

The Difference Getting Help Makes: Unfair Dismissal

In our *Insight Report: Unmet demand for community legal services in Western Australia*, among those turnaways attributable to capacity constraints, 8.5 percent were for employment law issues. An estimated 1,394 people annually. Below are the stories of four real Western Australians, who all had the same issue: they lost their job. Some were able to get legal help from a community legal service, but one was not. Western Australia's employment law specialist community legal service, Circle Green Community Legal Centre, assisted the three people who did get help in the stories below.

Unresolved legal matters can have compounding effects on people's wellbeing and life outcomes. In the stories below, when people got the help they needed it let them find closure, have positive financial outcomes, and have confidence moving forward in the workforce. One story tells of a person who was not able to get the help they needed. This meant their issue got worse as they were drawn into a vicious cycle, from which they could not easily recover.

Community legal services help with a variety of different legal issues. We have chosen to use the examples of people who have unfair dismissal issues as it is just one situation which highlights the difference getting help makes. While receiving representation features in two of the stories, the reality is that community legal services' resourcing does not permit ongoing services to be provided to all clients. Sometimes initial advice is all that can be regularly offered and delivered within available resources, with representation only being offered to people presenting with critical vulnerability.

For an overview of research regarding the specific impacts losing one's job has on individuals, the community, and the economy at large see the 'Broader Impacts for People and Society' box to the right of this page.

