



Russell
McAugh

Assisting our communities
in Aotearoa New Zealand
Pro Bono Overview 2023

1863 2023
160
YEARS

Increasing access to legal advice

The support we provide comes from a desire to make a difference and help in the best way we know how, utilising our skills and expertise in a way that improves outcomes for the people and communities of Aotearoa New Zealand. Pro bono forms a core component of our business and culture, and we have a proud history of directing our skills and resources towards making a positive and long-lasting difference.

Our values are integral to the way we operate and the service we provide to all our clients. Working with some of the most forward-thinking charitable and not-for-profit organisations in Aotearoa New Zealand through our pro bono work is an example of how we live our values.

Our Values

Our values reflect who we are, what we stand for, and how we work together.

Excellence | Whai hiranga

Respect | Manaaki

Curiosity | Māhirahira

Tenacity | Whakapau kaha

4,056:

Total hours of pro bono work in FY22.

Assisting our communities in Aotearoa New Zealand

Contents

Increasing access to legal advice	2
Our Pro Bono Committee	4
Supporting our communities: Community Law centres	6
Supporting social enterprises: Ākina	8
Enabling access: Access Matters	10
Transforming the health of children: Cure Kids	12
Other organisations we support	14
Appendix: How we define pro bono at Russell McVeagh	16

Our Pro Bono Committee

Our pro bono work is led by partners Polly Pope and Jesse Fairley, who work to develop new pro bono opportunities and match those opportunities with the right experts in our firm.



Polly Pope

Partner & Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair

“ We have a long tradition of pro bono - like many Russell McVeagh lawyers, my pro bono work at Community Law clinics was a formative experience early in my career. Our pro bono work today looks to continue that tradition, while challenging ourselves to see how we can better address the barriers to access to justice in Aotearoa. ”

Jesse Fairley

Partner & Pro Bono Committee Co-Chair

“ We are proud to work with a number of charities, social enterprises, and not-for-profit organisations, supporting their kaupapa and the important work they do for the communities across our country. ”

Our Pro Bono Framework

Increasing access to justice is at the heart of Russell McVeagh’s Pro Bono Programme.



We also focus on pro bono work that aligns with our values of **respect | manaaki, excellence | whai hiranga, tenacity | whakapau kaha** and **curiosity | māhirahira**, including projects that support diversity and inclusion.

Te Ara Ture – A Bridge to Law

In 2022 Russell McVeagh registered with Te Ara Ture, an innovative online portal that connects volunteer lawyers with disadvantaged kiwis, referred by Community Law Centres across the motu to make the justice system fairer and more accessible. Being part of the Te Ara Ture community of volunteer lawyers opens up opportunities for our people to contribute their expertise to some of Aotearoa’s most vulnerable communities.



Supporting our communities

Community Law Centres

We have been supporting Māngere Community Law Centre since 1987 and Wellington and Hutt Valley Community Law Centres since 2003. Senior Solicitor, Aleisha Robertson, shares more about her involvement with the programme.

What pro bono work does Russell McVeagh do with the Māngere Law Centre and why is it important?

Every Tuesday, two or three solicitors volunteer at the Māngere Community Law Centre to offer free legal advice to members of the community. The cost of obtaining legal advice is often a barrier that prevents people from seeking advice when they are facing tough situations. These sessions aim to lower that barrier and make top-quality legal advice more accessible to the community. Our advice can be on a wide range of civil matters such as assisting with debt disputes, protection from cyber-bullying, and finding solutions to resolve consumer issues.

What's the best thing about supporting the Māngere Law Centre?

Undoubtedly the ability to help people through tough times. Many of the clients who visit us are experiencing hardship and often feel helpless and uncertain. Being able to listen and offer solutions to the clients' issues is incredibly rewarding. The opportunity to use our legal skills to give back to the community, and to have that engrained in our firm's culture, is a privilege. With that privilege comes a sense of responsibility to give back to our community and ensure that anyone can benefit from the protections of the legal system.

867 + Hours for Community Law centres in FY22

“ Russell McVeagh is a really active partner of Te Ara Ture. They work across all areas of our programme – helping individuals, NFPs, and community law centres. They did a brilliant piece of work after the floods and cyclone. The legal information they produced is now available to all New Zealanders and will be there ready to go, should it be needed again. ”

Darryn Aitchison

Director, Te Ara Ture



Solicitors at Wellington Community Law Centre



“ Volunteering is a rewarding opportunity to support Community Law's amazing mahi by offering our expertise to people navigating complex situations and the legal system. ”

Ashley Donaldson

Solicitor

Supporting social enterprises



Ākina

Ākina is an impact consultancy that provides capability building support and coaching on how to achieve better social and environmental outcomes to social enterprises and other organisations.

We have partnered with Ākina since 2010, providing advice on a range of legal issues. In this time, we have helped them navigate major changes in charities law, adjusting their structure to optimise their operations, and have worked on projects with them including the launch of their Fwd: social procurement network, establishing the National Advisory Board for Impact Investing in New Zealand, and helping write the *Structuring for Impact: Evolving Legal Structures for Businesses in New Zealand* report which was produced in partnership with the Department of Internal Affairs.



Ākina CEO Nicola Nation presenting at Russell McVeagh



“ We’re delighted to support Ākina in driving impact through New Zealand’s business ecosystem, including through their work with some of Aotearoa’s most exciting social enterprises. ”

Hannah Bain
Special Counsel

145:

Of our people worked on pro bono matters in FY22



Waka Aronui Scheme

Improving access to education, employment, and sporting opportunities.

The Waka Aronui Scheme provides low-cost access to hybrid vehicles to whānau in South Auckland, an area which has fewer public transport connections and where many whānau may have difficulties affording their own private vehicles, including the ongoing costs of maintenance, registration and warrants of fitness.

We supported the Manukau Urban Māori Authority with the contracts to implement this scheme. The project improves the ability of whānau to access education and employment opportunities which they may not otherwise be able to, and the use of hybrid vehicles reduces the environmental impact of the scheme. Read more on this scheme [here](#).

The Waka Aronui Scheme is a collaboration between Manukau Urban Māori Authority and Toyota, with support from Ākina, the Tindall Foundation, and government partners Waka Kotahi and the Ministry of Business, Innovation, and Employment.



Enabling accessibility



Access Matters Aotearoa

Throughout its 160-year history, Russell McVeagh has supported a number of major public-good law reform initiatives in a range of sectors. Russell McVeagh has been supporting Access Matters in its law reform initiative around the legislative framework for disabled people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This particular initiative is an important one for Aotearoa New Zealand, as it provides a legislative framework to enable disabled communities across New Zealand to enjoy a better quality of access to buildings, services, and generally a better lifestyle throughout the motu.

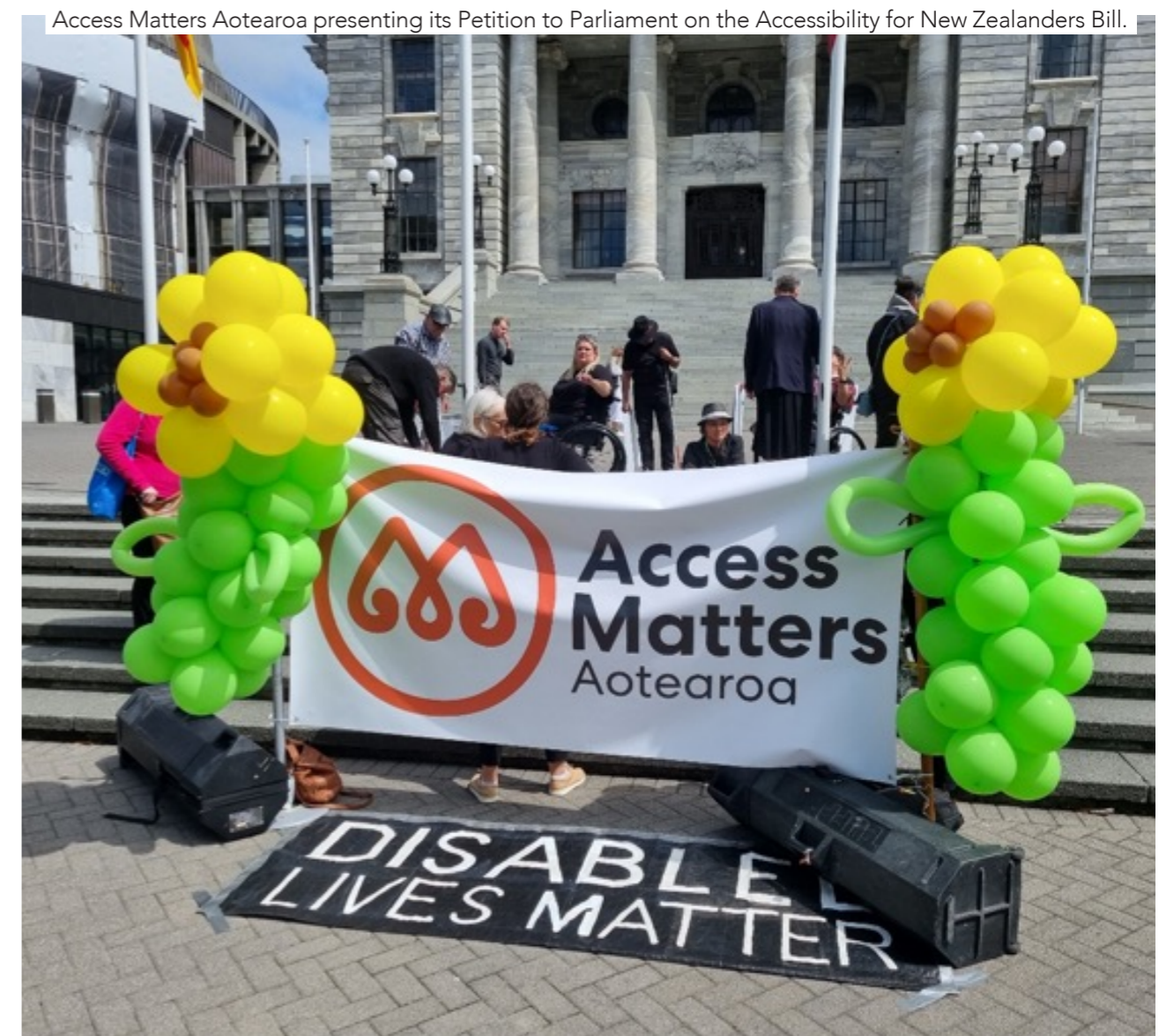
Russell McVeagh has been assisting Access Matters Aotearoa around the law reform process since 2022. At the moment the Accessibility for New Zealanders Bill is currently before Parliament awaiting second reading.

Among other things, we've been assisting Access Matters Aotearoa to shape up their submissions, so people throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, whatever community they come from, will be able to participate more effectively in the law reform process.



“ I've been very privileged to work with Access Matters Aotearoa to advocate for stronger legislation to support those with accessibility needs. I believe we've made a real impact and created meaningful change by using Russell McVeagh's expertise along with Access Matters Aotearoa's energy and grass roots commitment. ”

Georgina Lomax-Sawyers
Solicitor



“ Our ability to bring legal and legislative expertise to bear on such a major and important public policy issue is a real privilege and something we're very pleased to assist with. Major public-good law reform projects like this don't come along that often, and when we get an opportunity to use our legal skills to be able to support such a fantastic reform, we're very happy to do so. ”

Tim Clarke
Partner, Public Law and Regulation

Transforming the health of children



Cure Kids

[Cure Kids](#), whose mission it is to invest in research to transform the health of children across Aotearoa New Zealand, is the largest funder of child health research outside the government.

In operation since 1971, Cure Kids' vision of "healthier children, with a brighter future" has seen more than \$60 million invested in New Zealand research, and over 700 research projects completed, to improve the way children who live with serious diseases and health conditions are diagnosed and treated.

They have supported research that has helped prevent 200 sudden unexpected deaths in infancy each year, enabled the diagnosis of cystic fibrosis at birth, helped identify some of the genes that cause epilepsy, along with many other significant breakthroughs.



“ Working with Cure Kids has provided a unique and rewarding opportunity to contribute legal support to one of Aotearoa's most cherished charitable organisations. ”

Leisha Fletcher
Solicitor

38: Pro bono clients in FY22* supported by Russell McVeagh

*not including sub-clients of parent organisation

Led by Tax partner, [Fred Ward](#), our work with Cure Kids has been ongoing since 2003. We provide support to them through the preparation and review of agreements in their key areas of sponsorship and fundraising events, research partnerships, employment, and Cure Kids' Red Nose Day. Some recent work completed included contract negotiation and review with several high-profile entities, including:

- The Government in Fiji and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (in relation to Cure Kids' investments in research to help children in Fiji).
- The University of Auckland, where Cure Kids funds two Professorial Chairs and a range of research projects, including co-funding with the New Zealand Government for research to give children "A Better Start".



Cure Kids ambassadors

Other organisations we support



Tim Clarke at Parliament with the Mahi for Ukraine team

Mahi for Ukraine

We have been assisting Mahi for Ukraine since 2022 with the design and implementation of its government relations strategy advocating for various immigration and humanitarian aid measures to support Ukrainians in New Zealand who have been displaced as a result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This includes supporting meetings with the Minister of Immigration and regular meetings with Immigration New Zealand and other officials and MPs to advocate for policy change.



Coralus

Coralus is a global community of women + non-binary people that help businesses working on the world's to-do list. We have been offering our help since 2020 to the handful of impact-driven ventures that are picked each year through the innovative Coralus funding model. This has included supporting start-ups such as Nisa, an organic cotton underwear label that employs women from refugee backgrounds; Kiri Nathan, a Māori fashion label focusing on community, ethical practice, and cultural integrity; and Jobloads, a digital solution enabling collaboration when people work together on temporary jobs; and many more organisations like these.



RainbowYOUTH

RainbowYOUTH work towards creating social change by providing support, information, resources and advocacy for queer, gender diverse, takatāpui and intersex young people across Aotearoa New Zealand. We have been supporting RainbowYOUTH on various matters since 2016.



Zealandia | Te Māra a Tāne

We act for the Karori Sanctuary Trust (trading as Zealandia | Te Māra a Tāne), who operate a globally recognised urban ecosanctuary that has transformed the birdlife of the Wellington region. Since 1998 we have worked with Zealandia on a variety of issues affecting the council-controlled organisation, as and when required. For example, we assist with commercial contracting arrangements, employment matters, health and safety issues affecting the business, and provide overall strategic and governance advice to the Trust Board. We are pleased to support Zealandia's conservation work and believe in its 500-year vision to restore biodiversity in the sanctuary and beyond, and to connect communities with Aotearoa's natural heritage.

Bridget Williams Books

Bridget Williams Books (BWB) is an award-winning independent New Zealand publisher. It has published a number of New Zealand's most significant and impactful books over the last three decades. It has a particular focus on history, Māori history and perspectives, and issues confronting Aotearoa's future (including the BWB Texts series). BWB's publishing includes a significant educational outreach programme into schools and kura. We support the BWB team across all of its endeavours.



Motu

Motu produces economic and public policy research on public-good focused topics such as the gender pay gap, who benefits the most from free speech, and the effect of access to childcare on employment for mothers. Their experts endeavour to shed light on the forces that shape Aotearoa's economy, inform policy decisions, and improve the lives of New Zealanders. We have been providing pro bono support to Motu since 2019.



Appendix:

How we define pro bono at Russell McVeagh

- Giving legal assistance for free or at a substantially reduced fee to:
 - individuals who can demonstrate a need for legal assistance but cannot obtain Legal Aid or otherwise access the legal system without incurring significant financial hardship;
 - individuals or organisations whose matter raises an issue of public interest which would not otherwise be pursued;
 - charities, other not-for-profit organisations or social enterprises, in each case where their sole or primary purpose is to work in the interests of low income or disadvantaged members of the community, or for the public good; or
 - iwi, hapū and other Māori led organisations working for the collective wellbeing of iwi, hapū or Māori generally, and/or the wider public.
- Conducting law reform and policy work on issues affecting low income or disadvantaged members of the community, or on issues of public interest.
- Participating in the provision of free community legal education on issues affecting low income or disadvantaged members of the community or on issues of public interest.
- Providing a lawyer on secondment at a community organisation (including a community legal organisation) or at a referral service provider such as a Public Interest Law Clearing House.

Auckland

Level 30, Vero Centre, 48 Shortland Street
PO Box 8, Auckland 1140, New Zealand, DX CX10085
Ph +64 9 367 8000 F +64 9 367 8163

Wellington

Level 24, NTT Tower, 157 Lambton Quay
PO Box 10-214, Wellington 6011, New Zealand, DX SX11189
Ph +64 4 499 9555 F +64 4 499 9556

[russellmcveagh.com](https://www.russellmcveagh.com)

**Russell
McVeagh**

© Russell McVeagh 2023. All rights reserved.

This content is intended only to provide a summary of the subject covered. It does not purport to be comprehensive or to provide legal advice. No person should act in reliance on any statement contained in this publication without first obtaining specific professional advice. If you require any advice or further information on the subject matter, please contact a Russell McVeagh partner/solicitor.