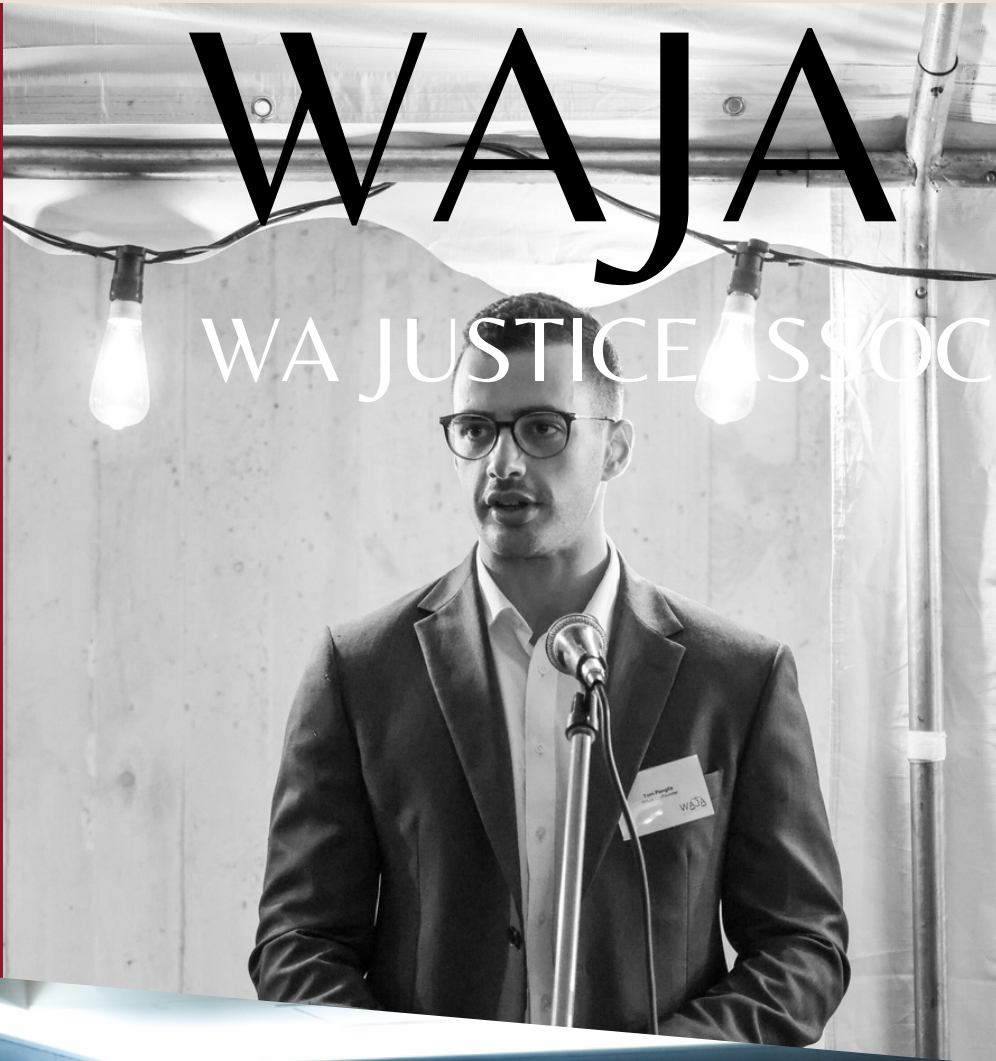


WAJA NEWSLETTER

WAJA

WA JUSTICE ASSOCIATION



BRIDGING THE GAP
BETWEEN SOCIAL
JUSTICE ADVOCACY AND
LAW REFORM





WA Justice Association History

In the world of social justice, true change often begins with a determined vision. For the WA Justice Association (WAJA), that vision was born from the collective determination of two extraordinary individuals: Tom Penglis and Julian Sanders.

The seeds of inspiration were sown in April 2020, as Tom emerged from Acacia Prison. Inside those walls, he bore witness to a system marred by inefficiencies and injustices. Rather than succumb to despair, Tom and Julian rallied their fellow law students, igniting a spark that would become WAJA. This organisation was founded with a singular mission: to reform the Western Australian criminal justice system, reduce incarceration rates, and create brighter prospects for those ensnared within it.

Our journey began with a deep understanding of Tom's experiences within the system. His insights were revelatory. Firstly, he recognised the presence of numerous social justice organisations and support services, brimming with potential but starved for resources.



Secondly, Tom's candid conversations with his father, Steven Penglis SC, during prison visits unveiled a passionate cohort of lawyers eager to contribute to social justice causes but lacking clear avenues for effective action. Lastly, Tom identified a wellspring of untapped talent and passion among university students, especially those studying law, who could become pivotal agents of change in the realm of social justice. These three vital groups—social justice organizations, legal professionals, and students—form the very foundation of our mission.

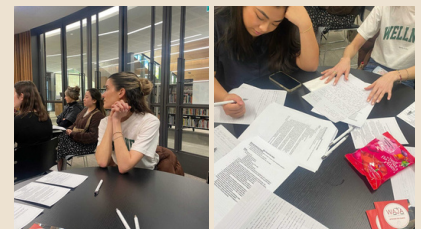
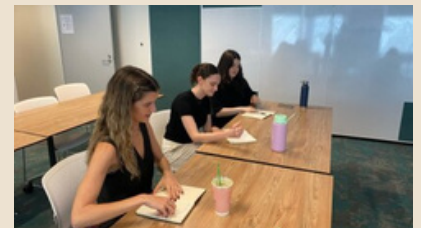
At WAJA, our core objective is to nurture collaboration and targeted initiatives among these groups. Through these concerted efforts, we aim to drive meaningful reforms in law and policy while fostering profound engagement between students, social justice organizations, and the legal community. Our vision is of a criminal justice system that prioritizes rehabilitation, extends support to all Western Australians seeking redemption, and reserves incarceration as a genuine last resort. Above all, we are steadfast in our commitment to dismantling the troubling overrepresentation of First Nations people within Western Australia's criminal justice system.

As we stride into the future, our mission grows stronger. We aspire to involve academics, students, legal professionals, and the wider community in our noble quest. Together, we are architects of a more equitable and just future for every resident of Western Australia.

Acknowledgement of Country

WAJA pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of Whadjuk Noongar Boodja and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

Past Event Photos



Visit our website for more info <https://wajustice.org.au/about-us>

Tom Penglis (WAJA Founder) participated in a panel discussion hosted by the University Club of Western Australia and the UWA Public Policy Institute focusing on Australia's obligations to children in detention and the current state of WA's youth justice system.

Tom joined fellow panellists Professor Neil Morgan AM (former Inspector of Custodial Services (WA)), Dr Hayley Passmore, and Gerry Georgatos, with the discussion moderated by Linda Savage (Commissioner for Children and Young People WA Ambassador). Dr Brad Pettitt MLC (Greens) also joined for an audience Q&A session.

The panel highlighted the severity of the issues plaguing WA's youth justice system and what must be done to fix these issues. Attendees found the discussion both insightful, sobering and, at times, emotional.



Meet Tom

In the heart of Western Australia, a unique perspective on criminal justice reform is emerging, one that's rooted in personal experience and a passionate commitment to change. Tom Penglis, is at the forefront of this movement, as the founding Executive Director of the WA Justice Association (WAJA). His remarkable journey, from incarceration to advocacy, shines a powerful light on the social justice issues within Western Australia.

In August 2019, Tom found himself facing a 15-month prison sentence, he was released on parole in April 2020 following the completion of his full sentence in November 2020. This period was a time of personal challenges and deep introspection. It was also a time of growth, as Tom gained a newfound appreciation for the support of his loving family, loyal friends, and promising career prospects. Yet, he couldn't ignore the stark disparities that many inmates faced within the system.

Tom's experience exposed him to the systemic flaws within Western Australia's criminal justice system. It illuminated the glaring injustices, including the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians at every stage of the criminal justice process.

Working in Acacia Prison's Resettlement Office, Tom's responsibilities included helping inmates with issues like driver's licenses, identification, and drug and alcohol support. He also conducted induction presentations for new inmates, providing valuable insights into the challenges prisoners face in Western Australia and the availability (or lack thereof) of support services. His role humanized individuals who are often reduced to statistics.

Living alongside inmates and hearing their stories left an indelible mark on Tom. Tom's firsthand experiences underscore the deficiencies of Western Australia's predominantly punitive justice system. Despite attempts to incorporate rehabilitative elements, the system continues to fall short, as evidenced by alarming incarceration rates highlighted in recent reports from the Inspector of Custodial Services and the Department of Correctional Services.

Tom's vision for WAJA is to provide students with a platform to contribute meaningfully to the transformation of Western Australia's justice system. He firmly believes that positive change is possible for those in contact with the justice system, their families, and the wider community.

In the heart of WAJA's mission lies the conviction that change is not only necessary but achievable. Through collaboration, dedication, and the unwavering commitment of individuals like Tom Penglis, the future of Western Australia's justice system holds the promise of a fairer and more equitable tomorrow.

Past Event Photos



UPDATES

It has been an amazing year for WAJA! From new community Outreach events to interesting Projects, it has been great to see our volunteers dedicate themselves to WAJA's mission of effecting positive criminal justice reform. Thank you to all volunteers in 2023 for their time and passion that they have all brought to the table.

The ability to volunteer with an organisation such as WAJA is truly unique. I was fortunate to have joined WAJA in 2021 and contributed to its growth over the years. My time at WAJA has honed my leadership capabilities, problem-solving skills and fostered a deep appreciation for the various complex issues within WA's criminal justice system. Moving forwards in my legal career, I know these lessons learned will stay with me and have equipped me to meaningfully contribute to WA criminal justice system reforms.

Thank you to the WAJA Board for their ongoing leadership as WAJA's growth is possible thanks to their continued support. Additionally, special thanks goes to the 2023 Executive team for their co-operation this year. The success of WAJA's Portfolios is reflective of the hard work you have all put in and I am grateful to have worked alongside this terrific group of individuals.

RORY O'SULLIVAN



COMMUNICATION SAJINI DASSANAYAKE

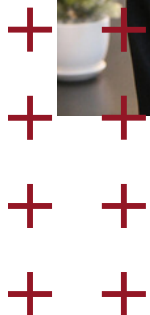
In retrospect, my journey with WAJA over the past year has been nothing short of transformative. Serving on the Executive team and contributing to the Communications portfolio has provided a unique blend of leadership and organisational skills that extend beyond the academic realm.

WAJA has proven to be a pivotal platform for expanding professional networks, particularly within the legal and social justice spheres. The opportunities to engage with seasoned professionals have been instrumental in broadening my perspective and understanding of these dynamic fields.

Within the Communications portfolio, I've found an ideal intersection of my passion for social justice and creativity. Crafting purposeful messages has not only honed my creative abilities but has also instilled a sense of purpose in my contributions.

A noteworthy highlight was the workshop conducted by Anthologie, a Marketing and Consulting firm, in late August. Their insights on creating media with a targeted purpose, understanding our audience, and maximizing creativity and reach have been invaluable. We extend our sincere gratitude to Anthologie for their contribution to our growth.

As the WAJA community expands, the Communications portfolio continues to explore new avenues for reaching our audience through diverse mediums. The group's collective commitment to making a positive impact remains unwavering, and we look forward to the evolving chapters that lie ahead.



PROJECTS

JESSICA HUYNH

In Semester 1, 2022 WAJA engaged in a Project with the WA Association for Mental Health, Magistrate Felicity Zempilas and Nicholas Versteegen from Mental Health Law Centre to develop a report which proposed reform of the Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996 (CLMIA Act).

The (then) CLMIA Act permitted the imprisonment of accused persons for indefinite terms of custody, often longer than the period they would have served had they been convicted of a criminal offence. Punishment without conviction undermines the foundational values of our justice system such as equality, the right to a fair trial and the right to know the charges held against you.

WAJA's report developed 13 recommendations to reform the CLMIA Act. The report also considered the advantages of a centralised process in courts to determine fitness to stand trial and examined mechanisms to restore fitness in a process which is person-centred, family sensitive and recovery focused.

Following Project completion, WAJA's Advocacy Team used the report to engage with politicians and government agencies to advocate for reform.

In March 2023, the Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Bill 2022 passed the WA Legislative Council. This amendment bill came after years of activism by mental health and human rights advocates.



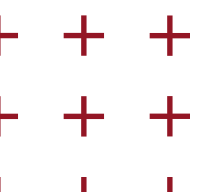
WAJA was privileged to work with the WA Association for Mental Health to reform this outdated area of WA law and thanks them for their long-term support. Several of WAJA's recommendations were implemented in this Act. For example:

- enshrining limits on detention periods as the Court must set a limiting time on a custody order
- establishing the right for the accused person to appear and be represented at the Mentally Impaired Accused Review Board
- enhancing cooperation and sharing of information between supporting agencies, such as the Department of Justice, Chief Mental Health Advocate, Chief Psychiatrist, Public Advocate/Trustee, and the Mental Health Tribunal.

Legislative reform is only part of the process. In-court procedures, government agency practices and improved government funding will determine how the system will improve its support to people experiencing mental impairment. WAJA is currently monitoring the implementation of the amendment bill.

Testimonial from Magistrate Felicity Zempilas: (now currently Judge of the WA District Court)

"I have been involved with WAJA for the past 12 months in a number of roles: as a project supervisor, discussion panellist and during stakeholder consultations. I have found all my interactions with WAJA to be highly professional and well planned, and the executive and advocacy staff have offered excellent support and organisation. The students involved have all been respectful, passionate and hard-working and a real source of inspiration in social justice reform. I hope to continue my involvement in WAJA and would encourage other lawyers and members of the judiciary to become involved."





ADVOCACY

This year, the Outreach team has been working hard to increase engagement with university students and the community. We spoke at universities across WA to educate students on issues facing our criminal justice system and encourage them to get involved in the community. We delivered many guest lectures on both the Raise the Age project and the Justice Denied is Justice Denied project, as well as speaking about volunteering opportunities for law students.

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In July, we hosted a letter writing workshop at the Fremantle Library, focusing on how to write an informative and persuasive letter to Members of Parliament. This event equipped attendees with the skills to advocate for issues they're passionate about and affect positive change. We also sent multiple letters on behalf of WAJA volunteers promoting the Raise the Age campaign.

In September, we teamed up with the Murdoch Student Law Society to host a screening of *The Tall Man*, a documentary about the death of Cameron Doomadgee, an Aboriginal man, in police custody.

This screening was to raise awareness about the treatment of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system. We followed the screening with a fascinating group discussion into the issues raised in the film.

AYESHA FERNANDES



TARA INNES

The Advocacy team at the WA Justice Association has had a busy and impactful year, working hard to advance criminal justice reform in Western Australia.

The Advocacy team have continued to raise awareness and educate the public on topical justice-related issues through media advocacy efforts. We wrote informative explainer posts on topics such as solitary confinement, the Voice Referendum, and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.

In addition to our social media advocacy, we submitted articles to various publications. We submitted two articles to Blackstone's Ignite journal. I would like to thank Claudia Reedy for her excellent article on raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility. I would also like to thank Helen Do for her detailed article on Treatment, Support and Discharge Plans. The team will also be writing an article for the Murdoch Student Law Society's *Carpe Diem* publication. The Advocacy team also submitted a speech to *Raise Our Voice*, with the hope of a politician choosing the speech to read in federal parliament.

The Raise the Age campaign is consistently Advocacy's largest campaign. The Advocacy team have been watching this space extremely closely to allow the Cook Government time and space to make progress in the criminal justice system. Our volunteers have worked extremely hard to contact and meet with Members of Parliament to discuss raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility. This semester, we met with Zenata Mascarenhas and are yet to meet with Lara Dalton in the coming weeks.

The Advocacy team has been extremely busy with the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) campaign this semester. The team met with Lisa Munday and Corrective Services policy advisor to discuss an IPS pilot project. The team also facilitated discussions between the WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH) and Outcare to discuss a pilot project in greater detail. The team met with Dr Jagadish Krishnan and we thank his support for the cause. We are extremely excited to see this pilot project come to fruition.

The Advocacy team also began strategically planning the Treatment, Support, Discharge and Plan (TSDP) campaign whilst the second project was underway, and we are excited to start lobbying for reform next year after the second TSDP project is complete.



CHARLOTTE SALOME

This year in Finance we have been grateful for the ongoing support of Bennett as our Major Partner. This Partnership has provided WAJA will invaluable resources to host events such as the Letter Writing Workshop and upcoming Panel Event. These resources have also allowed us to support our volunteers by providing workshops in both portfolio relevant skills and broader career upskilling such as public speaking and networking.

We have also continued to build the internal WAJA community across the course of the year with ongoing social activities at both an Executive and whole organization level. We have hosted events such as lawn bowls, laser tag and end-of-semester wrap ups to provide our volunteers an opportunity to come together and celebrate the hard work they contribute across the semester.



Operations

Maria Ambrose

This year, our WAJA volunteers have been privileged to attend several incredible workshops with knowledgeable individuals in the political, legal and professional spheres. A particular highlight was a Panel style workshop held in Semester 1 whereby our volunteers heard from a fantastic panel made up of Steven Walker, president of the Voluntary Assisted Dying lobbying group Dying with Dignity and Marion Buchanan, Principal Policy Adviser for the Attorney General Minister for Electoral Affairs (WA). The amazing Judge Felicity Zempilas facilitated the panel. The discussion revolved around law reform in Western Australia, focusing on the passage of the Voluntary Assisted Dying Bill as a case study. Our WAJA volunteers were provided with the opportunity to ask the panellists about their experiences and provide their insights into bringing meaningful law reform in WA.





Volunteer Highlight

Volunteer Name: Hannah Jackson

Joined WAJA: July 2022

Favourite WAJA Highlight: having the opportunity to talk to so many inspiring and passionate people, both within WAJA and in the wider community

Every single one of WAJA's Projects involve a team of talented and hardworking volunteer Project Officers. These volunteers engage in the tedious task of carefully researching and producing excellent reports to inform law and policy reforms in WA.

In May of this year, whilst balancing her legal studies and leading a Project Team, Hannah Jackson took out first place in the Blackstone Society's Open Witness Examination Grand Final. Hannah was also a key member of this year's UWA team in the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition (where the UWA team placed as quarterfinalists!)

Well done, Hannah! WAJA's volunteers never cease to blow us all away with their passion and determination.



WAAMH Project Team

Project Team: Shiya Tee (Team Leader), Rhianna Dehne, Alex Di Rosso, Aisha Chaudhry, and Jessica Huynh

Partner Organization: WA Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)

Project Supervisor: Roshani Shrestha (Senior IPS Support & Evaluation Officer - WAAMH)

Project Mentors: Jay Leary and Libby Plajzer, both esteemed professionals from the globally recognized law firm Herbert Smith Freehills

Project Objective: *The primary objective of this project is twofold. First, to generate an implementation guide delineating a proposed IPS model for employment, supported by an accompanying research report that establishes an evidence base for its seamless integration into Western Australia's criminal justice system.*

Project Purpose: The overarching purpose of this endeavor is to combat the overrepresentation of individuals with mental health conditions within the criminal justice system. This is achieved through an in-depth analysis of the potential utilization of a specialized mental health employment service as a proactive measure to curtail recidivism.

The final report will comprehensively address the key factors and challenges associated with implementing this service within the criminal justice setting. The findings will play an integral role in shaping the next phase of WAAMH's Prevent Support Heal campaign, contributing to a more holistic approach to mental health and criminal justice reform.

This team produced the research report 'n Individual placement and support (IPS) Model for the criminal justice system.'

[LINK TO REPORT>>>](#)



**AN INDIVIDUAL
PLACEMENT AND
SUPPORT (IPS)
MODEL FOR THE
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
SYSTEM**

Research Report 2021





Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Program Team

Project Team: Jessica Huynh (Team Leader), Olivia Trimboli, Mishka Isaacs, Natalya Mulvey, and Leila Pinilla

Partner Organization: Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)

Project Supervisor: Roshani Shrestha

Project Mentors: Libby Plajzer and Julian Sanders, both distinguished professionals from the globally renowned law firm Herbert Smith Freehills

Project Objective: Building on the foundation laid during an initial project collaboration between WAJA and WAAMH in late 2021, this project aims to leverage the insights garnered from the previous report. The goal is to illustrate how the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Program, which focuses on helping individuals with mental health conditions secure employment, can be adapted for use within a criminal justice context.

Project Purpose: The overarching purpose of this project entails conducting extensive consultations with key stakeholders, exploring avenues for the seamless integration of IPS into existing services, and crafting a preliminary IPS program tailored to the unique needs of individuals within the criminal justice system.

This team produced the report 'An Individual placement and support (IPS) Model for the criminal justice system: Consultation Discussion Report 2022.'

[Link to report >>>](#)

Fitness To Stand Trial

Enhancing Fitness to Stand Trial Under the Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996 (WA)

Project Team: Max Hinch, Hugo Brossard, Maria Ambrose, Lachie Phillips, Charlotte Salom (Team Leader)

Partner Organization: Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH)

Project Supervisor: Liz Connor (Senior Policy Officer, Mental Health and Public Health) from WAAMH

Project Mentors: Nicholas Versteegen from Mental Health Law Centre and Magistrate Felicity Zempilas

Project Objective: The primary objective of this project is to produce a comprehensive research paper and develop a model proposing enhancements to the criminal justice system's response to individuals deemed unfit to stand trial.

Project Purpose: The project's ultimate deliverable will encompass a set of well-considered recommendations outlining the key components of a proposed new system. This system is strategically designed to address and rectify the existing shortcomings in the handling of accused persons found unfit to stand trial. Additionally, the project will offer an in-depth discussion of the opportunities and challenges associated with the integration of this proposed system into the broader framework of Western Australia's criminal justice system.

Two publications came from this project's team the 'Justice Delayed is Justice Denied' report as well as the 'Criminal Law (Mentally Impaired Accused) Act 1996 (WA) - the CLMIA Act' summary.



[Link to report >>>](#)



Spent Convictions

Project Team: Kilkeny Ong (Team Leader), Maria Ambrose, Hugo Brossard, Claudia Genovese, and Hannah Jackson

Partner Organization: Gilbert + Tobin

Project Supervisors: Marshall McKenna and Jim Power from Gilbert + Tobin

Project Mentor: April Barton of Gilbert + Tobin Pro Bono Practice

Project Objective: The primary aim of this project is to delve into the social ramifications of criminal records, with a particular emphasis on the significance of spent convictions in facilitating reintegration efforts, including securing employment and housing. Additionally, the team seeks to create a specialised tool tailored to demographics that are most in need of support in this context.

Project Purpose: The overarching purpose of this endeavour is to develop a comprehensive guide that serves as a resource for both individuals seeking to navigate the intricate process of applying for a spent conviction and pro-bono practitioners assisting them in this endeavour. This guide will be a valuable tool in facilitating a smoother path to reintegration for those with criminal records, enhancing their prospects for gaining employment and securing housing.

**First Nations Data
Sovereignty**

Project Team: Ailish Dey, Connor O’Sullivan, Laura Walton, Jessica Huynh (Team Leader), Olivia Trimboli

Partner Organization: Wungening Aboriginal Corporation

Project Supervisors: Louise Southalan (Project Manager for the Homelessness Research Project) and Lindey Andrews (Specialist Manager Research, Evaluation, and Engagement) at Wungening.

Project Mentors: Dalveen Belyea (Consultant) and Amelia Arndt (Lawyer) from Gilbert + Tobin.

Project Objective: The primary objective of this project was to create a comprehensive research report delving into the application of First Nations Data Sovereignty (FNDS) principles within Western Australia’s criminal justice system.

Project Purpose: The report serves a dual purpose. Firstly, it aids Wungening in their advocacy efforts for FNDS, offering valuable insights and recommendations. Secondly, it endeavours to provide Wungening with a roadmap, outlining a clear path for the realization of FNDS within the context of the criminal justice system.

The completed report is currently in use by our Partner Organization, Wungening Aboriginal Corporation, as they continue their vital work in advocating for and implementing First Nations Data Sovereignty principles.



Mid West Youth Skills

Project Team: Maria Ambrose (Team Leader), Isabelle Bavcevic, Jit Neo, Helena Trang, and Charlotte Salom

Partner Organization: Mid-West Service Providers

Project Supervisor: Lisa Kazalac (CEO & Founder – Professional Vogue)

Project Mentor: Melanie Naylor, a seasoned litigator who recently retired from Tottle Partners, specializing primarily in medical negligence and regulation.

Project Objective: The primary aim of this project is to conceptualize and develop a pilot program tailored to offer support to young individuals who find themselves at risk of becoming entangled in the criminal justice system within the Mid-West region of Western Australia.

Project Purpose: The overarching purpose of this endeavor is to establish a robust evidence base that will inform the creation of future programs dedicated to empowering young people in regional Western Australia, enabling them to secure and sustain gainful employment—a crucial element in the effort to reduce rates of offending. The final report will serve as a blueprint, delineating a model for the implementation of a comprehensive on-site program encompassing skills development, training, education, and support. This model will be designed for collaborative implementation in partnership with existing service providers in the region.

Two publications came from this project’s team the ‘Mid-West Youth Skills Programme’ report as well as the ‘Mid-West Youth Skills’ literature review.

[Link to report >>>](#)

**Aboriginal Justice Advisory
Mechanisms**

Partner Organization: Social Reinvestment WA (SRWA)

Project Supervisors: Sophie Stewart (SRWA), Reginald Ramos (SRWA)

Project Mentor: Ruth Dineen (lawyer at Aboriginal Legal Service of Western Australia)

Project Objective: The objective of this project was to craft a comprehensive report centered on the potential establishment of Aboriginal justice advisory mechanisms in Western Australia, with a particular focus on an Aboriginal Justice Advisory Agreement.

Project Purpose: The primary purpose of this report was to provide well-considered recommendations for the implementation of a lasting WA Aboriginal Justice Agreement. These recommendations were formulated based on extensive consultations with stakeholders in various jurisdictions, as well as the examination of models implemented in those regions. The research findings presented in our report will serve as a vital resource for SRWA, enriching their future community engagement initiatives and advocacy efforts aimed at championing the establishment of Aboriginal justice advisory mechanisms in Western Australia.

The result was a report published by this project’s team the ‘Aboriginal Justice Agreements.’



[Link to report >>>](#)



Effective Police Training for Family Violence

Enhancing Police Training for Family Violence Response

Partner Organizations: Equal Opportunity Training and WA Police

Project Supervisor: Franca Sala Tenna (Equal Opportunity Training)

Project Mentor: Melanie Naylor (retired litigator from Tottle Partners)

Project Objective: The overarching goal of this project is to generate a comprehensive research paper centered on the development of effective training strategies tailored for Police Officers, specifically concerning family and domestic violence situations.

Project Purpose: The primary objective is to provide valuable insights that will shape the future of Police training programs, equipping Police Officers with the skills and knowledge necessary to adeptly interpret and respond to family and domestic violence incidents. Our research findings will serve as the foundation for the creation of innovative training workshops. These workshops, in turn, will exert a positive influence on Police practices, fostering enduring behavioral transformations and enhancing frontline response procedures.

Given the sensitive nature of this project, certain details pertaining to its content and progression will remain confidential.

The result was a report published by this project's team the 'Effective Police Training for Family Violence Project.'

[Link to report >>>](#)

Raise The Age (RTA)

Elevating the Minimum Age of Criminal Responsibility

Partner Organization: Social Reinvestment WA (SRWA)

Project Supervisors: Sophie Stewart (SRWA), Reginald Ramos (SRWA)

Project Mentor: Samantha Nadilo

Project Objective: Our team was dedicated to crafting an evidence-based paper in alignment with SRWA's guidelines. This entailed conducting a comprehensive research endeavor with the primary goal of enlightening, educating, and persuading the public not only on the rationale behind increasing Western Australia's minimum age of criminal responsibility but also on the practical means of achieving this objective. Our efforts encompassed an exhaustive examination of available sentencing alternatives at regional, national, and international levels.

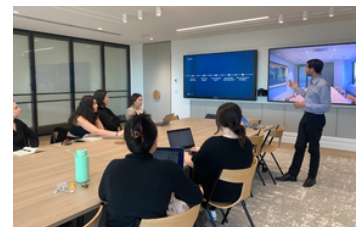
Project Purpose: The research undertaken by WAJA will serve as the bedrock for SRWA's official policy paper on this critical matter, enriching their forthcoming advocacy strategies. SRWA's paper will complement the organization's broader Youth Justice Report, a comprehensive study delving into the multifaceted ways in which Western Australia's legal system adversely affects young individuals. It presents a vision centered on justice reinvestment, aimed at addressing the root causes of youth offending and ultimately reducing crime rates.

Two reports were published by this project's team the 'Pilot Research Report' as well as the 'Raise the Age Campaign.'



[Link to report >>>](#)

Photo Gallery





MEDICARE ACCESS IN PRISONS

SEMESTER 2, 2023

Project Objective: The aim of this project is to develop a novel and detailed report into the inaccessibility of Medicare within prisons. We will engage in targeted consultations with the healthcare sector to understand the barriers of improving prison healthcare access and develop practical recommendations to overcome it.

Project Purpose: The project's purpose is to propose policy-based Medicare reforms by amplifying the views of healthcare agencies and bring greater awareness of the healthcare inequities experienced by incarcerated individuals.

Members: Ashton Godfrey (Leader), Ethan Nicholas (Leader), Ronan Pettit, Liang Pillay, Phoenix Rogers, Megha Sheth.

Supervisors: Damien Linnane (University Fellow of the Centre for Law and Social Justice at the University of Newcastle) and Craig Cumming (Research Associate at the University of Western Australia)

Mentors: Jessica Edmeades (Lawyer) and Tom Penglis (Graduate) of Gilbert + Tobin.

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TREATMENT, SUPPORT, DISCHARGE PLAN USER GIUDE

SEMESTER 2, 2023

Project Objective: Following our Semester 1 project, WAJA is re-partnering with Mental Health Matters 2 on another project! Together, we aim to use our findings to create an accessible guide for individuals, their families and carers to obtain, and enforce the compliance of, effective Treatment, Support and Discharge Plans. We will also develop a supporting guide aimed at healthcare clinicians to improve understanding of their statutory requirements under the Mental Health Act 2014 (WA) (the Act).

Project Purpose: The purpose of the guide is to empower individuals, families and carers to understand their legal options and generate greater sector accountability for non-compliance of TSD Plans under the Act.

Members: Bianca Baptista (Leader), Judd Behr, Ryan Davidson, Dev Sheth, Homaira Su.

Partner Organisation: Mental Health Matters 2 Ltd.

Supervisors: Wendy Cream and Ann McGuire (Board Members of MHM2).

Mentors: Rachel Hao (Senior Associate) and Julian Sanders (Solicitor) of Herbert Smith Freehills.



Walk for Justice

The Walk for Justice is held each year to fundraise for Law Access. Law Access is a not-for-profit organisation that facilitates the provision of pro bono (free or low fee) legal assistance by the WA legal profession to those who cannot afford a lawyer. The Walk for Justice is a 4.4-kilometre loop starting and finishing at the Bell Tower to Point Fraser.

The event is run externally by Law Access, who invites different organisations to participate as teams. This year, students have been invited to join the UWA Law School Staff and Students team. Students are encouraged to donate to the UWA Law School team, as all donations will assist in building Law Access' vision for equal access to justice for everyone in WA.



Letter Writing Event



"Members of Parliament (MPs) play a vital role in representing the views and concerns of their constituents throughout their tenure. Regardless of voting age, constituents can actively engage with their MPs by utilizing tools such as petitions, statements, and legislative proposals. Writing to your MP serves as a powerful means to express your opinions, fostering an ongoing dialogue that compels them to consider diverse perspectives and influences their decision-making process beyond election cycles.



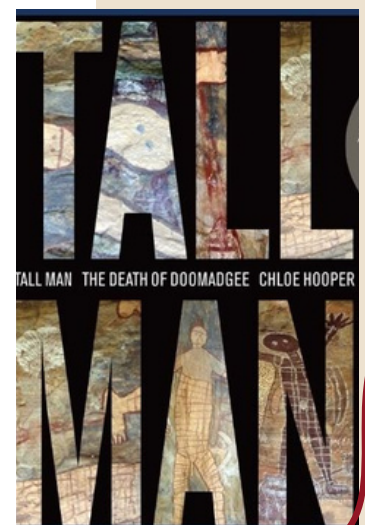
This workshop is dedicated to empowering individuals with the skills to craft informative and persuasive letters. By honing these communication skills, participants will be equipped to advocate for issues close to their hearts, creating a pathway to effect positive change. Through a focused exploration of effective writing techniques, participants will gain the tools to articulate their concerns and aspirations convincingly, ultimately contributing to a more engaged and responsive democratic process. Join us in discovering the art of impactful communication and learn how your voice can resonate within the corridors of power."

Film Screening

"The Tall Man" unfolds a compelling narrative that delves into the courtroom drama surrounding Senior Sergeant Chris Hurley, a complex character at the heart of a gripping trial. The storyline intricately weaves through the challenges faced by the Doomadgee family as they grapple with the mysterious circumstances surrounding their brother's fate. Set against the atmospheric backdrop of the once-notorious Queensland police force, the film offers a gritty and original portrayal of the unfolding events.

As the plot unfolds, viewers are taken on a riveting journey into the heart of the Indigenous community on Palm Island in Australia's Far North. Here, lives are led in a manner distinct from any other, deeply intertwined with the land and marked by a history and culture that stands apart. The movie unearths the complexities of a catastrophic present, shedding light on a side of Australia rarely seen by many.

Derived from Chloe Hooper's book of the same name, "The Tall Man" not only explores the trial but also offers a nuanced perspective on the social fabric of Australia, providing insight into the once-notorious Queensland police force and the unique challenges faced by the Indigenous community on Palm Island. This is an Australia seldom witnessed, where the viewer is invited to confront a reality that is both haunting and eye-opening.



Pannel Event: Policing in African Spaces and the Impact on Youth

In October, we hosted a panel event on the topic of "Policing in African Spaces and the Impact on Youth." Our esteemed panel consisted of Hon. Ayor Makur Chuot MLC, Louis Kristopher (Criminal Lawyer from Savannah Legal), and Dr Umile Gwakuba (Senior Community Diversity Officer from the WA Police Force). The panel was emceed by David Mickler, Dean Global, Africa and Associate Professor of International Relations at Curtin University. They discussed issues relating to community policing, the relationship between African communities and police, and innovative solutions for improving the current situation. Our panel's experience in this field allowed for an insightful analysis of the issues facing African communities in WA. The event drew in students and legal professionals alike to hear about this important topic and draw attention to some of the many challenges in this space, as well as some potential solutions.

Embark on an enlightening exploration at our upcoming event, where we delve into the theme of 'Policing in African Spaces and the Impact on Youth.' Our panel discussions promise a rich and insightful dialogue, offering a sneak peek into the compelling topics we'll be exploring: Community Policing: Immerse yourself in an examination of community-oriented law enforcement approaches and their significance in the context of African societies. Uncover how these strategies can foster a more collaborative and responsive relationship between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Cultural Sensitivity: Delve into the critical realm of culturally sensitive policing strategies. Understand the importance of law enforcement practices that respect and integrate diverse African traditions and norms, ensuring a more harmonious and effective approach to maintaining public safety. Building Trust: Gain valuable insights into methods that effectively build trust and collaboration between law enforcement agencies and African communities. Discover the pivotal role trust plays in fostering positive relationships, ultimately contributing to safer and more secure environments. Challenges and Solutions: Explore the nuanced challenges faced by African spaces in the realm of policing. Engage in discussions that dissect these challenges and, more importantly, propose actionable solutions to address them. This segment aims to contribute to the development of practical and effective approaches to law enforcement in African contexts. Innovative Models: Open the door to a world of innovation as we examine promising policing models that have shown success in African contexts. Explore how these innovative approaches can be adapted and expanded to meet the unique needs and dynamics of policing in diverse African spaces.

Join us for an intellectually stimulating event where we dissect, discuss, and strategize for a future of policing in African spaces that is both effective and youth-centric. Your participation is not just welcomed; it's integral to shaping the narrative and fostering positive change.



Panel Event: WAJA Alumni Workshop



Our upcoming workshop is set to feature three distinguished speakers—Tenille Lazenby, Luke De Castro, and Izzy Bavcevic—all esteemed alumni of WAJA. Each speaker has charted unique career paths, and they are eager to share their invaluable insights derived from both their professional journeys and WAJA experiences.

- Tenille Lazenby: Law Graduate at Wotton and Kearney**
- Luke De Castro: Lawyer at Minter Ellison**
- Izzy Bavcevic: Supreme Court Research Associate**



We're genuinely thrilled to bring together such accomplished individuals, each offering a distinct perspective on their respective careers and the impact of WAJA on their professional development. This workshop presents a rare opportunity for attendees to glean firsthand knowledge, guidance, and inspiration from our distinguished alumni.

We extend a warm invitation to all interested individuals to join us for this enriching session. Whether you're a current WAJA student, an alum, or someone eager to learn from the diverse experiences of our speakers, your presence will undoubtedly contribute to the success of this event. Let's come together, share insights, and make this workshop a gathering of learning, networking, and inspiration. Your participation is key to making this event as vibrant and impactful as possible. We look forward to seeing you there!

Each semester, our volunteers are fortunate to attend different workshops, these are aimed at building skills and networking in ways which allow the members to grow and experience new things. Here are some highlights...

Helena Trang Projects Workshop

This semester, our WAJA Project Officers had the privilege of participating in a captivating meeting with WAJA alumna and consultant, Helena Trang. Helena graciously shared her professional journey, providing a fascinating glimpse into her role as a consultant liaising with both Federal and State Governments. Her involvement in the impactful Raise the Age campaign and her contribution to creating an evaluation plan for the early childcare and education sector were particularly enlightening.

Helena's presentation went beyond the surface, delving into the valuable skills she cultivated during her time at WAJA and pursuing a Juris Doctor. She underscored the significance of attention to detail and how this skill has been instrumental in her career. Additionally, Helena shed light on how WAJA served as a crucial networking platform, connecting her with like-minded individuals in the consulting field.

Helena's experiences exemplify the real-world impact that can arise from combining legal expertise with a commitment to social change. Her insights provide a roadmap for aspiring professionals keen on making a difference in policy and advocacy.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Helena for generously sharing her time, experiences, and lessons with our Project Officers. Her mentorship and wisdom contribute immensely to the educational journey of our members.

Thank you, Helena, for being an inspiration and for reinforcing the spirit of collaboration within the WAJA community. Your commitment to fostering connections and sharing knowledge sets a positive tone for future engagements.

Stay tuned for more engaging workshops and knowledge-sharing sessions as we continue our commitment to fostering growth, learning, and collaboration within the WAJA community. Your active participation contributes to the richness of our collective journey. Thank you for being part of this invaluable experience!

Lisa Kazalac Workshop

In a recent knowledge-sharing session, Lisa generously imparted her wealth of experience gained from working across diverse industries. Her broad expertise set the stage for an enriching workshop, focusing on effective research methodologies and strategies to attain research goals.

Lisa's workshop covered the nuances of working across various industries, providing attendees with a comprehensive understanding of her multifaceted expertise. Participants gained valuable insights into the art of conducting research effectively.

A key highlight was Lisa's emphasis on the value of fostering a robust team culture. She shared insights on how a cohesive team can not only grow but also achieve remarkable results. The importance of collaboration in achieving collective goals was a central theme.

Lisa delved into the critical aspect of delivering high standards of policy advice to local agencies. The workshop explored the process of facilitating this, shedding light on the intricacies of maintaining excellence in policy recommendations.

Overall, the workshop proved to be a valuable experience, offering insights into the practical aspects of research, team dynamics, and policy advice. Attendees left with a deeper understanding of these crucial elements.

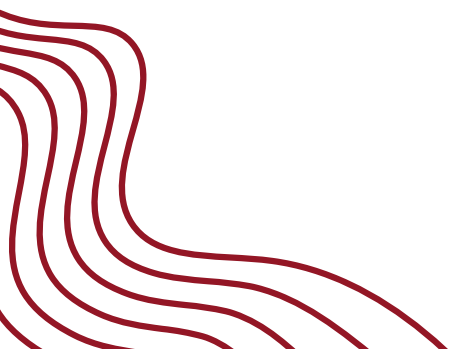
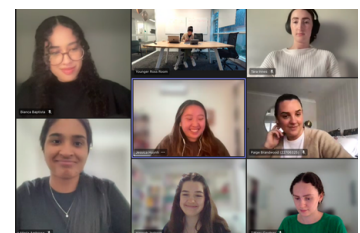
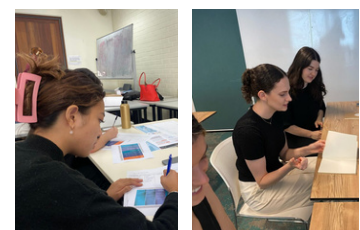
A heartfelt thank you to Lisa for dedicating her time to share her expertise and experiences. Her ongoing support to WAJA is immensely appreciated, and we look forward to more collaborative learning opportunities in the future.

What are workshops

A workshop is a structured learning or problem-solving session where participants actively engage in hands-on activities, discussions, or tasks related to a specific topic or skill. Workshops are beneficial because they promote interactive learning, foster collaboration, and enable practical skill development in a focused and participatory environment.

WAJA engages with a broad range of workshops every semester, the aim is to network and broaden the thinking of those in attendance. These will often be portfolio specific.

Workshop Photos



Volunteer Highlight

WAJA encourages volunteers to grow both personally and professionally – sometimes this means stepping outside our comfort zones! Earlier this year, Projects Director Jessica Huynh did just that when she presented at the 2023 Reintegration Puzzle Conference in Perth.

The Reintegration Puzzle Conference brings together social justice community-led organisations, lived experience experts and legal academics who all contribute to improving justice outcomes for people impacted by incarceration.

Jessica presented the key findings of WAJA’s year-long Project collaboration with the WA Association for Mental Health. The Project examined avenues for greater rehabilitative, employment and mental health support for individuals leaving prison. Its purpose was to reduce adverse justice and mental health outcomes.



Dave Kelly MLA Workshop

In a recent standout moment, WAJA's Advocacy and Executive team had the privilege of engaging with Dave Kelly MLA, and we're thrilled to share the highlights with you!

We extend our sincere thanks to Dave Kelly for graciously opening up his office space to host our recent workshop. His support has been invaluable!

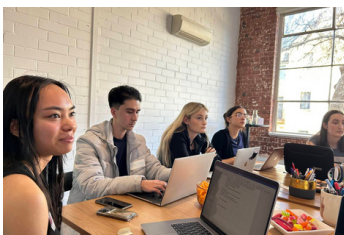
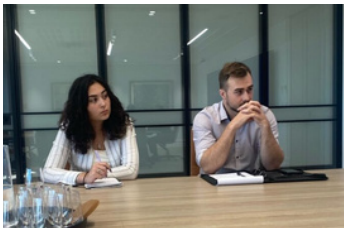
During the workshop, Dave Kelly shared a wealth of insights into successful campaigning, providing a glimpse into the art of effective advocacy. The session delved into WAJA's core focus on restorative justice and its vital role in communication with local government, exploring how these efforts can drive impactful law reform.

The Advocacy team adeptly communicated WAJA's mission for effective criminal justice reform to Dave Kelly, sparking a fruitful discussion. This laid the groundwork for exploring how parliamentarians and key stakeholders can actively contribute to shaping a more promising future for individuals navigating the Western Australian criminal justice system.

Stay tuned for future opportunities to engage and contribute to our ongoing efforts for a fair and compassionate criminal justice system in Western Australia.

Your continued support and engagement are vital to our mission. Look out for more updates in our next newsletter as we navigate the path toward positive change. Thank you for being part of the WAJA community!

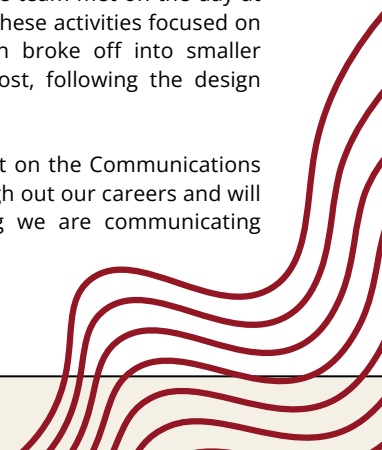
Workshop Photos



Anthologie Workshop

The Anthologie Workshop was an opportunity for the Communications Portfolio to gain new insights into social media and communication strategy design. The team met on the day at Anthologie, who kindly guided the team through a few activities. These activities focused on designing social media posts. Attendees of the workshop then broke off into smaller groups, where each group worked to design a social media post, following the design concepts inspired by Anthologies own practice.

The skills gained at this workshop have had an immediate impact on the Communications Portfolio. The skills gained in this short session will be used through out our careers and will continue to guide or decision and design process in ensuring we are communicating effectively, meeting the objectives we set out to achieve.



How to get involved

EFFICIENT COLLABORATION NETWORKS Through the engagement of a dedicated Project Supervisor and Mentor for each project, we are committed to fostering direct collaboration among students, legal professionals, and social justice organizations.

EXEMPLARY OUTCOMES Our unwavering commitment is to produce top-tier materials that directly contribute to the advancement of social justice reform initiatives. Our project teams are comprised of passionate student volunteers who are deeply invested in social justice reform. With input from Project Supervisors and Mentors, we ensure the highest standards of professionalism, quality, and relevance in our work.

STUDENT GROWTH Our student volunteers actively participate in a series of training workshops designed to enhance their skill sets across a spectrum of areas, spanning from report composition to campaign implementation and marketing.

These sessions offer practical, real-world skill development that extends beyond the confines of academic learning.

Our projects are meticulously crafted to yield tangible benefits for social justice reform efforts while providing invaluable real-world knowledge and experience to the students involved.

These projects empower university students to contribute to and create research papers, inquiry submissions, policy proposals, and other pertinent materials for legal reform. The project timelines align with the typical 13-week university semester, with teams comprising approximately five students. Project briefs are meticulously crafted in collaboration with our partner organizations prior to the start of the semester.

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In addition to our dedicated student volunteers, each project team includes a Project Supervisor and a Project Mentor. The project timelines align with the typical 13-week university semester, with teams comprising approximately five students. Project briefs are meticulously crafted in collaboration with our partner organizations prior to the start of the semester.

'Supervisor' and a 'Mentor.' The Project Supervisor hails from a local social justice organization relevant to the project, while the Project Mentor is a seasoned legal professional deeply passionate about social justice reform. Throughout the project's duration, students meet bi-weekly with their Supervisor and Mentor, providing a unique opportunity for hands-on guidance from individuals boasting extensive professional experience in the legal and social justice sectors.

Upon the project's conclusion, WAJA's advocacy team transforms project findings into campaign materials as needed. Drawing from our project outcomes, our Advocates actively campaign for reform by engaging with decision-makers, publishing newspaper articles, participating in talkback radio discussions, and hosting community events, among other impactful initiatives.

Why get involved

Bridging the chasm between social justice advocacy and law reform, the WA Justice Association endeavors to mitigate incarceration rates and enhance the outcomes of individuals entangled within Western Australia's criminal justice system. Our mission revolves around the transformation of legal frameworks and the cultivation of student involvement with non-governmental organizations and the legal community.

We are dedicated to nurturing close collaboration among student volunteers, pre-existing social justice entities, and members of the legal sphere to optimize the impact of policy reform initiatives. Our commitment extends to advocating for policy reform across critical areas, including youth justice, the disproportionate representation of Indigenous individuals within the criminal justice system, and prison reform.

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One of our core objectives is to provide real-world experience to student volunteers, transcending the confines of academic studies and immersing them in practical legal contexts. Through participation in WAJA, our aim is to instill socially conscious mindsets within law students, thereby equipping them to embark on their legal careers with a profound sense of social responsibility.

Our ultimate goal is to harness the combined strengths of diverse stakeholders, orchestrating a synergy that endures and yields results in the realm of social justice reform. By leveraging the talents and readily available resources of student volunteers alongside the professionalism and expertise of legal practitioners and social justice organizations, we strive to establish a network that not only stands the test of time but also proves remarkably effective in advancing our reform endeavors.





WAJA takes great pride in acknowledging Bennett - Litigation and Commercial Law as a Major Partner. The steadfast support provided by Bennett - Litigation and Commercial Law serves as a cornerstone for WAJA's ability to effectively advance criminal justice reform and amplify the visibility of crucial social justice concerns. Moreover, Bennett - Litigation and Commercial Law plays an instrumental role in enabling WAJA to host a variety of workshops, thereby empowering our dedicated student volunteers to hone their professional abilities and further the realization of WAJA's mission. We extend our profound gratitude to Bennett - Litigation and Commercial Law for their substantial and invaluable support.

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WAJA extends its heartfelt gratitude to Fourth Floor Chambers for their unwavering support. Additionally, we would like to express our sincere appreciation to The University of Western Australia's Law School for their consistent backing of our endeavours.

THANK YOU