



Contents

Message from the Chair	4
Message from the CEO	5
How we make change	6
Our impact in review	7
Legal action for social justice	8
Advocating for change	9
Rights education in the community	10
Training the next generation of social justice lawyers	11
Respecting First Nations communities	12
Our collective impact	14
Amplifying the voices of our clients	15
Meet the Team	16
Meet the Advisory Board	17
Thank you to our supporters	18
Join the fight for justice	19

The front cover was developed to reflect the National Justice Project's 'ripple' logo. The 'ripple' design reflects our mission to create a ripple effect of systemic change through our strategic litigation, education and advocacy.



Message from the Chair

Strengthening our capacity to advance social justice

2020 has been a dramatic and challenging year for all of us, as the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it a major upheaval in the way we work, live and interact with each other. However, it gives me great satisfaction to say that the National Justice Project ends the year in a stronger position than before the crisis.

Recognising the importance of bolstering our capacity to deliver on our mandate, we have invested in both our legal and non-legal staff. With two new First Nations trainees and two new junior lawyers, we are in a better position than ever to represent our clients in the courts. By also bringing on board two new communications and fundraising staff members, we aim to become a growing and sustainable legal service in the coming three years. With the further addition of one new position to manage our projects and partnerships, and one new role to oversee the general management of our organisation, we will be able to expand and deepen the impact of our work.

This year, we have also sought to strengthen our commitment to providing a culturally safe work environment for both our clients and our staff. Recognising our obligation to ensure that our practice reflects our values, we have developed a Cultural Safety Policy and an Anti-Racist Ethics of Practice to guide our conduct. We have established a Reconciliation Action Plan that details how we will strengthen and promote dialogue between the Australian legal system and First Nations laws, governance structures and protocols.

I am delighted to announce that the National Justice Project Advisory Board has also been strengthened and diversified with the addition of five new members. Our Advisory Board now comprises a wealth of talented members including First Nations leaders, disability advocates and corporate innovators, in addition to our founders George Newhouse, Dan Mori and Duncan Fine.

Despite the enormous challenges that 2020 has thrown at us, our team has made important progress. We conclude the year in a stronger position than we began, and we look forward to continuing to hold governments to account for overreach and misconduct throughout the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, in times of crisis we must be even more wary of government abuses of civil rights and speak truth to power whenever we can.

Steven Castan

CHAIR



Message from the CEO

Amplifying our clients' call for truth and justice

In 2020 the #BlackLivesMatter movement erupted across the United States following the death of George Floyd, whose last words – "I can't breathe" – reverberated throughout the globe. In Australia, the same words "I can't breathe" uttered by David Dungay Jr. reignited the campaign for accountability and justice for the 441 First Nations people who have died in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission.

Our governments deny that systemic discrimination exists in Australia, but our clients know through lived experience that First Nations people, people with disabilities and asylum seekers continue to be treated as second-class citizens in healthcare, policing, incarceration and child protection.

The community knows this too. Following the mass rallies on the streets against First Nations deaths in custody, more than 110,000 people signed our petition calling for justice for David Dungay Jr. Faced with this upswell in community outrage, the NSW Parliament called an inquiry into First Nations over-incarceration and deaths in custody, and the Dungay family delivered a clear and uncompromising message to the commissioners: "Someone must be held accountable. Stop Black deaths in custody."

The 47 refugees we represented just this year know that their human rights do not matter to the Australian Government. They are people who have been profoundly harmed while in the custody and control of the Minister for Home Affairs. Yet when we took legal action to force the Government to own up to its legal responsibilities and failures, the Government appealed our case to the High Court to slow down the course of justice.

The Government's roadblocking tactics, however, did not stop the wider community from mobilising to stop Peter Dutton from removing mobile phones from the hands of detained asylum

seekers. We launched a petition in alliance with other advocate organisations to secure more than 110,000 signatures calling on the Senate to block the Government's cruel attempt to remove the mobile phone life-line from detained asylum seekers, and we succeeded.

Into the new year, the National Justice Project will continue to stand with First Nations peoples, asylum seekers and all of our clients. We acknowledge in particular our First Nations clients who entrust to us their very personal stories in the hope that they will change our society and eliminate prejudice, discrimination and racism.

It is the courage, strength, and determination of our clients, together with the support of our staff, donors and volunteers that keeps us going.

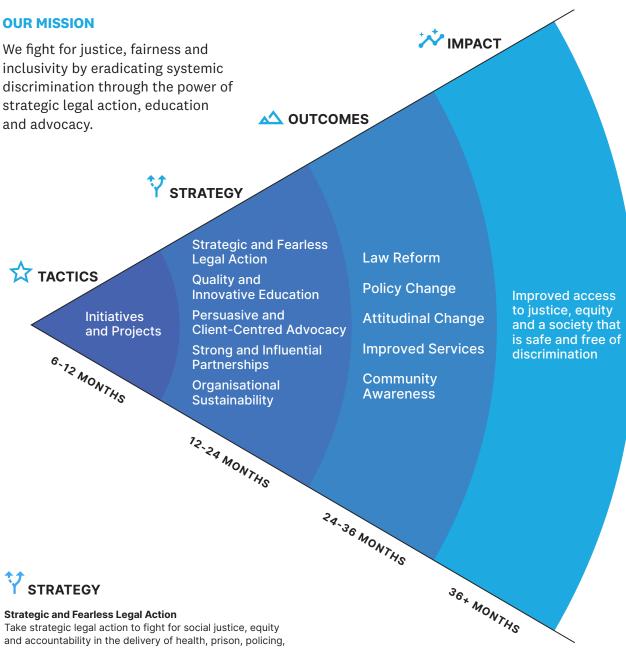
George Newhouse

CEO

How we make change

Despite substantial steps forward in 2020 the journey toward advancing human rights and social justice through strategic legal action, education and advocacy has only just begun.

Our Three Year strategy



justice and other government services and wherever systemic discrimination is found.

Quality and Innovative Education

Deliver world class, practice-inspired and catalytic social justice education for community, legal professionals and advocates.

Persuasive and Client-Centred Advocacy

Support grassroots advocacy built on ethical, rigorous and factbased research to amplify the voices of communities harmed by injustice.

Strong and Influential Partnerships

Collaborate with partners to develop and distribute tools and information to increase access to justice through the law, education and complaint mechanisms.

Organisational Sustainability

Grow our organisational efficiency and capacity to be enduring, robust and agile, enabling our work to continue for as long as injustice exists.

Our impact in review

Despite major obstacles in 2020 we made an impact on a greater number of clients, students and communities than ever before. Our strategic focus means that the ripple effect of our work will be felt well beyond the raw numbers.

PETITION



110,000+

Supporters signed the petition calling for charges to be laid for the death of David Dungay Jr.

TRAINING



88

Law students trained in Social Justice Clinics, TECH4JUSTICE, and through internships and placements.

ASYLUM SEEKERS



47

Asylum seekers represented in legal action to hold the Minister for Home Affairs to account for the harm done to them in detention.

OPEN LETTER

250+



Community leaders, jurists, eminent lawyers and scholars signed an open letter to the NSW Premier and Attorney General demanding that they take action to hold the authorities to account for the death of David Dungay Jr.

PETITION



110,000+

Supporters signed the petition demanding that the government back down from its threat to remove mobile phones from detained asylum seekers.

SUBMISSIONS



9

Parliamentary submissions lodged to inquiries into First Nations over-incarceration and deaths in custody, and the Disability Royal Commission.

COMPLAINTS



26

Complaints lodged regarding misconduct and discrimination in government services in health, education, policing and corrective services.

CASES



81

Cases taken to court, including 42 new cases and 29 closed cases.

Legal action for social justice

At the National Justice Project strategic legal action is at the heart of what we do. To secure change we take on some of the most challenging cases and we represent people and communities who experience systemic discrimination and marginalisation.

REPRESENTING PEOPLE SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE HIGH COURT



Throughout 2020 we fought a major legal battle with the Government in the High Court on behalf of 47 people seeking asylum. After being detained by the Government for years in offshore detention, our clients sought justice for the enormous harm and trauma they suffered.

In 2018 and 2019 we won several cases on behalf of dangerously ill asylum seeker children and adults in the Federal Court, forcing Peter Dutton to provide them with the medical treatment that experts said they urgently needed. Dutton's first appeal to slow down the progress of these cases failed, so he appealed to the High Court.

In December 2020 the High Court decided that our clients do have the right to take legal action against the Government in any court of Australia. This means we can progress these cases in 2021 to hold the Government accountable for the harm it needlessly caused.

Above: Naomi Lai, Emma Hearne, Anna Talbot, Elika Chaparian and Deema Dermelkonian went to Canberra in March to fight the Government's appeal.

Right: George Newhouse with National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) NSW Secretary Michael Thompson. Image by Alexandra Baker/National Justice Project.

DEFENDING THE RIGHT TO COVID-SAFE PROTEST

During the COVID-19 pandemic, governments and police forces sought to exploit the health crisis by imposing unnecessary and unreasonable restrictions on the right to assembly and the freedom of speech.

We worked with organisers of the Sydney #BlackLivesMatter rallies to protect their right to COVID-Safe protest, and won a major case in the NSW Supreme Court that led to a relaxing of police suppression of public protest. Representing the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU), our legal team convinced the judge that freedom of speech can be balanced with public health.

"During a time of increased policing powers, it is vital that civil society organisations and trade unions can take action to hold governments to account and to raise awareness without the risk of copping massive fines and bans."

GEORGE NEWHOUSE National Justice Project CEO



Advocating for change

We are committed to bringing change not only through litigation and education but by advocating with the community and allied organisations for systemic reform.

Throughout 2020 we mobilised our supporters to take action in #BlackLivesMatter rallies, where 30,000 people stood behind our clients who led the call for change.

In July 2020 we stood with the Dungay family to deliver a petition of more than 110,000 voices to the NSW Parliament. The mass petition called for accountability for the death of David Dungay Jr., a Dunghutti man who died in Long Bay Prison screaming out "I can't breathe." The petition was received by NSW Greens MPs David Shoebridge and Jenny Leong.

In December we delivered an open letter on the death of David Dungay Jr. to the NSW Premier and Attorney General, signed by more than 250 community leaders calling for a First Nations-led body to investigate First Nations deaths in custody.

BRINGING THE VOICES OF CLIENTS TO PARLIAMENT INQUIRIES

In 2020 we called for systemic reform of prisons and the coronial system at the NSW Select Committee on the High Levels of First Nations People in Custody and Oversight and Review of Deaths in Custody. Our submission highlighted the tragic story of David Dungay Jr. and called for a First Nations-led body to investigate First Nations deaths in custody. We also recommended the appointment of First Nations Coroners, measures to tackle overincarceration of First Nations people, and the delivery of culturally-safe care in detention.

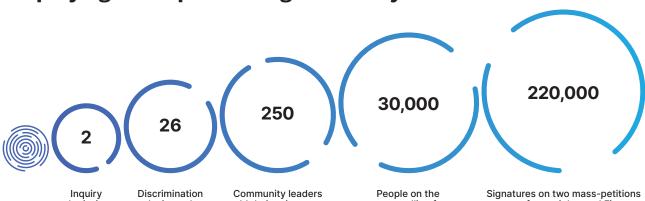


Showing the power of complaints, our clients the Mackenzie Donovan family pushed retail chain Big W to implement cultural awareness training across all stores nation-wide. After their young daughter was racially profiled by staff, the family welcomed Big W's commitment to dialogue with the Barngarla nation. Here, the family, Barngarla Elders and Big W staff stand together following a Smoking Ceremony. Image by: Mackenzie Donovan family.

HELPING PEOPLE SECURE ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH COMPLAINTS

To help people take action against discrimination and demand change, we record and report complaints. This is an important part of securing accountability from government bodies and authorities. Without an effective avenue for making complaints, many acts of daily discrimination would remain unacknowledged and unrecognised.

Amplifying our impact through advocacy



submissions

Discrimination and misconduct complaints lodged Community leaders add their voice to an open letter on the death of David Dungay Jr. People on the street calling for racial justice

Signatures on two mass-petitions on refugee rights and First Nations deaths in custody

Rights education in the community

The National Justice Project is committed to strengthening the legal agency of communities and empowering change-makers to practise social justice law. By raising the standards of rights education we are amplifying the impact of our work well beyond the courtroom.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO JUSTICE THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

TECH4JUSTICE is a new clinical placement for law students that commenced in 2020. Delivered through the Macquarie University Social Justice Clinic, TECH4JUSTICE is focused on designing and innovating technology solutions to help marginalised communities secure change. TECH4JUSTICE provides students with a range of opportunities and skills including design thinking, digital literacy, legal technology, practical legal experience, exposure to different areas of law and mentorship opportunities.

TECH4JUSTICE is designed to reflect the structure of a tech start-up. The leadership team is drawn from students and guided by Macquarie University Law Professors and our partner organisations, the global law firm K&L Gates and Australian legal tech firm Josef.

INFORMING FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES ON COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS

Throughout the pandemic we have distributed resources designed specifically for First Nations communities to update and inform people of the frequently changing

legal restrictions imposed by States and Territories in response to COVID-19. Together with Jumbunna (UTS) and the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (NATSILS) and our pro-bono partners, we have worked to provide communities with up-to-date legal information.

EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATES

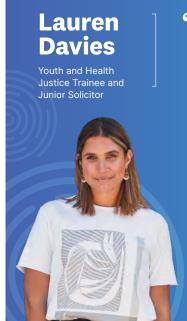
University clinics provide students with practical skills, a passion for social justice and a unique opportunity to work on current legal issues. The Macquarie University Social Justice Clinic has been operating since 2016. In 2020 we partnered with Monash University to deliver multiple Social Justice Clinics in Melbourne. Mentored by Barrister and National Justice Project Chair, Steven Castan, clinical graduates are now working with judges, not-for-profits, government agencies and First-Nations led organisations.

Below: In 2020 we launched our inaugural semester of TECH4JUSTICE. COVID-19 restrictions didn't stop our very first cohort of students from designing innovative chat-bots that help people lodge discrimination complaints.



Training the next generation of social justice lawyers

At the National Justice Project, we are committed to developing the skills and experience of the next generation of legal change makers. We provide our volunteers and Practical Legal Training (PLT) students with first-hand experience working on major cases, complaints, submissions and projects.



Project was through the Macquarie University
Social Justice Clinic. The Social Justice Clinic
was a twelve week class where we came into
the National Justice Project office, attended
conferences, helped draft legal advice and
completed other law clerk tasks. I loved it."

"As a Gomeroi-Ngarabal woman, it is very hard to disconnect myself from social justice issues when it is my own people whose rights are being violated. Our clients have to consistently deal with grief and loss, and they are always fighting for social justice – not just for their own family, but to ensure that other families don't have to go through the same experience. The most rewarding part of the work comes from the clients and their strength to continue fighting this broken system – that is inspiring."

National Justice Project is the satisfaction and feeling of helping people – knowing that the time and effort I put in is helping to change someone's life. You reap so many personal benefits from that. It is something that you can take with you forever, and you can say that you have contributed and played a small part in making the lives of our clients better."

"Being in the corner of the client and advocating for their rights is the greatest reward that I can take out of this legal internship. It's about making a difference in the world – this intangible feeling of making someone's life better is the best thing about it."



THANK YOU TO THE NATIONAL JUSTICE PROJECT CLASS OF 2020!



PLT STUDENTS

Agrima Shrestha
Amanda Saliba
Deema Dermelkonian
Erin Manuel
Hayley Drewery
Jason Hesse
Jessica La
Kerrie Theodoridis
Lungaka Mbedla
Meekehleh Deserio
Sarin Zaitounian
Sue Sundar



VOLUNTEERS

Legal

Alexandra Baker
Coco Frohlich
Eric Zhang
Javvad Jaffry
Jared Poland
Juliette Kennedy
Kevin Dorostkar
Lucy Schroeder
Marcus Corah
Marina Camarao
Nia Rahmanipour
Peter Subramaniam
Sam Goldberg
Vamshika Bakshi
Zak Staub

Non-legal

Ashleigh Sohier Catherine Donaghy David Greenhalgh Hayley Althaus Helen Esmond Jane Salmon Nicola Cadman Noshin Nawar Sara Hakim Simran Dahiya Sue Cribb



Over the past six years of our work, the National Justice Project has been on a journey of learning and transformation. By learning, listening and collaborating with First Nations people, we hope to develop a deeper understanding of the injustices experienced by our clients and their communities.

LEARNING FROM OUR CLIENTS AND COMMUNITY

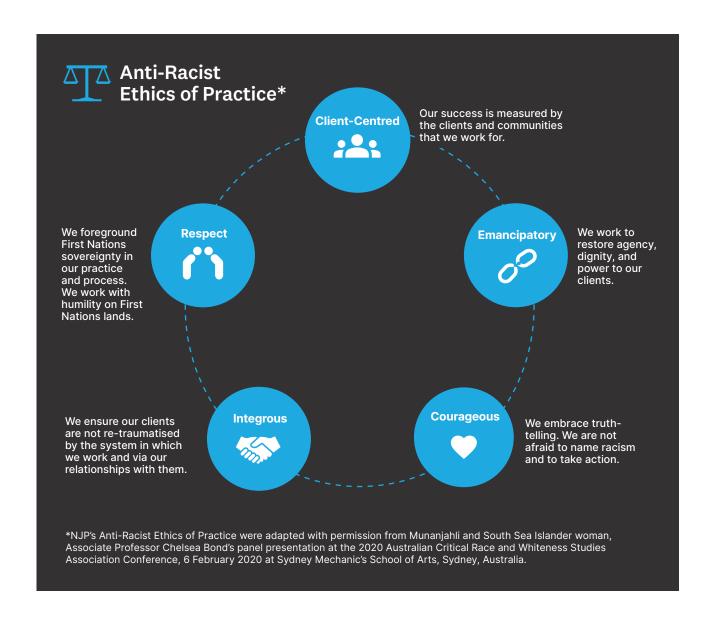
In 2021, we will implement the Reconciliation Action Plan developed by our staff to accompany our Cultural Safety Policy and Anti-Racist Ethics of Practice. To strengthen our dialogue with First Nations communities, we are delighted to welcome three First Nations leaders to our Advisory Board, Alison Whittaker, Tasma Walton and Kirsten Gray.

Our Anti-Racist Ethics of Practice defines the principles which guide our work alongside First Nations clients and communities.

COLLABORATING IN THE FIGHT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The National Justice Project joined many other civil society and First Nations-led organisations calling for racial justice throughout the year, including: the Redfern Waterloo Aboriginal Affordable Housing Campaign, the Jumbunna Institute's (UTS) call on the NSW Government to recognise Black Lives Matter, and the call for greater scrutiny of police powers and access for legal observers at the Djab Wurrung sacred trees protest.

Opposite: A traditional smoking ceremony was conducted at the Sydney #BlackLivesMatter rally in July 2020. Image by: Garry Friedland.



Our collective impact

By joining with hundreds of thousands of like-minded people and organisations who are committed to the fight for justice, we have helped advance powerful, systemic reform. Our collective energy and campaigning boost the impact of our legal work in the courtroom and our educational work in the classroom.



In 2020 we launched a petition with the family of David Dungay Jr. demanding "accountability from police, prisons, medical officers, and governments for ALL Black deaths in custody in Australia."

We were proud to walk through the gates of NSW Parliament carrying with us the names of more than 110,000 people who signed the petition. The petition was received by NSW Greens MPs David Shoebridge and Jenny Leong, and it sent a clear signal to the NSW Legislative Council's inquiry into First Nations over-incarceration and deaths in custody that #BlackLivesMatter.

In 2020 more than 110,000 people called on the Government to back down from its threat to cut off asylum seekers and refugees from the outside world.

The Senate listened to the enormous community upswell in support of refugee rights, and Peter Dutton was forced to back down. Thanks to the campaign, detained people seeking asylum can continue to use their mobile phones as a life-line that connects them to family, partners, friends, lawyers and advocates.





To find out how you can take action, subscribe to our newsletter by visiting our website: justice.org.au



Amplifying the voices of our clients

By supporting our clients to share their stories in the media, we can help them reach more eyes, ears and hearts to challenge systemic discrimination. Here is a snapshot of some of that media attention.

ADVOCATING FOR POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY

When a NSW police officer assaulted a young First Nations man in Surry Hills, we were proud to take a knee with his family and call for charges to be laid against the officer.

Right: Family of the young man appeared in a media conference with George Newhouse (National Justice Project), Karly Warner (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT), and David Shoebridge MLC.



"Western Australia is the mother of all jailers. I see the same people going in and out. When does the cycle stop?"



INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ATTENTION ON AUSTRALIA'S INCARCERATION CRISIS

Al Jazeera's feature documentary "Young, Black and Behind Bars" helped bring the issue to global attention in 2020. Speaking with Al Jazeera, National Justice Project's Paralegal, Megan Krakouer highlighted the human, heart-breaking stories behind the growing numbers of First Nations people dying in custody.

"A death in custody should never be normalised. The ripple effect is one of hurt, one of pain, one of suffering."



Read more stories.

To see more stories about our clients and the causes we fight for, visit our website: justice.org.au

Meet the Team



Amelia Sweetland SPECIAL COUNSEL



Anna Talbot SENIOR SOLICITOR AND LEGAL PRACTICE MANAGER



Ariane DozerPROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS
MANAGER/SOLICITOR



Ashleigh Buckett SENIOR SOLICITOR



Bianca Orsini JUNIOR SOLICITOR



Duncan Fine SPECIAL COUNSEL



Elika Chaparian
JUNIOR SOLICITOR/VOLUNTEER
AND STAKEHOLDER MANAGER



Emma Hearne SENIOR SOLICITOR



George NewhouseCEO AND PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR



Jazlie Davis YOUTH AND HEALTH JUSTICE TRAINEE AND PARALEGAL



Katy TyrrellFUNDRAISING AND
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER



Lauren DaviesYOUTH AND HEALTH JUSTICE
TRAINEE AND JUNIOR SOLICITOR



Megan Krakouer YOUTH AND HEALTH JUSTICE TRAINEE AND PARALEGAL



Naomi Lai GENERAL MANAGER



Sarah Druce SPECIAL COUNSEL



Steve Castan SOCIAL JUSTICE CLINIC EDUCATOR



Sophie Wenderoth PARALEGAL



Tim GintyCOMMUNICATIONS AND FUNDRAISING SPECIALIST

Meet the Advisory Board



Alison Whittaker WRITER, POET AND RESEARCHER



Dan Mori, Founder LAWYER, EDUCATOR AND VETERAN



David RadcliffINSURANCE PROFESSIONAL AND STRATEGIC CONSULTANT



Duncan Fine, Founder LAWYER AND WRITER



Heather Yelland THOUGHT LEADER AND PUBLIC SPEAKER



Elissa Baxter, Secretary LAWYER AND COMPANY SECRETARY



George Newhouse, Founder CEO AND PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR



Jenni Seton AMSPECIALIST NOT-FOR-PROFIT LEADERSHIP



Kirsten GrayPOLICY ADVISOR



Neil Singleton, Treasurer ACCOUNTANT AND FINANCIAL ADVISOR



Rob SilbersteinLAWYER, DOCTOR AND EQUALITY ADVOCATE



Steve Castan, Chair BARRISTER, MEDIATOR AND EDUCATOR



Tasma Walton
ACTRESS AND WRITER

Thank you to our supporters

We gratefully acknowledge those who supported us in 2020. Your support is vital, it is what keeps us going, what allows us to represent the voices of our clients in the courtrooms, shine the spotlight on injustice and train the next generation of aspiring social justice lawyers.

THANK YOU

To the 8,000 grassroots donors and to the major donors listed below.

- * Aldis Family
- * Angus McDonald
- Angus and Emma White
- Barlow Foundation
- * Bserk Giving Fund
- Celeste Barber
- Chestnut Foundation
- Emily Ross and Tony Gray
- ★ Ing Foundation
- The Fouress Foundation
- The Humanity Foundation
- ★ Lara Goodridge
- McLeod Family Foundation
- Mundango Abroad
- Matt D'Avella and Natalie Pidding
- Sally Ross and Ashley Murdoch

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

To heighten out impact, we partner with organisations who share our commitment to social justice. We appreciate all the partnerships that play an important role in our work.

COMMUNITY













LEGAL





EDUCATION

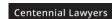


















KING&WOD MALLESONS



MEDIA





EMILY ROSS BESPOKE





TECHNOLOGY







NGNY

Join the fight for justice!

The National Justice Project knows what it means to fight for lives. As a notfor-profit legal service, we are only able to operate because of the donations of people who believe in justice.

We go to court to fight for asylum seekers and refugees to hold the government accountable for the harm that it has caused. We go to court for First Nations peoples, who have suffered discrimination in the healthcare and justice systems.

Where deaths have tragically occurred in custody, we push for inquests to try and get answers for the families of the deceased. If you would like to get in touch with the National Justice Project or donate to support our work, follow the link below.

DONATE

justice.org.au/donate →

CONTACT

Phone: +61 2 9304 0373

Email: info@justice.org.au

Mail: PO BOX 587,

Woollahra, NSW, 1350

CONNECT

• @NationalJusticeProjectAu



(O) nationaljusticeproject_au















Lara Goodridge

Musician and National Justice Project supporter 66 I have known the team at the National Justice Project for many years and I admire their work greatly. I've watched as the idea grew into an impassioned reality built on dedication, expertise and passion. I am proud to contribute towards the much-needed hard work that the National Justice Project offers to people whose voices are ignored and rights are breached by those with power."



