



# Free workplace and recruitment advice for people affected by cancer.

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## CANCER COUNCIL PRO BONO PROGRAM

As cancer incidence and survival rates continue to increase, and many of the estimated 1.1 million Australians living with cancer are also part of the workforce, there is a need to address the significant workplace challenges they and their carers face.

Cancer Council's Pro Bono Program helps people affected by cancer to access free workplace advice, where they would otherwise be unable to do so due to cost, illness or other barriers. The program connects eligible clients who contact the Cancer Council Information and Support Line on 13 11 20 or who are referred by health professionals to employment lawyers, human resources (HR) professionals and recruitment specialists.

Since its launch in 2010, the program has received referrals for 1153 people experiencing difficulties in the workplace or seeking to return to work after a cancer diagnosis. Professional assistance is often required to help clients better understand their rights, negotiate with their employer and enable them to enter or return to a suitable workplace.

## DESIGN

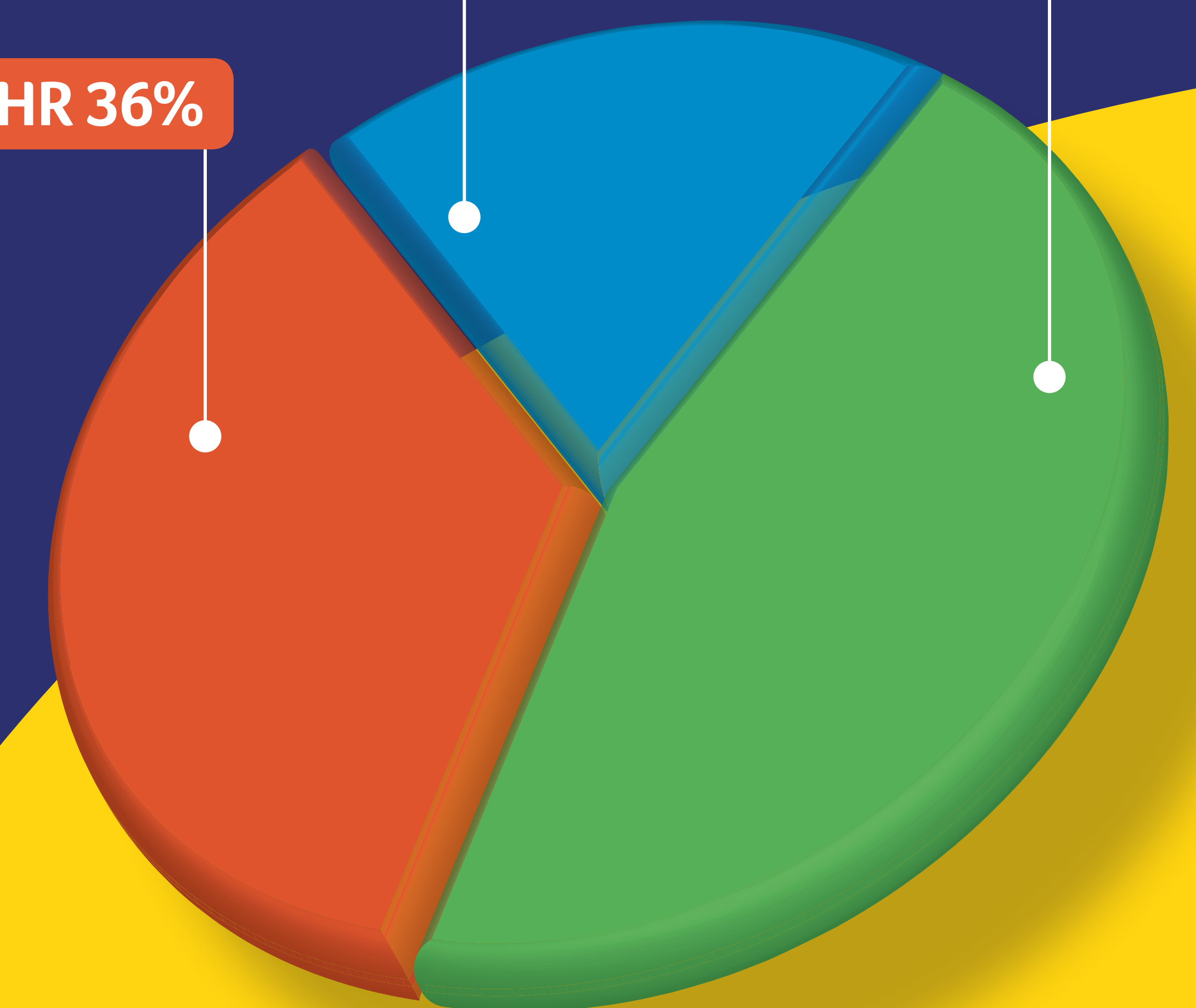
Starting as a Legal Referral Service, the Cancer Council Pro Bono Program expanded in 2012 to provide clients with free access to HR professionals. The service has connected 767 patients, carers and survivors with employment lawyers (n=345), HR professionals (n=277) and recruitment specialists (n=145). The service refers people affected by cancer who need information, support and advice with a range of issues, including:

- employment law issues and discrimination
- negotiating flexible working arrangements
- managing expectations of employers
- understanding leave entitlements
- guidance on disclosing diagnosis to colleagues and managers
- advice returning to the workforce
- assistance drafting a CV
- explaining gaps in employment.

Recruitment 19%

Employment 45%

HR 36%



## OUTCOMES

Within the first year, referrals for workplace and recruitment advice increased by 50% and have remained steady since. The estimated commercial cost of employment law advice provided for free by lawyers is \$1,770,000.

In 2015, an evaluation found that 9 in 10 professionals were able to clarify issues for clients most or all the time with 25% of HR professionals noting they resolved clients issues frequently.

One cancer survivor who was referred to a recruitment specialist for assistance returning to work noted: "Thanks to her I got a job ... I was at my wits end and she pulled me back from the mire and gave me hope and strength."

### HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

"I see such a change in people's level of stress and an improvement in their ability to cope – which equates to better health outcomes."



### CLIENT

"It was a great experience and really made me feel that I had someone in my corner."

### HR PROFESSIONAL

"After I met with my first referral, I was so connected to the purpose of the service I stayed on and have been providing my time since."



How to contact the Cancer Council Pro Bono Program

Email [probono@cancerCouncil.org.au](mailto:probono@cancerCouncil.org.au)  
Call 1300 852 295