

# In Kind

## Sparke Helmore's social sustainability report FY2020/21

### Our impact

Every lawyer at Sparke Helmore is encouraged to participate in our national Pro Bono Practice. We've been providing pro bono legal services for several decades, with a more formalised Pro Bono Practice in place for the past 17 years. Once again in the 2020/21 financial year, the firm exceeded the National Pro Bono Target of 35 hours per lawyer and reached a new high of 39.6 hours per lawyer—our biggest year yet!

We're extremely proud of how our people have successfully managed the way they provide legal advice and services during the pandemic so those most in need continue to gain access to justice. Our community fundraising and ongoing support of fantastic initiatives and charitable organisations has made a meaningful difference in what has been a challenging environment.

### Our pro bono work

An overview of our achievements.

15,659

Pro bono hours completed

39.6

Average pro bono hours completed per full-time-equivalent lawyer

>1,080

Hours spent on secondments to community legal centres, clearing houses and charities/not-for-profit organisations

>1,905

Hours spent by lawyers volunteering at community advice clinics and self-representation services

314

New pro bono matters taken on by our staff throughout Australia

*My involvement with the Low Bono service has allowed me a rewarding opportunity to directly assist people adversely affected by the pandemic, who without this service may have not been able to access legal assistance.*

Sophie Ray | Law Graduate | Workplace

### In the community

A snapshot of our community activities.

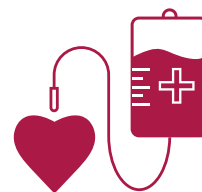


\$14,474

raised during September 2020 in support of the Cerebral Palsy Alliance

\$20,000+

Funds raised to break the cycle of homelessness, in the Vinnies CEO Sleepout event



141 lives

saved following staff blood drives

239 gifts

donated to spread Christmas cheer to vulnerable children



\$12,500

given to local charities through our Community Program

## Highlights from the past year

### Responding to the COVID-19 pandemic

#### Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) Low Bono Legal Service partnership

MLC, in partnership with our firm, launched the Low Bono Legal Service in May 2020 to provide employment law assistance to the “missing middle”, a large section of the community who cannot afford professional legal advice but who also don’t meet Legal Aid or pro bono eligibility tests. This innovative service addresses a large gap in access to justice for low-income earners with a model that provides affordable, fixed-fee representation to clients who, before its launch, would not have had access to legal services. All funds raised through the service are directed towards MLC’s pro bono programs.

*The Low Bono Legal Service is a prime example of pro bono relationships having a direct impact for vulnerable clients and the outcomes of their legal matters. Since inception, the Low Bono Legal Service has recovered \$1,582,406.09 for clients. The positive outcomes for clients could not have been achieved without the support of Sparke Helmore.*

Lucy Carroll | Acting Assistant Principal Solicitor | Marrickville Legal Centre

#### Low Bono Legal Service in FY2021



#### Three Rivers Regional Assembly: supporting local decision making in Aboriginal communities

We are currently working in partnership with Three Rivers Regional Assembly (TRRA), an Aboriginal leadership group, which engages with local community to improve health, education and economic outcomes for Aboriginal communities in the Central West and Central Tablelands regions. TRRA is a member of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances, established to ensure the voices of First Nations communities are heard. Sparke Helmore offers both legal and non-legal support to TRRA. Advice is provided in a culturally appropriate manner and we have established a long-term sustainable partnership in order to support local decision making in First Nations communities.

*On behalf of all the Aboriginal peoples in our communities that benefit from your hard work, I thank you ... As an Aboriginal man wanting to change my peoples future, please remember you have made my job that little bit easier.*

Paul Carr | Chair | Three Rivers Regional Assembly

#### Helping the helpers

Our dedicated Not-for-Profit Corporate team specialises in providing governance and regulatory compliance expertise. The firm also advises not-for-profits and charitable organisations across all of its practice areas, including employment law, property and conveyancing, dispute resolution, insurance and liability, risk and compliance, estates, environment and planning, and intellectual property and technology. Some of the largest not-for-profits in the country as well as small and newly established organisations receive assistance through our Pro Bono Practice.

One of our charity clients, Brand X, provides arts organisations and individual artists with subsidised workspaces and creative development programs to help the creative community thrive. Through this partnership we offer holistic support, advising on all areas of Brand X’s operations.

*We are incredibly grateful for Sparke Helmore’s expertise and support, its legacy is a safe and equitable operational foundation for the City of Sydney Creative Studios that will ensure we thrive during this truly unique creative infrastructure project.*

James Winter | Director | Brand X

