For the past seven years, ECU has partnered with the Joondalup Community Legal Centre to help disadvantaged and low-income residents in Perth’s northern suburbs with legal advice and representation.

The collaborative project is funded through Federal and State Government departments, including the State Attorney General’s office, Legal Aid WA and the Department for Communities.

Every semester, up to ten ECU students work alongside Centre lawyers to help local residents with legal matters and representation on issues of family, civil, tenancy and criminal law.

JCLC managing lawyer Ian McLeod said the Centre did important work within the community and it would struggle to provide all the services it does without the students’ help.

“We provide general legal advice by phone to people that call in with minor legal problems, we have partnerships with the Family Relationship Centre and meet with clients in relation to child contact and domestic violence issues,” Mr McLeod said.

“We have a lawyer who attends Joondalup Court once a week to advise respondents to violence restraining orders before their first court attendances and we also provide community education services.

“Both students and graduates work on a volunteer basis and the Centre could not provide the services it does without this assistance.”

Mr McLeod said the law firm had been providing free services to the community’s most disadvantaged or vulnerable since 1996 and originally operated out of just one office in Mirrabooka.

Since joining forces with ECU in 2006, the team had expanded to open a second centre at the Joondalup ECU campus, which employs six staff.

“Our services are generally available to all residents of the northern suburbs but ongoing representation will only be provided to people who have a vulnerability or disadvantage, such as language or financial, or a case with special legal merit,” Mr. McLeod said.

ECU law students volunteer one day a week to the law firm work directly with clients. Law graduates then complete 75 days legal training at JCLC.

Mr. McLeod said his team was looking to expand their partnership with ECU and take on more students in the future.