifically all of their information needs. These special purpose financial statements have been prepared to meet the reporting requirements of the *Act*.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the recognition and measurement requirements of the Australian Accounting Standards and Accounting Interpretations, and the disclosure requirements of AASB 101 Presentation of Financial Statements, AASB 107 Statement of Cash Flows, AASB 108 Accounting Policies, Changes in Accounting Estimates and Errors and AASB 1054 Australian Additional Disclosures.

## 2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies

### (A) INCOME TAX

Court Network Inc. is not liable for tax as it is recognised as a public benevolent institution by both Federal and State legislation. Donations to Court Network Inc. in excess of \$2 are eligible for a tax deduction.

### (B) FIXED ASSETS

Fixed assets are carried at cost as indicated, less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation or impairment losses.

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets is depreciated on a straight line basis over the useful lives of the assets commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

The depreciation rates used for fixed assets are 10% - 40%. The assets' residual value and useful lives are reviewed, and adjusted if appropriate, at each balance sheet date.

### (C) CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS

Cash and cash equivalents include cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of twelve months or less that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash and which are subject to an insignificant risk of changes in values.

### (D) IMPAIRMENT OF ASSETS

At each reporting date, the Association reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is any indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying value.

Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is expensed to the profit and loss.

### (E) TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES

Trade payables and other payables are carried at amortised cost and represent liabilities for goods and services provided to the Association prior to the end of the financial year that are unpaid and arise when the Association becomes obliged to make future payments in respect of the purchase of these goods and services.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2018

## (F) EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

### Wages, Salaries and Annual Leave

Liabilities for wages, salaries and annual leave that are expected to be settled within 12 months of the reporting date represent present obligations resulting from employees' services provided to reporting date. They are calculated at undiscounted amounts based on remuneration wage and salary rates that the Association expects to pay as at reporting date including related on-costs, such as workers compensation insurance.

### Long-term service benefits

The Association's net obligation in respect of long-term services benefits, other than pension plans, is the amount of future benefit that employees have earned in return for their service in current and prior periods. The obligation is calculated using current rates including related on-costs.

### Superannuation

The amount charged to the Income Statement in respect of superannuation represents the contributions made by the Association to superannuation funds.

### (G) PROVISIONS

Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured.

### (H) REVENUE

Revenue is recognised to the extent that it is probable that the economic benefits will flow to the Association and the revenue can be reliably measured. The following specific recognition criteria must also be met before revenue is recognised.

### Interest Income

Interest revenue is recognised on a proportional basis taking into account the interest rates applicable to the financial assets.

### Membership Income

Membership income is recognised in the year it is received.

### Grant Income

Grants from the Government are recognised at their fair value where there is a reasonable assurance that the grant will be received and the Association will comply with all the attached conditions.

Government grants relating to specific projects are deferred and recognised in the income statement over the period necessary to match them with the costs they are intended to compensate.

## (I) CRITICAL ACCOUNTING ESTIMATES AND JUDGEMENTS

The preparation of a financial report in conformity with Australian Accounting Standards requires management to make estimates, judgements and assumptions based on historical knowledge and best available current information. Estimates assume a reasonable expectation of future events and are based on current trends and economic data, obtained both externally and within the Association. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The accounting policies detailed in note 2 provide details of these estimates, judgements and assumptions.

## (J) GOODS AND SERVICES TAX ("GST")

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office. In these circumstances the GST is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or as part of an item of the expense. Receivables and payables in the balance sheet are shown inclusive of GST.

Cash flows are presented in the cash flow statement on a gross basis, except for the GST component of investing and financing activities, which are disclosed as operating cash flows.

## (K) LEASES

The determination of whether an arrangement is or contains a lease is based on the substance of the arrangement and requires an assessment of whether the fulfilment of the arrangement is dependent on the use of a specific asset or assets and the arrangement conveys a right to use the asset.

Capitalised lease assets are depreciated over the shorter of the estimated useful life of the asset and the lease term if there is no reasonable certainty that the Association will obtain ownership by the end of the lease term.

Operating lease payments are recognised as an expense in the Income statement on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

## (L) CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

The incorporated association had no contingent liabilities as at 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2017.

## (M) EVENTS AFTER THE REPORTING PERIOD

No matter or circumstance has arisen since 30 June 2018 that has significantly affected, or may significantly affect the incorporated association's operations, the results of those operations, or the incorporated association's state of affairs in future financial years.

# Notes to the Financial Statements

For the year ended 30 June 2018

Note 3. Cash and Cash Equivalents	2018 \$	2017 \$
Cash on Hand	919	1,142
Cash at Bank	616,236	679,923
Cash on Deposit	493,834	482,876
	<b>1,110,989</b>	<b>1,163,941</b>

Note 4. Receivables and Prepayments	2018 \$	2017 \$
Sundry Debtors	7,831	4,336
	<b>7,831</b>	<b>4,336</b>

Note 5. Fixed Assets	2018 \$	2017 \$
Office Equipment	55,553	65,818
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(43,524)	(60,312)
	<b>12,029</b>	<b>5,506</b>

Note 6. Income In Advance	2018 \$	2017 \$
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	-	4,028
Court Services Victoria (Department of Justice)	6,021	37,610
Queensland Department of Justice	60,471	39,236
Victoria Department of Health & Human Services	136,027	113,423
Victoria Legal Aid	-	15,602
	<b>202,519</b>	<b>209,899</b>

Note 7. Provisions	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>(A) Employee Entitlements</b>		
Annual Leave and Other Entitlements	80,398	106,582
Long Service Leave	61,853	58,142
	<b>142,251</b>	<b>164,724</b>

<b>(B) Other</b>		
Children's Court Project	11,805	11,805
Office Maintenance	-	801
Staff Professional Development	3,401	8,751
Tech & Communication Strategy	15,880	25,880
Quality Management	33,000	-
Victim Support Unit Brisbane Volunteer Support	1,000	1,000
Volunteer Policy Handbook production	-	6,469
Volunteer Training	-	12,800
	<b>65,086</b>	<b>67,506</b>
	<b>207,337</b>	<b>232,230</b>

Note 8. Cash Flow Reconciliation	2018 \$	2017 \$
Reconciliation of net cash used in operating activities to operating results		
Operating Result	27,587	25,712
Depreciation	4,916	4,888
(Increase)/Decrease in receivables and prepayments	(3,495)	642
(Decrease) in creditors and accruals	(38,248)	(27,338)
Increase/(Decrease) in provision for entitlements	(22,472)	17,400
Increase/(Decrease) in Provision for Projects	(2,421)	4,114
(Decrease) in unearned income	(7,380)	(66,190)
<b>Cashflows (used in)/ from operations</b>	<b>(41,513)</b>	<b>(40,772)</b>

Note 9. Grants From Government And Statutory Bodies	2018 \$	2017 \$
Commonwealth Attorney General	4,028	17,000
Court Services Victoria	1,192,204	1,065,402
Victoria Department of Health & Human Services	320,737	300,983
Victoria Legal Aid	145,462	116,155
Queensland Department of Justice	730,851	683,733
	<b>2,393,282</b>	<b>2,183,273</b>

Note 10. Board And Governance	2018 \$	2017 \$
The Court Network AGM and Conference is a combined annual event. 30% of the event cost has been allocated in the accounts below:		
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	5,031	5,021
Other Board and Governance	8,401	11,348
	<b>13,432</b>	<b>16,369</b>

Note 11. Consultants	2018 \$	2017 \$
Consultants - Strategic Review	-	5,000
Consultants - DHS Accreditation	4,463	6,306
Consultants - Vic DHHS Sunshine Project	1,500	11,050
Consultants - Other	9,475	12,000
	<b>15,438</b>	<b>34,356</b>

Note 12. Volunteer Expenses	2018 \$	2017 \$
The Court Network AGM and Conference is a combined annual event. 70% of the event cost has been allocated in the accounts below:		
Court Network Conference	11,263	7,574
Other Volunteer Expenses	75,633	58,437
	<b>86,896</b>	<b>66,011</b>

Note 13. Reserve	2018 \$	2017 \$
Funds set aside in the Reserve is for the on-going maintenance of Networkers Online Database.		
Networker Online Database Reserve	6,079	6,079
	<b>6,079</b>	<b>6,079</b>

Note 14. Lease Commitments	2018 \$	2017 \$
Operating Lease commitments in relation to the rental of photocopying equipment.		
<b>Payable - Minimum Lease Payments (inclusive of GST):</b>		
- not later than 12 months	3,039	3,039
- between 12 months and 5 years	1,520	4,559
	<b>4,559</b>	<b>7,598</b>

# Statement by the Management Committee

## COURT NETWORK INC.

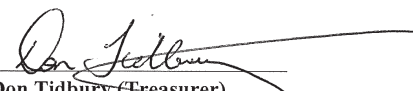
### STATEMENT BY THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 2 to the financial statements.

The committee of the association declares that:

- The financial statements and notes are in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and:
  - Comply with Accounting Standards as described in Note 2 to the financial statements; and
  - Give a true and fair view of the association's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the period ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 2 of the financial statements.
- In the Committee's opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the committee and is signed for and on behalf of the committee by:

  
Don Tidbury (Treasurer)

  
Rudy Monteleone (Secretary)

Dated: 24/09/2018



## Independent Auditor's Report To the Members of Court Network Inc.

### Opinion

We have audited the special purpose financial report (the financial report) of Court Network Inc. (the Association), which comprises the balance sheet as at 30 June 2018, the income statement, the statement of changes in equity and the statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the statement by the management committee.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Association is in accordance with the Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* (the ACNC Act), including:

- (a) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 2, and Division 60 of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### Emphasis of Matter - Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared for the purpose of fulfilling the Association's financial reporting responsibilities under the ACNC Act. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

### Responsibilities of Management and the Management Committee for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 to the financial report is appropriate to meet the requirements of the ACNC Act and the needs of the members.

Management's responsibility also includes such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intend to liquidate the Association or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

The management committee are responsible for overseeing the Association's financial reporting process.

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The title 'Partner' conveys that the person is a senior member within their respective division, and is among the group of persons who hold an equity interest (shareholder) in its parent entity, Findex Group Limited. The only professional service offering which is conducted by a partnership is the Crowe Horwath external audit division. All other professional services offered by Findex Group Limited are conducted by a privately owned organisation and/or its subsidiaries.



## Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the management committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during the audit.

CROWE HORWATH MELBOURNE

CASSANDRA GRAVENALL

Partner

24 September 2018

Melbourne

The relationship you can count on

# Statistics

## Number of People Assisted at Court\*

VICTORIA	2016-17	2017-18
<b>METROPOLITAN</b>		
Magistrates' Courts (includes Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre)	39,837	42,835
County Court	3,946	4,715
Supreme Court	1,559	1,525
Coroners Court	586	379
Children's Court	3,316	2,517
VCAT	7,556	6,665
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
Magistrates' Courts (including VCAT and Children's Courts)	42,062	38,940
Higher Courts (including County, Supreme and Coroners Courts)		
<b>OTHER</b>		
Family and Federal Magistrates' Courts	2,703	2,514
Supreme Court Information Team	13,265	12,177
Melbourne Magistrates' Court Information Desk	14,957	13,055
<b>VICTORIAN TOTAL</b>	<b>129,787</b>	<b>125,322</b>
<b>QUEENSLAND</b>		
<b>METROPOLITAN</b>		
Supreme & District Court	3,528	3,180
Supreme & District Court Information Desk	9,061	7,391
Brisbane Magistrates' Court	19,131	8,848
Brisbane QCAT (inc QCAT Info Desk)	7,909	12,681
<b>REGIONAL</b>		
Townsville Supreme & District Courts	813	427
Townsville Magistrates' Court	2,173	1,780
Cairns Supreme & District Courts	256	150
Cairns Magistrates' Court	5,017	4,182
Cairns Information Desk	5,995	4,935
Cairns QCAT		69
Victim Support Unit	392	844
<b>QUEENSLAND TOTAL</b>	<b>53,883</b>	<b>65,273</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>183,670</b>	<b>190,595</b>

\*Does not include duty calls VIC or info line QLD

“The Networkers were very supportive, put me at ease and made me feel safe. They do really important work – and it is vitally important to feel supported as a survivor of family violence.”  
– Court user

# Glossary

## **AGM**

Annual General Meeting

## **ATSI**

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

## **CALD**

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

## **COURT NETWORKER**

A Court Network volunteer

## **COURT USER**

Any person attending court

## **CPI**

Consumer Price Index

## **CSV**

Court Services Victoria

## **DHHS**

Department of Health and Human Services

## **DOJ**

Department of Justice

## **IRO**

Information Referral Officer

## **LEGAL AID**

A free, state government funded legal service

## **LAQ**

Legal Aid Queensland

## **NETWORKER**

A Court Network volunteer

## **ODPP**

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions

## **OPP**

Office of Public Prosecutions

## **QCAT**

Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal

## **VAQ**

Victims Assist Queensland

## **VCAT**

Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

## **VLA**

Victoria Legal Aid

## **VSU**

Victim Support Unit

**“Court Network really helped me. The Networker was lovely, made me feel very supported and looked after me when I was giving evidence. As a parent of a witness, I definitely appreciated the court support – the legal system is a foreign world to us and having people explain the process was really valuable.”**

**– Court user**



**VICTORIA**

Level 5, 555 Lonsdale Street  
Melbourne VIC 3000  
DX: 210 312

admin@courtnetwork.com.au  
Toll free number: 1800 681 614

**QUEENSLAND**

The Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law  
415 George Street  
Brisbane QLD 4000

queensland@courtnetwork.com.au  
Toll free number: 1800 267 671

**[www.courtnetwork.com.au](http://www.courtnetwork.com.au)**

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