



Norton Rose Fulbright

Workplace Giving Australia Awards 2023 Winner

Best Pro-Bono/Volunteering Program

Workplace Giving Program Case Study



 **NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT**

Norton Rose Fulbright Workplace Giving Program Summary

Norton Rose Fulbright (NRF) provides a full scope of legal services to the world's preeminent corporations and financial institutions. As a global law firm NRF has more than 3,000 lawyers advising clients across more than 50 locations worldwide. NRF's dedicated Australian pro bono team, led by Partner Chris Owen, is defined by four impact pillars and four focus themes. In FY23 NRF completed more than 25,000 hours of pro bono work across Australia, acting for disadvantaged people who cannot afford legal services; non-profit organisations that support those individuals; and public interest matters of broad public concern.

From the Judges

"Lawyers can go on full time secondments - usually lasting six months - that is a significant investment from NRF - benefiting both the employee and also NFP."

Workplace Giving Program Details

Norton Rose Fulbright Australia's (NRF) dedicated pro bono practice is led by partner, Chris Owen. Chris is supported by special counsel and dedicated pro bono senior associates in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane and other lawyers. NRF's commitment to a fully-staffed team has significantly increased the pro bono operations of the firm. NRF works on local, national and global projects, collaborating across teams and offices.

Last year the firm undertook 25,294 hours of pro bono, equating to a value of \$11,034,909.

NRF ensures that their lawyers are involved in pro bono legal work from the beginning of their careers. Through their strong relationships with community legal centres and not for profit organisations, NRF's lawyers can go on full-time secondments, usually lasting six months.

NRF's lawyers are always encouraged to be involved in pro bono work, and the central team allocates matters depending on interests, expertise and capacity, as well as undertaking work itself. Last year the firm undertook 25,294 hours of pro bono, equating to a value of \$11,034,909.



Norton Rose Fulbright's Implementation Of The Program

The firm has a dedicated pro bono webpage and members of the central team frequently liaise with staff and give presentations. NRF currently has five lawyers and four graduates participating in secondments. Providing pro bono opportunities early, facilitates a genuine and long-lasting commitment to pro bono work. For example, during her graduate rotation Jessica Markabawi completed a six month secondment at Jaramer Legal (Australia's first indigenous owned commercial law firm which NRF partner with) and Refugee Legal. Jessica, now an Associate, is heavily involved in the pro bono practice, sits on the firm's RAP committee, and in FY23 contributed on average 34.69 pro bono hours monthly (416.28 annually).

NRF frequently provide educational opportunities for staff to learn about pro bono initiatives. For example, the Mental Health Law Centre and Ruah Legal Services recently presented to staff on the Criminal Law (Mental Impairment) Bill 2022 (WA) and its human rights impacts. They also recently hosted leading human rights barrister Jennifer Robinson.

NRF use an 'expression of interest' register to record their lawyer's interest areas. This allows NRF to be targeted when placing work, which help keeps their lawyers engaged.

NRF also actively promotes the business benefits of a thriving pro bono program. They have partnered with commercial clients like Pfizer on pro bono initiatives, and understand that pro bono work attracts the best and brightest young lawyers and upskills existing staff. They also push a strong internal social impact footprint to credibly market their firm as a leading ESG advisor.



Norton Rose Fulbright's Results Of The Program

NRF is proud of all its work across each of its strategy areas. One area that NRF has focussed on is climate change, particularly providing assistance to Indigenous peoples who are disproportionately affected, as well as considering the intersection of human rights and climate change. NRF work in this space was recently published on the PILNet Global Climate Action Portal.

Some examples include:

1. NRF has provided pro bono advice to many environmental not-for-profit organisations that are committed to combatting climate change, including:
 - a) a nature-based solution charity working to regenerate cleared agricultural land in North Queensland;
 - b) a First Nations NFP managing land in the NT according to tradition fire management practices;
 - c) a charitable organisations whose mission is to stop the degradation of the planets natural environment.
2. Working with Firesticks Alliance Indigenous Corporation to compile laws and policies, as well as to compile opportunities and barriers for traditional cultural burning practices.
3. Natural Disaster Assistance following the Black Summer bushfires in 2019 and 2020 and the floods on the east coast of Australia in 2021.

"It is our privilege to be able to use our specialist legal skills to make a positive social impact in our communities. Our firm's long history of providing pro bono legal services is a vital part of our cultural make-up and community spirit."

*Chris Owen,
Partner | National Pro Bono Team Leader | ESG Group Chair
Norton Rose Fulbright*



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