

In Kind

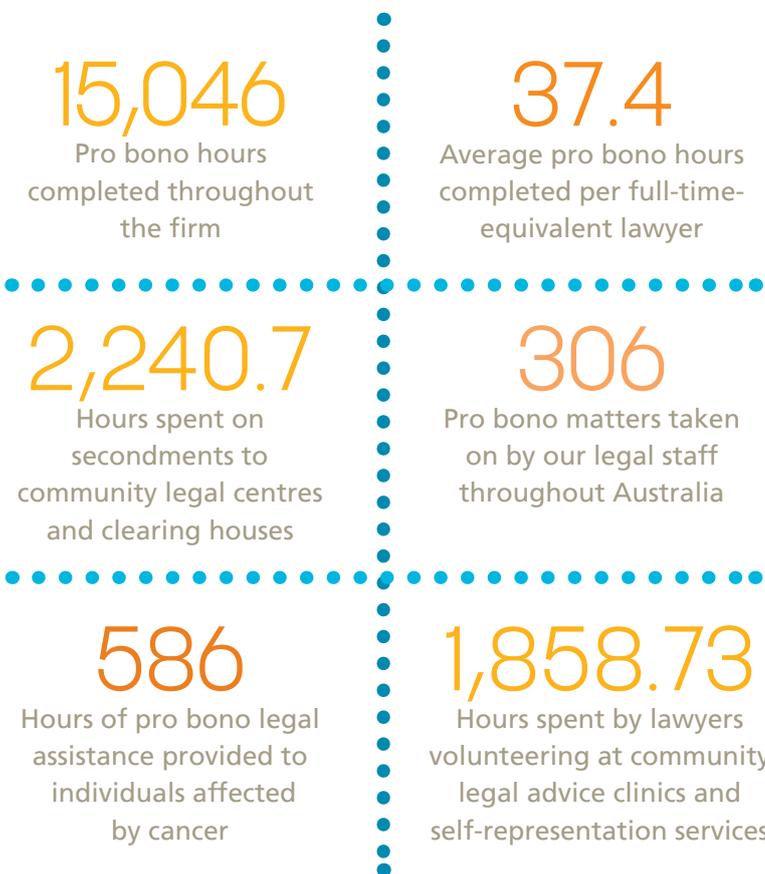
Sparke Helmore's social sustainability report FY2019/20

Our impact

For 16 years we've worked to empower local communities and to advocate for individuals experiencing disadvantage through our Pro Bono Practice and Community program. We're particularly proud of the very real outcomes that our people have achieved and delighted that we've once again met the legal industry target for pro bono hours undertaken by our lawyers.

Our pro bono work

An overview of our achievements from the past year.



"Sparke Helmore proved exceptionally responsive and were quickly able to identify our needs, ensuring they were addressed throughout our correspondence. We feel much more confident in our standing with Sparke Helmore behind us."

— Nicolas Brown | Batyr Australia Limited

"Sparke Helmore has really assisted [by] alleviating stress from the civil law service. The partnership is invaluable to a busy community legal centre like ours, handling a high volume of advices and enabling our staff to focus on complex casework."

— Vasili Maroulis | Marrickville Legal Centre

In the community

A snapshot of our community activities over the past year.

Two Transform Cambodia centres take vulnerable and neglected children to a water park for a day from staff donations

\$10,000
Donation to provide scholarships to Indigenous students through the Goodes O'Loughlin Foundation

>1,000
Sandwiches made for Eat Up!, helping disadvantaged school children who can't afford lunch

315
Lives saved following staff blood drives

\$7,000+
Funds raised to break the cycle of homelessness, in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout event

>25
Hampers made for Weave with donations of non-perishable food items

Highlights from the past year

Key activities from our Pro Bono Practice and Community program

Responding to the bushfire crisis

Sparke Helmore joined in a coordinated pro bono legal response, with Justice Connect, Legal Aid and several key pro bono sector stakeholders to provide pro bono legal support to those impacted by the fires. We also rallied together in support of Cobargo, a town in the Bega Valley Shire of NSW that was ravaged by bushfires on New Year's Eve. In just 24 hours, we received an influx of incredibly generous donations, contributing to 20 pallets of necessities delivered to the community of Cobargo by convoy arranged by JPH Urban.

Assisting charities and individuals affected by the pandemic

For charitable organisations hard hit by the impacts of COVID-19, our Pro Bono Practice provided 277 hours of free legal assistance on a range of matters, from lease terminations as a result of financial hardship, HR matters and JobKeeper disputes, to providing vulnerable members of the community with employment law assistance.

Closing the gap for the "missing middle"

In collaboration with the Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC), we launched the Low Bono Employment Service, catering for a large section of the community who cannot afford legal assistance but do not meet Legal Aid or pro bono eligibility tests. The service provides affordable, fixed-fee representation to clients who would not otherwise get access to legal support. Since its launch, we have been providing support of up to 30 hours every week through lawyer secondments, in addition to a 6-month full-time secondee who helped with the initial setup.

Supporting disadvantaged women through divorce

We set up a Divorce Clinic for women in the ACT, in collaboration with the Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region, providing over 265 hours of legal assistance. This clinic offers pro bono assistance to unrepresented applicants in the Federal Circuit Court of Australia for lodgment of a divorce application. This clinic caters to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) women, many of whom are disadvantaged, may experience domestic violence and may not have the English language skills to complete their application themselves.

Developing the MLC Telephone Advice Clinic

The Telephone Advice Clinic is another new initiative developed by MLC and the Sparke Helmore Pro Bono Practice, providing free telephone advice on general legal matters as well as civil or employment disputes for individuals. Demand for free legal advice has increased during COVID-19, with an influx of enquiries regarding redundancies and entitlements, helping over 100 people to achieve better and fairer outcomes.

"Obtaining a divorce can be crucial for a woman to move forward with her life, or stop ongoing abuse, but divorce procedures can be complicated by factors linked to cultural and linguistic backgrounds or migration. We are grateful for Sparke Helmore's support and working together to provide this really important service."

—Nicola Mildren | Women's Legal Centre ACT & Region

2,900



Containers for Change collected - Ronald McDonald House Charities



\$3,500

Raised by staff to support victims of Australia's bushfire season



Ronald McDonald House Charities® Australia

Sparke Helmore inducted into RMHC Hall of Fame

As a long-time partner with McDonalds Australia, and its associated charity, Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC), in 2019 Sparke Helmore was inducted into the RMHC Hall of Fame—that acknowledges volunteers and organisations going above and beyond in their service to the charity.