



FEDERATION

OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES VIC



IMPACT REPORT
2017–2018



FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES VIC

The Federation is the peak body for Victoria's Community Legal Centres (CLCs). Our members are at the forefront of helping those facing economic, cultural or social disadvantage and whose life circumstances are severely affected by their legal problem. For over 40 years CLCs have been part of a powerful movement for social change, reshaping how people access justice, creating stronger more equitable laws, and more accountable government and democracy.

We pursue our vision of a fair, inclusive, thriving community through challenging injustice, defending rights and building the power of our members and communities. As an influential advocate, our voice is distinct and courageous: we are not afraid to challenge government, big business, or other powerful actors to ensure equality and fairness for all.

Read our new strategic plan online
fclc.org.au/about

OUR VISION WE WANT A COMMUNITY THAT IS FAIR, INCLUSIVE AND THRIVING: WHERE EVERY PERSON BELONGS AND CAN LEARN, GROW, HEAL, PARTICIPATE AND BE HEARD.

The Federation:

- ▼ Enables a strong collective voice for justice and equality;
- ▼ Mobilises and leads CLCs in strategic, well coordinated advocacy and campaigns;
- ▼ Works with members to continuously improve the impact of community legal services;
- ▼ Drives creativity and excellence in the delivery of legal services to communities;
- ▼ Helps make justice more accessible.

Our members lead collaboration and advocacy via several Working Groups, providing guidance and direction for the Federation's work, as well as opportunities for joint advocacy.

Together with our members and communities, we work to dismantle unjust systems that perpetuate racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, economic injustice and other inequalities. Our priority is to be fully accountable to the communities we represent.



THE FEDERATION ACKNOWLEDGES THE TRADITIONAL ABORIGINAL OWNERS OF COUNTRY AND WE PAY OUR RESPECTS TO ELDERS PAST, PRESENT AND EMERGING. WE RECOGNISE THEIR CONTINUING CONNECTION TO LAND, WATER AND COMMUNITY. SOVEREIGNTY WAS NEVER CEDED.

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CHAIR AND CEO REPORT

This year, community legal centres have fiercely defended the rights of their communities. As their peak body, we stood with our members. The Federation supported campaigns on key social issues and we continued our advocacy for growing our sector.

We saw an imperative to stand with communities of colour and support their voices in the face of a very divisive law and order debate that has intensified in Victoria and found its way into National commentary.

The Federation created spaces for communities to come together to share experiences, build strength, plan action and be supported by allies. We did this through supporting a Black Lives Matter (BLM) Organising Exchange while the BLM founders were in Australia and hosting We Must Stand Together, an event that centred communities directly impacted by the damaging law and order agenda to reclaim the narrative.

The Federation, the Smart Justice Coalition and our members called for an increase to the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years and end the practice of imprisoning children as young as 10 years old. Alongside our members, we lobbied and campaigned, meeting with decision-makers from Canberra to Spring Street.

In the lead up to the State Budget, we lobbied Government on how best to support people

struggling to make ends meet and facing crises in their lives caused by family violence, debt or insecure tenancies.

Our budget priorities reflected the solutions identified by our members from their experience working with the community to eliminate inequality, disadvantage and discrimination.

We worked with our members to stand up for public housing tenants' facing relocation as part of redevelopments. Together we led advocacy for more security for tenants, greater consultation on the redevelopment and a much greater increase to public and community housing.

This year, the Federation has built its campaigning capacity. In addition to our lobbying and advocacy efforts for driving change, we believe it's critical to build strong support in the community to fight against damaging laws and to support the essential work of our members. A new website has enabled us to engage directly with the public on key issues and build a strong foundation of supporters for our members.



'Our long serving board member, Belinda Lo, stepped down in April following over 5 years' service on the board, with over two years as Chairperson. Belinda's dedication and expertise has been invaluable for the Federation. Fortunately we have the benefit of her leadership for the coming year, in the role of CEO while Serina is on parental leave. I was pleased to be elected Chair, and look forward to the year ahead.' - KRISTEN WALLWORK, CHAIR FROM APRIL 2018



'It has been a privilege to serve on the board of the Federation and I'm excited to step into the role of CEO in the coming year.' - BELINDA LO, CHAIR UNTIL APRIL 2018



'Community legal centres are the heart of a movement for justice. As their peak body, this year the Federation helped defend the rights of people and communities who are marginalised. We also advocated for our members, because we believe strong community legal centres mean strong communities.' - SERINA MCDUFF, CEO



We are also driving continuous improvement and accountability to our communities. The Federation is supporting members to demonstrate their impact through meaningful outcomes measurement, monitoring and evaluation.

Additionally, we are developing a sector-wide client survey, to capture the voices of people accessing community legal centres across Victoria. This is the first time that a Victorian state wide survey will be conducted in our sector.

The Federation is leading collaboration between Generalist and Specialist CLCs, as well as across the entire legal assistance sector in service planning, to improve services and access for people needing legal help.

Following engagement with members, our new strategic plan reflects our commitment to amplify community voices, drive collective advocacy with our members, lead the design of legal assistance services and increase access to legal support for the Victorian community.

TO ACCOMPANY OUR NEW STRATEGIC PLAN, OUR BRAND REFRESH VISUALLY CAPTURES OUR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE.

At a governance level, Ben Zika and Clare Sauro stepped down from the board and we sincerely thank them for their dedicated service. We welcomed Claudia Fatone, Chris Povey and Hayley Mansfield and are fortunate to have their skills and expertise.

At a staff level, Katie Fraser departed after a long and deeply committed decade in the sector. Katie's contribution to the sector and the Federation is considerable and she will be greatly missed.

In the context of rising inequality, community legal centres are crucial advocates for the people most impacted by injustice. We will pursue our vision of a fair, inclusive, thriving community through challenging injustice, defending rights and building the power of our members and communities.

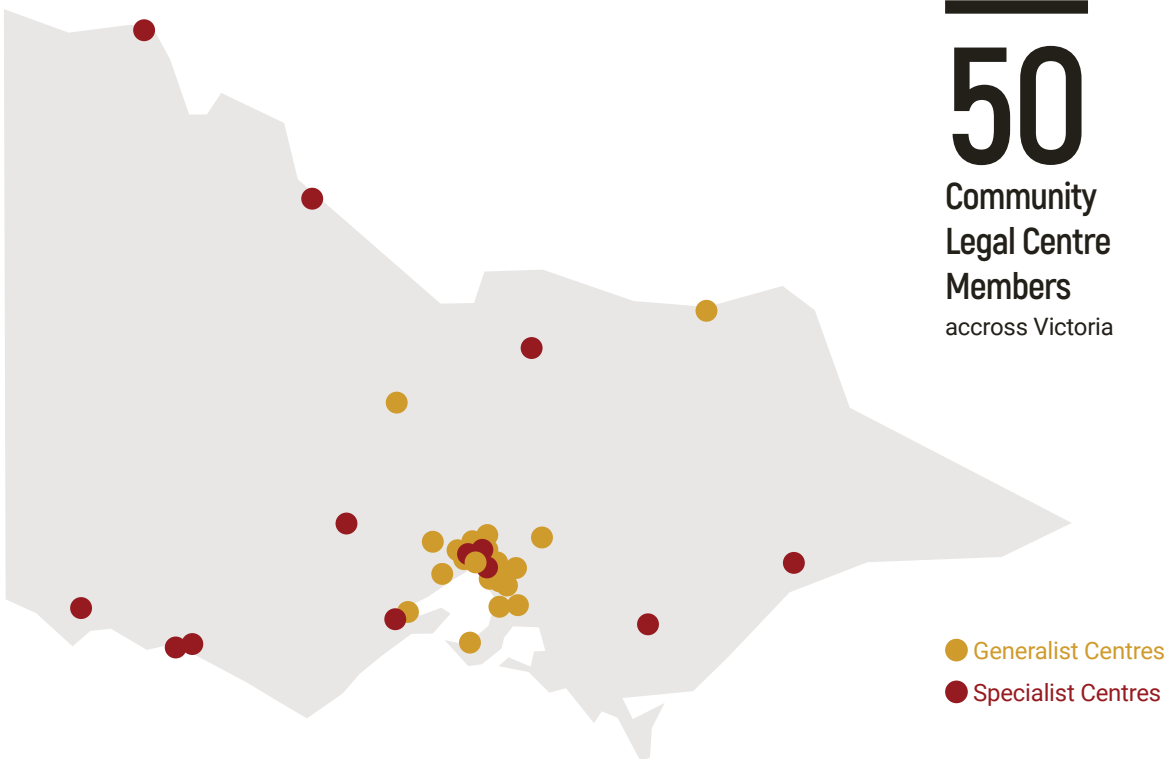
OUR MEMBERS

GENERALIST CENTRES

Barwon Community Legal Service; Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre; Casey Cardinia Community Legal Service; Central Highlands Community Legal Centre; Darebin Community Legal Centre; Eastern Community Legal Centre; Fitzroy Legal Service; Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre; Gippsland Community Legal Service; Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre; Hume Riverina Community Legal Service; Inner Melbourne Community Legal; Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre; Monash Law Clinic; Moonee Valley Legal Service; Murray Mallee Community Legal Service; Northern Community Legal Centre; Peninsula Community Legal Centre; Southport Community Legal Service; St. Kilda Legal Service Co-Op; Springvale Monash Legal Service; West Heidelberg Community Legal Service; WEstjustice Community Legal Centre; and Whittlesea Community Legal Service.


SPECIALIST CENTRES

AED Legal Centre, Animal Law Institute Inc; Asylum Seeker Resource Centre; Consumer Action Law Centre; Disability Discrimination Legal Service; Djirra; Emma House Domestic Violence Services; Environmental Justice Australia; First Step Legal Service; Human Rights Law Centre; Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence; JobWatch; Justice Connect; Law And Advocacy Centre For Women; Melbourne University Student Union Legal Service; Mental Health Legal Centre; Refugee Legal; Seniors Rights Victoria; Social Security Rights Victoria; Tenants Victoria; Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-Op; Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service; Women's Legal Service Victoria; Youthlaw; and Young Workers Centre.



HOW COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES MAKE A DIFFERENCE:

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES ARE CRUCIAL ADVOCATES FOR THE PEOPLE MOST IMPACTED BY INJUSTICE. WE ARE CRITICAL TO A HEALTHY, FUNCTIONING DEMOCRACY, BECAUSE WE STAND UP FOR PEOPLE AND CAUSES THAT AREN'T BACKED UP BY POWER AND WEALTH. WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE HAS A RIGHT TO BE HEARD, TO ENJOY THEIR RIGHTS AND TO LIVE FREE FROM DISCRIMINATION AND INJUSTICE.

-  **Provide legal services** to people who are experiencing discrimination, disadvantage or injustice.
-  **Provide legal education** so that people know their rights.
-  **Fight for economic and social justice** at a systemic level through strategic litigation, advocacy and campaigns to improve justice for all.

ANTOINETTE BRAYBROOK OF DJIRRA, MELANIE POOLE OF THE FEDERATION AND OUR MEMBERS HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AT PARLIAMENT HOUSE CANBERRA TO CALL FOR JUSTICE FOR ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES.

COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES ACROSS VICTORIA MADE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT TO PEOPLE'S LIVES, THEIR COMMUNITIES AND TO ADVANCING JUSTICE. THESE CASE STUDIES ARE A SMALL SNAPSHOT OF SOME OF THEIR POWERFUL WORK THIS YEAR.

GOULBURN VALLEY COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

CASE STUDY

Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre's Therapeutic Justice Program targets people with complex healthcare needs and related legal issues appearing before Shepparton Magistrates' Court.

A partnership between Goulburn Valley CLC and Primary Care Connect, the TJP employed a lawyer who provided legal information, advice and advocacy to participants, and legal education to health and social service staff. The program also employed an allied health professional case manager, who connects participants with appropriate health, social and cultural supports. The program was particularly beneficial to Aboriginal participants and new arrivals to the Shepparton community.

The 2018 evaluation revealed stakeholder feedback was overwhelmingly positive and highlighted the critical role that the TJP played in improving coordination between community legal and health services and the Shepparton Magistrates' Court, enabling a more therapeutic response to clients with complex legal and health needs.

The evaluation highlighted the potential for this integrated service model to reduce recidivism, divert people away from prisons, and increase client and community wellbeing. The TJP was generously funded by the Legal Services Board.

75% of those surveyed said the TJP had made a "significant" or "essential" contribution to improved coordination processes and legal and health outcomes for clients

97% of clients reported an increase in their wellbeing through their engagement with the TJP

88% of clients received a non-custodial sentence

"Prior to the project, the Court had no ability to deal with the complexities of people's health needs or issues... The project has helped to put in place services to assist in the lead up to sentencing, therefore an offender has a better rate of success in completing a Community Corrections Order."

- INTERVIEW WITH MEMBER OF THE JUDICIARY, SECOND EVALUATION SNAPSHOT

WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA

CASE STUDY

Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) work with and for women experiencing particular disadvantage to address legal issues arising from relationship breakdown or violence.

They assisted Hannah, whose husband, Joel, had been violent to her over several years, often in the presence of their young children. There had been multiple Intervention Orders made for her and the children's protection, the most recent of which did not exclude Joel from the home.

Despite the order, Joel forcibly removed their baby from Hannah's care. Joel also took possession of the children's passports. He then went to the police and falsely claimed Hannah had serious mental health issues and was threatening harm to herself and the children. The police attended their home, removed the older children and issued a safety notice against Hannah.

Hannah attended the Federal Circuit Court that day and was assisted by a lawyer from Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) who made an urgent application to the court for the return of her children, outlining the history of violence, the risk of the children being taken overseas and challenging the version of events accepted by the police. The application was successful and the children were returned to Hannah. Her lawyer also ensured Hannah, who doesn't speak English, had an interpreter.

Women's Legal Service Victoria took the matter on to represent Hannah in the ongoing contested family law proceedings. Initially Joel's version of events were accepted, but with the help of WLSV, Hannah's story was told and her children remain securely in her care.

In addition to helping women like Hannah, WLSV also drive systemic change, successfully campaigning to ensure women escaping violence are not cross-examined by their violent ex-partners, as well as advocating for improvements to the family law system for women and their children.



© SENATOR PENNY WONG AND COMEDIAN GERALDINE HICKEY IN CONVERSATION AT OUR EVENT, LGBTIQ RIGHTS AND THE ROAD AHEAD.

AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICES

'YES' FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY



© WE CO-HOSTED CALLING PARTIES FOR THE YES CAMPAIGN WITH VCOSS, WHICH WERE ATTENDED BY OUR MEMBERS AND THE COMMUNITY.

15 November 2017 was an historic day for Australia. The 61.6 % Yes vote is testament to the incredible work done by so many tireless community members and organisations during the decades-long campaign to remove discrimination from our marriage laws and finally achieve marriage equality.

We are proud to have contributed to the Yes campaign by hosting 5 calling parties and meeting our goal of making 2,000 calls during the campaign.

We also brought together the CLC sector in the lead up to this important moment in history for our event, LGBTIQ Rights and the Road Ahead, where we heard from an incredible speaker line-up including Federal Senator Penny Wong, Penny Sharpe NSW MLC, Victorian Greens Councillor Steph Amir, comedian and commentator Geraldine Hickey and Minus 18's Mill O'Sullivan.

MC Geraldine Hickey conducted an intimate and entertaining interview with Senator Wong, and the panel of eminent speakers shared experiences of their long fight for equality and justice, as well as the personal impact of the plebiscite.

We may now finally have marriage equality, yet the fight for full LGBTIQ rights and equality goes on and we will continue our efforts.



© MELANIE POOLE OF THE FEDERATION, MILLS O'SULLIVAN OF MINUS 18, COMEDIAN GERALDINE HICKEY, BELINDA LO OF THE FEDERATION, SENATOR PENNY WONG AND SERINA MCDUFF OF THE FEDERATION AT OUR LGBTIQ RIGHTS AND THE ROAD AHEAD EVENT.

SOLIDARITY WITH ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN



This year saw devastating revelations across Australia, from the NT to Victoria, of the abhorrent treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children by the criminal justice system. From being locked in adult prisons to the use of solitary confinement, Aboriginal children were subjected to horrific treatment.

To recognise these injustices and to stand in solidarity, the Federation coordinated a candlelight vigil while the CLC community were in Canberra for our national CLC conference. We were able to add our voices to the demands for Justice for Elijah, and for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people denied justice or unfairly targeted by the criminal justice system.

We were joined by Dylan Voller, members of Elijah's family and activists from the Aboriginal Tent Embassy, speaking powerfully about the harmful and devastating impact of racism and injustice.

Not only did the vigil achieve significant media coverage of this important issue, the vigil was also a powerful moment of shared solidarity from people and organisations across the country who are committed to working alongside First Nations Peoples for justice.

OUR MEMBERS AND THE CANBERRA COMMUNITY ATTEND OUR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL FOR ABORIGINAL CHILDREN DENIED JUSTICE.

WE MUST STAND TOGETHER

The past year has seen Victoria in the grip of a toxic law and order debate. Driven by politicians and the media, it has served to divide communities and sow fear and division. In the face of this, the Federation saw the importance of standing with communities of colour and supporting their voices.

We Must Stand Together created a space for affected communities to tell stories, heal and plan action on criminal justice issues. The event was curated by people directly affected by the toxic law and order narrative, and provided an opportunity for grassroots community activists to share their experiences with community organisations and each other.

'It brought people in, including and elevating voices usually sidelined from policy debates. It reminded us that the personal is political. It was fun, challenging and engaging. Great energy!'

- WE MUST STAND TOGETHER PARTICIPANT

In the context of a divisive public conversation about law and order, We Must Stand Together brought members of African and First Nations communities together with the CLC sector to share perspectives, skills and experiences and strengthen our collective advocacy.

Panel sessions focused on building the strength and capacity of those with lived experience through workshops on media communications, messaging and community canvassing. Attendees shared strategies to build narratives, shape the media cycle and ensure that their campaigns had impact.

The event provided a unique opportunity for activists, lawyers and community to come together to share experiences and connect to stand together for justice.



"I COULD SPEAK ABOUT ISSUES THAT I COULDN'T ANYWHERE ELSE. IT WAS A GREAT SAFE SPACE."

- WE MUST STAND TOGETHER PARTICIPANT

BLACK LIVES MATTER IN AUSTRALIA

The powerful Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement demands racial equality and an end to state violence and racism. While beginning in the US, it sparked a global reflection of the injustices facing people of colour. In November 2017, the BLM founders were awarded the Sydney Peace Prize, bringing them to Australia.

"GREAT TO HAVE A SAFE SPACE TO CONNECT, SHARE AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER. WE NEED MORE."

-BLM ORGANISING EXCHANGE PARTICIPANT

This presented a unique opportunity. The Federation was asked to help coordinate the Black Lives Matter Organising Exchange, to connect Australian activists with the founders, Patrisse Cullors and Rodney Diverlus, and BLM organiser, Dawn Modkins.

The Organising Exchange brought together 100 young people of colour to meet the founders, share experiences and learnings, and build new relationships. The Exchange provided an opportunity for First Nations young people, and young people with lived experience of the out-of-home-care, immigration detention and justice systems to share their stories of strength.

The Exchange provided a valuable opportunity for grassroots community organisers to enhance strategies to build resilience, strengthen movement building and drive social change. The Federation worked with young leaders to provide a safe and powerful space and these relationships will guide our future advocacy.

The Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Amnesty International, the Koorie Youth Council, IndigenousX, the Human Rights Law Centre and the Sydney Peace Foundation were key partners for the Exchange. The Reichstein Foundation was a key partner and provided generous funding support.

The Federation also spent time briefing the Black Lives Matter founders on injustices in Australia as part of the Change the Record Coalition.

The Exchange has resulted in ongoing connections between Australian communities and activists and the BLM movement, for solidarity in challenging police, the justice system and the community to ensure that Black Lives Matter here too.

© THE BLM FOUNDERS WITH ORGANISING EXCHANGE PARTICIPANTS.

"As a feminist woman of colour this helped me to find a place in anti-racism and anti-sexism struggle in Australia that centres Aboriginal experience and leadership."





MOBILISE AND LEAD CLCS IN STRONG ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN TO RAISE THE AGE

OUR CAMPAIGN MEDIA EVENT WITH THE VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE, VCOSS, KOORI YOUTH COUNCIL AND SHEA GARDNER, WHO HAS LIVED EXPERIENCE OF THE CHILDREN'S PRISON AT PARKVILLE.

The Federation and the Smart Justice Coalition partnered with Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS), Amnesty International, Youthlaw and others to call for an increase to the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years and end the practice of imprisoning children as young as 10 years old.

With a range of draconian laws introduced targeting children, raising the age is more important than ever. Over 60 organisations, including major peak bodies and coalitions, signed our open letter in less than 24 hours.

The letter was launched on the steps of the Victorian Parliament on 29 November 2017, together with VALS, the Koori Youth Council, Amnesty International, Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and Shea Gardener, a young man with lived experience of the children's prison at Parkville.

We also coordinated a delegation of representatives from Victorian CLCs to lobby their Federal representatives to discuss our concerns about youth justice in Victoria and ask them stand up for a smarter youth justice system.

Smart Justice: We lead Smart Justice, a coalition of over 60 organisations committed to shaping the agenda on criminal justice towards fairness and equality. We advocate for law and policy that is based on evidence and human rights. The Coalition this year have continued to advocate for policy solutions that prioritise justice over punishment and elevate the voices of people unfairly targeted by the criminal justice system.

Our campaign was covered on TV news and syndicated in newspapers across the country.

At a state level, we coordinated a delegation of Smart Justice Members to meet with the Shadow Attorney General John Pesutto to discuss the urgent need to raise the age. Together with representatives from Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Human Rights Law Centre, Flem-Ken Community Legal Centre and Jesuit Social Services, we made the case for raising the age of criminal responsibility to treat children with compassion and fairness and bring Victoria's approach into line with human rights standards and international best practice.



"BY PUTTING OUR CHILDREN INTO THESE CAR PARK-SIZED BOXES, WE'RE CONDEMNING THEM TO A LIFE OF RE-OFFENDING."

- WAYNE MUIR, VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE

"THROWING 10-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN PRISON MEANS THEY'RE UP TO THREE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO END UP IN THE QUICKSAND OF THE ADULT JUSTICE SYSTEM. THIS DOESN'T BENEFIT ANYONE."

- MELANIE POOLE, FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES



FAIR AND TRANSPARENT USE OF POLICE BODY-WORN CAMERAS



The Federation, along with 26 organisations, signed an open letter to the Victorian Police Commissioner regarding the trial of body worn cameras by Victoria Police.

The letter outlined a series of crucial accountability and oversight measures that must be implemented if the program is to achieve the objectives of enhancing safety for both officers and community members, and increasing police transparency and public confidence.

These cameras have the potential to help boost public confidence in policing by ensuring that officers and community members alike are held accountable for their actions. But for this to work, everyone needs to trust the rules governing their use.

This includes rules about when the cameras should be turned on, who has access to the footage, how long the footage is stored for, and how the program is monitored and evaluated.

The letter called for:

- ▼ Clear and publicly available guidelines, concerning data retention periods;
- ▼ Limits on discretionary use by officers and penalties for failure to activate;
- ▼ Breadth of access for victims, their lawyers and the public; and
- ▼ Rigorous evaluation prior to further expansion.

The Federation was contacted by Government for advice on these issues and with our members, we continue to monitor whether the roll out of the cameras is best serving the community.

LIFT THE BAN ON PEN PALS FOR PEOPLE IN PRISON

THE BAN ON PEN PAL PROGRAMS IGNORES THE PROVEN BENEFITS TO PRISONERS' WELLBEING AND THEIR REINTEGRATION INTO SOCIETY. PEN PAL PROGRAMS HELP TO BREAK DOWN PRISONERS' SENSE OF ISOLATION AND ESTRANGEMENT. THEY PROVIDE A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE PRISON SYSTEM AND WIDER WORLD.' - HAYLEY MANSFIELD, CEO OF ARC JUSTICE IN THE BENDIGO ADVERTISER

Pen pal programs operate successfully around the world. Tens of thousands of people across the UK and US engage in pen pal programs, some formerly administered by prisons. But in Victoria, there is a ban on pen pal programs, putting the state at odds with protections of freedom of communication in other comparable jurisdictions both here and abroad.

The Federation launched a campaign to raise awareness of this issue and persuade the Government to change their policy.

Our petition quickly gained hundreds of signatures, and generated substantial media coverage. We are in an ongoing dialogue with Corrections Victoria about lifting the ban, and the Minister has advised she is now actively considering the matter.

Allowing people in prison to have pen pals helps them to establish links to the community while aiding their rehabilitation. Having someone to talk to can help people to navigate the complex emotions of living in prison, particularly where there is chronic underfunding for the rehabilitation programs people in prison need.

Inside Out, a group that works with LGBTIQ people in prison, told us that access to pen pal programs is the number one request they get from their members. The evidence shows that contact with others who identify as LGBTIQ can play a crucial role helping people overcome feelings of loneliness and despair.

OUR SUBMISSION TO THE 2018 VICTORIAN BUDGET CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO:

1. DELIVER FAIRER SAFER HOUSING:

Homes not housing. Legislate the 'Make renting fair' policy commitments and seize the opportunity to build more public housing.

2. FIX OUR FINE SYSTEM:

For our fine system to work, it must be fair. People should not be slugged with exorbitant fees on top of small fines. When there are special reasons a person cannot pay off a fine, they should get help not a prison uniform.

3. BE SMART ABOUT JUSTICE:

Too many people are in prison for struggling with addiction, homelessness and poverty. Victoria can be smarter about reducing poverty and investing in people, rather than building more prisons.

4. KEEP FAMILIES SAFE:

We can keep families safe and realise the vision of the Royal Commission into Family Violence only if we make sure legal help is integral to victim-survivor recovery. When a person escapes a violent partner, they shouldn't have to face the legal system alone.

5. MAKE JUSTICE FOR ALL A REALITY:

The law will only be equal when everyone has access to the rights and protections it affords us. People doing it tough are locked out of accessing justice and they deserve a fair go. Community legal centres are the safety net that catches people when they experience injustice. Strong community legal centres mean a strong community and a fair legal system for everyone.

A FAIR VICTORIAN BUDGET

In the lead up to the budget we lobbied Government, publicised our issues through social media and produced a video featuring our members highlighting our budget priorities.

Many of our partners shared our calls and together, our efforts have seen the Government respond with positive action, including major progress for making renting fair, reforming the fines system and investment in drug and alcohol and mental health services.

However, community legal centres missed out in this year's budget. The Federation was disappointed that there was no new funding for the rapidly escalating legal needs that community lawyers are seeing across Victoria.

We will continue to advocate for a fair Victoria into the 2018 election to ensure people in need of legal help can access essential support from community lawyers and support workers.

"THERE ARE A LOT OF POSITIVE INITIATIVES IN THIS BUDGET. BUT THERE'S A LOT MORE TO DO IN GETTING THE BALANCE RIGHT AND ENSURING THAT THE FOCUS IS ON LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS."

- FEDERATION CEO SERINA MCDUFF



STANDING UP FOR PUBLIC HOUSING TENANTS



In late 2017, public housing tenants living at 9 sites across Melbourne were advised they would be relocated as their homes were scheduled for demolition. Distressed tenants concerned about the relocation and redevelopment contacted their local CLCs.

The Victorian Government Public Housing Renewal Program plans to sell-off the public land to developers to redevelop the sites, while increasing public housing by 10 per cent. This would amount to only 110 additional homes, and could reduce overall capacity, as three bedroom homes would be replaced with one or two bedroom units.

We commend the Government for efforts to improve and increase public and social housing, however believe much more can be done to ensure sufficient levels of housing into the future and secure tenant rights.

A coalition of CLCs made a joint submission to Parliamentary Inquiry into Public Housing Renewal Program, which raised the key concerns that:

- ▼ An increase of 110 properties was inadequate to address Victoria’s public housing crisis;
- ▼ Community housing tenants deserve equal rights to those in public housing;
- ▼ Development and planning should engage with the community to ensure design meets tenants’ needs;
- ▼ That public housing tenants must have their human rights respected during the relocation process and have access to independent advice prior to signing any agreements; and
- ▼ The Victorian Government must make a commitment to public housing.

The Federation convened the group of members to ensure collective and coordinated action to ensure tenants rights were respected and to drive advocacy for greater consultation on the redevelopment and a much greater commitment to increase public and community housing.

Our advocacy helped improve the consultation and relocation process with tenants. We fought for tenants’ right to return to the redeveloped sites and be no worse off as a result of the relocation process. We coordinated feedback to the creation of deed to guarantee these rights for tenants relocated from these sites.



TENANCY WORKING GROUP

CONVENOR: MARK O'BRIEN
(TENANTS VICTORIA)

This group, convened by Tenants Victoria and including representatives from a number of CLCs, VLA and other community services who undertake tenancy work, discusses problems in tenancy law and practice; emerging issues; common work and joint advocacy, particularly in relation to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA), public and community housing practice and VCAT.

In 2017/18, the group continued to identify shared concern in the review of the RTA and work to ensure major changes are implemented to improve the rights, safety and security of tenants. The group also worked on the development of longer fixed-term leases for tenants, establishing an internal appeals mechanism for the residential tenancies list at VCAT and looked at options for improving the protections afforded to residents in specialist disability accommodation and community housing tenants.

In a busy year, the group was also monitoring the provision of services to tenants following significant changes in the tenancy services funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria; the outcome of the Ombudsman’s review into the practice of allocating maintenance charges to tenants in public housing and the Public Housing Renewal Program.



INFRINGEMENTS WORKING GROUP

CONVENORS: CAMERON LAVERY
(JUSTICE CONNECT HOMELESS LAW),
SHIFRAH BLUSTEIN (WESTJUSTICE),
JOANNE PARKIN (UNITING REGEN)

This joint-working group between the Federation, VLA and the Financial and Consumer Rights Council and involves 37 member organisations has worked closely with successive governments, enabling infringements policy to be informed by the expertise and experience of practitioners who work daily with people who are disproportionately affected by fines.

The group works to achieve fines reform, train the legal assistance and financial counselling sectors, engage with different arms of government and advocate for highly marginalised people facing fines.

A key win for this year was the group’s contribution to the sustained cross-sector campaign to persuade the City of Melbourne to drop its tough proposed laws in response to people sleeping rough. Securing the City’s commitment to drop these damaging laws has ensured people sleeping rough will not face further harm and criminalisation.

The IWG also delivered our biennial professional development day in November 2017, Making Sense of Fines Reform, training around 200 members of the legal assistance and financial counselling sectors. We thank the presenters for sharing their insights and acknowledge the Department of Justice and Regulation, the City of Melbourne, and the Neighbourhood Justice Centre for their generous support.

IMPROVE THE IMPACT OF COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

ACCOUNTABLE TO OUR COMMUNITIES

HEARING FROM CLIENTS

This year, the Federation is leading the development of a sector-wide client survey, to capture the voices of people accessing community legal centres across Victoria.

With the support of the Department of Justice and Regulation, the Client Survey Project is the first time that a Victorian state wide survey has been conducted in our sector. We will be able to reflect on what we do collectively and individually, and the unique and multilayered ways in which we work with our clients and communities.

AGATA WIERZBOWSKI, JILLIAN WILLIAMS AND JILL TOOVEY FACILITATE THE ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM.

The Federation has worked hard with the sector to develop a survey that is accessible, inclusive and flexible. As the baseline for future work, the survey has been designed to build an evidence base, identify best practice and to provide tangible direction for future sector and community work, led by the clients we serve.

This survey will generate a rich and robust data set that both reflects and celebrates the strength and the diversity of our work. From the feedback of our clients we will have a solid base to document and build accountability, to strengthen our connections and continue to grow understanding of our context.

In the year ahead, we are also leading a major project to improve data standards across the sector, which will improve quality of insights and evidence available for centres and our partners.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The Adaptive Leadership Program (ALP) is a five day program that builds the leadership capacity of CLC workers and intends to strengthen our collective capacity to adapt and thrive as a sector. Participants learn and apply theories to give new perspectives on familiar problems, including complex adaptive thinking, innovation, conflict management, reflective practice; and practical skills, including managing and leading performance and having difficult conversations.

This year Jill Toovey delivered the program for her seventh time, and it was the second time it has been co-facilitated by the program's alumni. On behalf of the sector, we sincerely thank Jill for her commitment and expertise and for so generously making a significant contribution to the sector for so long.

100+ people have participated in the program since 2010

A WORD FROM OUR INTERNS



“AS INTERNS AT THE FEDERATION, WE HAVE BEEN CONSTANTLY SUPPORTED AND INSPIRED BY A STAFF OF DEDICATED AND COMPASSIONATE PEOPLE WHO HELPED US TO UNDERSTAND THE LAW AND JUSTICE IN A NEW LIGHT, PROVIDING A WIDER CONTEXT TO OUR STUDIES.”

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE STUDENT INTERNS

We were all enthusiastic to be interning with the Federation. We were keen to expand our knowledge of the vital role played by CLCs having studied and learned primarily within the private law sector at university. Studying the law can make it seem abstract, and we were all seeking a better understanding of the its practical role in the lives of people who need its protection most.

Once we started, we found that we were also gaining invaluable campaigning and advocacy experience.

We learned to appreciate the rewards and challenges of answering the phone referral service, directing callers in need of legal advice to the appropriate avenues, or, sometimes, acknowledging that the limits of the CLC system and the cost-

prohibitive nature of private legal advice create gaps in access to justice that left some callers with nowhere left to go. While this was sometimes difficult and upsetting, it only highlights the importance of the tireless advocacy work done by the Federation and CLCs with often limited resources.

With a strong focus on justice, community building and human rights, our team of interns had the opportunity to work together with Federation staff on wonderful events like We Must Stand Together, a forum for advocacy around racial justice issues, and campaigns like those against mandatory sentencing laws and to raise the age of criminal responsibility in Victoria.

Find out about becoming an intern with the Federation fclc.org.au/internships



NEOPHYTES NETWORK

CONVENORS: ZOE CHAN (JUSTICE CONNECT) AND BETH KING (DAREBIN COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE)

The Neophytes Network creates opportunities for lawyers new to the CLC sector to meet and build relationships through social events and professional training sessions. This year, we have delivered training sessions in the diverse areas of:

- ▼ Cross-cultural awareness with InTouch Multicultural Centre against Family Violence;
- ▼ The CLC Adaptive Leadership Program;
- ▼ Employment rights in the sector with the Australian Services Union;
- ▼ Media and communications with Jonathan Brown from Consumer Action Law Centre and Tom Clarke from the Human Rights Law Centre; and
- ▼ Technology, design thinking and access to justice with Brendan Lacota from Moonee Valley Legal Service.

The professional skills training that we have organised relies on the generosity and goodwill of volunteer presenters, and we are very grateful for their support of and commitment to the development of new lawyers in the sector.



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS & SUPPORT WORKING GROUP

CHAIR: CLARE SAURO TIL MARCH 2018 (LODDON CAMPASPE COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE) AND MELANIE DYE FROM APRIL 2018 (INNER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY LEGAL)

The PSS fulfills risk management responsibilities and supports principal lawyers and, in collaboration with the Federation, enhances professional development opportunities for our sector. Our core responsibilities include:

- ▼ Provide guidance to Centres about the Risk Management Guide (RMG) and insurance notifications;
- ▼ Coordinate an annual cross check of centres and communicate the outcomes to principal lawyers;
- ▼ Facilitate training for principal lawyers to support them in their roles.



"SPEAKERS WERE ALL EXCELLENT & RELEVANT, FIRST TIME I HAVE NOT BEEN BORED WITH CPD. THANK YOU!"
- CPD ATTENDEE



CPD DAY 2018

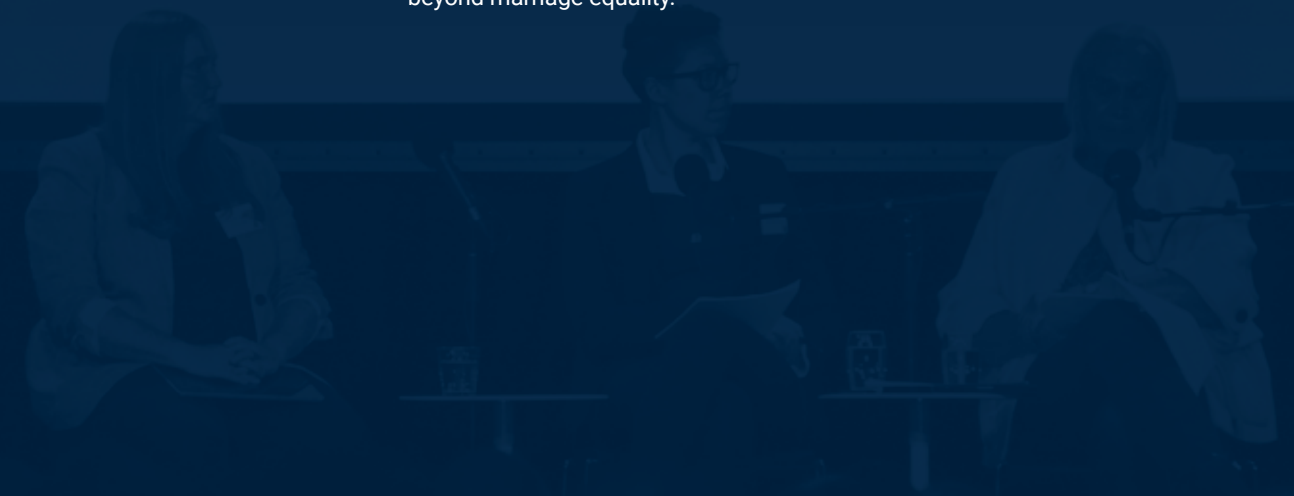
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

136
people attended
our CPD Day

Each year, we coordinate the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) day to provide topical and relevant development opportunities to people in the CLC sector.

The CPD day held in March gave community lawyers and subject matter experts the platform to showcase how they are best assisting their communities, and to share insights of excellence in service delivery, innovation and professional skills.

Our engaging presenters on the day spoke of fostering effective supervision practices of students and volunteers and meeting obligations under the OHS Act. Additionally, we heard about ways community lawyers and advocates can best support marginalised communities and become advocates for equity and inclusion. The participants learned about how CLCs can best assist LGBTIQ Victorians, drawing on individual stories and exploring ways discrimination law can be used to protect and support LGBTIQ communities beyond marriage equality.





LEARNING, REFLECTION
AND EVALUATION

MEASURING
OUR IMPACT

CLCs make a significant impact. We increase access to justice for our clients and advance social justice for our communities. A key priority for the Federation is to support our members to be able to demonstrate this impact.

We completed the first phase of our Outcomes Measurement Project in December 2017. The Project developed a sector-wide Outcomes Measurement Framework (OMF) that reflects the shared outcomes and diversity of the Victorian CLC sector. The Framework enables us to better demonstrate individual and collective impact and improve services for clients.

The Project also worked intensively with seven CLCs to improve their organisational evaluation capacity to define, measure and improve the outcomes of their work. This was delivered through training, hands-on learning and mentoring provided through evaluation consultants. Rather than short-term or one-off evaluation, this is continuous and ongoing, using evidence to inform decisions about how best to structure service delivery at a local level.

Following the Project, participant CLCs knowledge and confidence of the role of monitoring and evaluation in organisational management and service delivery dramatically increased.

All participants surveyed said it was 'likely' or 'very likely' they will continue to use the monitoring and evaluation tools developed in the project – meaning it will have a long-term impact on their work.

“Coming into the project I had very limited knowledge of evaluation capacity and have literally been thrown in head first!! I have gained an incredible amount of knowledge and a new skill set that is so diverse,”
- CAPACITY-BUILDING PARTICIPANT

Phase One came to an end in November 2017. The Federation remains dedicated to this work and sees it as a priority capacity building area. As such, we have received generous funding from the Legal Services Board to continue the work and implement the Sector Outcomes Framework and to support an additional 3 CLCs with evaluation capacity building in the year ahead.

The evaluation capacity-building journey for new participating centres Youthlaw, the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and Moonee Valley Legal Service kicked off with intensive training workshops, designed to capture the ins and outs of outcomes-based approaches to program design and measurement.

Following these training sessions, each organisation is now learning to apply these skills in their own organisational context; with staff consultation, mapping of relevant stakeholders and the design of internal workshops now taking place.

The Federation is also bringing together representatives from across the CLC sector in an impact and evaluation focused community of practice.

Through this work, we are making the community legal sector more deeply connected in our communities, more sustainable, accountable and better equipped to meet the legal needs of our community now and into the future.

Victoria Legal Aid’s CLC Innovation and Transformation Fund generously funded Phase One of this Project.

100% of lead contacts rated their knowledge of M&E as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ by project completion (73% rated their knowledge as poor at the beginning)

100% of lead contacts rate their confidence to use the findings from M&E to inform organisational decision making as ‘Very Good’ or ‘Good.’

100% of participating organisations agreed that the mentoring and technical assistance was ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’ in building their evaluation capacity.

MEMBER CLCS ATTEND OUR SECTOR OUTCOMES MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK CONSULTATIONS.

DRIVING QUALITY WITH THE NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Introduced by NACLC in 2010, the National Accreditation Scheme (NAS) is an industry-led certification process for CLCs. The Scheme enhances sector capacity to develop and implement effective governance and management practices and improve service delivery outcomes for the community.

CLCs have demonstrated a strong commitment to the NAS and Quality Improvement practices overall. This year, 16 CLCs have completed self assessments, participated in site assessments and embraced Improvement Plans, reporting back to us every six months.

We are committed to supporting and working with Victorian CLCs to build a culture of continuous improvement, robust governance and excellence in service delivery. This year, the Federation introduced new engagement visits, to support centres between their formal site visits and help with embedding quality beyond Accreditation.

We also involved our legal interns in the Accreditation process, helping them to understand the importance of continuous improvement and commitment to quality, something they will carry with them into legal practice when they graduate.

We were pleased to include Elizabeth Li in the NAS as part of her internship - the first intern in Australia to be involved in the Scheme. We are grateful to the Human Rights Law Centre and the Eastern Community Legal Centre for accommodating Elizabeth to attend Site Assessments as part of the Accreditation process.

The NAS also connects with the National Risk Management Guide and works closely with the Professional Standards & Support (PSS) Working Group. Combined, these initiatives demonstrate the community legal sectors' commitment to quality assurance, risk management and good governance.



FROM RIGHT NACLC CEO NASSIM ARRAGE AND VICTORIAN NAS COORDINATOR NATALIE HALLAM WITH NATIONAL AND INTERSTATE NAS COLLEAGUES.



"THIS WAS A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY. SEEING FIRST-HAND WHAT ORGANISATIONS DO WELL AND AREAS WHICH COULD BE IMPROVED HAS PROVIDED ME WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF AN IDEAL I WILL WORK TOWARDS IN FUTURE POSITIONS."

- ELIZABETH LI, LEGAL INTERN ATTENDING NAS SITE VISITS

LEAD THE DESIGN OF LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

DRIVE CREATIVITY + EXCELLENCE

COLLABORATION WORKS



© CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE AND HUME RIVERINA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE STAFF CONDUCTING OUTREACH ON FUNERAL INSURANCE AT THE ALBURY WODONGA ABORIGINAL HEALTH SERVICE. KAREN BOWLEY (HRCLS), KAYLEE ANDERSON (CALC) AND PHILIPPA HEIR (CALC).



© CONSULTANT TAIMUR SIDDIQI, HRCLS LAWYERS KAREN KEEGAN, SARAH RODGERS AND DEBI FISHER AND PROJECT MANAGER, MICHAEL TAMBLYN AT THE HRCLS WODONGA OFFICE.

100+

CLC stakeholders
consulted

about common CLC
service delivery
challenges.

"We are grateful for the frequent referrals from Job Watch that have assisted us to kick start the Migrant Employment Law Clinic.... None of these clients would have been able to receive the same level of assistance without the referral relationship established by the pilot."

- ADRIAN SNODGRASS, LAWYER, FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE



© CALC AND HRCLS WORKING TOGETHER AS PART OF THE PROJECT PILOT.

The CLC sector has a long and proud history of strong collaboration with each other and across sectors. However our inter-CLC collaboration and partnership work has not had the opportunity to be documented, rigorously evaluated and analysed. Our Generalist-Specialist Project sought to rectify this issue.

The Project led the design, testing and evaluation of practical, collaborative models to improve referral pathways between generalist and specialist CLCs, increase their exchange of knowledge and expertise, and ultimately, ensure their clients and communities receive the expert assistance they need.

In Phase One we consulted with over 100 CLC personnel and stakeholders across the state about common CLC service delivery challenges.

In Phase Two, we designed five integrated models to address these challenges and engaged 11 generalist and specialist CLCs to test the models and evaluate their impact.

Job Watch, WEstjustice and Fitzroy Legal Service (FLS) worked together to enhance employment law service delivery to migrants, refugees, and other visa holders;

Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC), Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and Barwon Community Legal Service worked together to identify and address consumer, credit and insurance legal needs in regional, rural and remote contexts;

Tenants Victoria and Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre (BMCLC) conducted supported casework and collaborative clinics to extend tenancy law services to people in the Brimbank Melton catchment area; and

Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre, St Kilda Legal Service and Women's Legal Service worked together to assist people who experience failures or inadequacies with police responses to family violence and to gather an evidence base which will guide collaborative systemic advocacy in the future.

"If we had not received the "Heaven-sent" help from Brimbank Melton CLC and Tenants Victoria, my child and I would have been homeless. We most probably would have been evicted as we had no extra money to pay for other accommodation". - BMCLC CLIENT ACCESSING SERVICES AS PART OF THE PROJECT

The pilots resulted in positive gains for those CLCs, with participants revealing that with the assistance of their partner CLC, they were able to help people they would not previously had the skills to assist.

Although the Project will finish in August 2018, we hope that the experience of the participating CLCs, coupled with the final report and recommendations, will serve as a blueprint for other specialist and generalist CLCs looking for a framework to improve their reach and service delivery.

The Project demonstrates the unique skills of the sector to develop more opportunities for client engagement and advocacy when given the opportunities and resources to do so.

Victoria Legal Aid's CLC Innovation and Transformation Fund generously funded this Project.

SUPPORTING INTEGRATED SERVICES



The Federation undertakes concerted advocacy each year to encourage the government to increase funding to much needed community legal services.

In 2017 we celebrated the reversal of Federal funding cuts to the CLC sector and an increase in the Victorian State budget.

The Victorian Government's funding commitment provides the opportunity for CLCs and Aboriginal Legal Services (ALS) to deliver integrated services within their communities.

Integrated services, such as Health Justice Partnerships, work by placing lawyers in health services to help people who are also experiencing legal problems. By operating out of non-traditional legal settings, the partnerships improve access to legal services by allowing people to have both their legal and health needs met in the same location and in an holistic way.

Evidence demonstrates that integrated and collaborative forms of service delivery better target disadvantaged and vulnerable groups and have a positive impact on their health.

The Federation was approached by the State Government to administer this funding to ensure its swift dissemination to the community legal sector. We are delighted to have the opportunity to administer this much needed funding to support our members to deliver vital services, establishing an independent evaluation panel to consider applications.

The Integrated Services Fund 2018-19 aims to provide ALS' and CLCs with the opportunity to extend or enhance an existing integrated service, establish a new integrated service, or build capacity to explore the possibility of a new integrated service. The fund will provide total funding of \$1.8million to CLCs' and ALS' with grants of up to \$200,000 for one year.

The increase in funding provided by the Victorian Government is helping our sector reach the growing demand for our services. Many Victorians who have been struggling to make ends meet, or who are facing crises caused by family violence, debt, consumer scams and insecure tenancies now have hope of receiving the support they need.

We look forward to seeing the impact of this funding in increasing access to justice and meeting people's needs.

MORE PEOPLE HAVE ACCESS TO LEGAL HELP

PLANNING SERVICES COLLABORATIVELY

Collaborative service planning - where all legal and connected service providers plan services together - is underway across Victoria. The Federation has been working closely with our members, Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) and the Department of Justice and Regulation (the Department).

We established a dedicated Working Group of our members to lead, support and oversee the collaborative planning process with VLA and the Department, to ensure the unique and vital approach and responses of CLCs is understood and captured in the process.

CLCs believe that people are experts in their own lives. People and communities are at our core and should be involved in the design of services. Listening to those who are impacted by the law has led community legal centres to think differently about how legal assistance can be provided, creating new approaches to identify legal issues and find the best ways to solve them.

We aim to prevent the escalation of issues, to resolve them before the need of intervention by the courts. We work in partnership with housing, youth and family violence services and alongside social workers, financial counsellors, or doctors. We believe their voices and experience in the planning process is also vital.

Our members have been participating in pilots designed and led by VLA to trial collaborative planning. With members, we are working to include the rich qualitative data of the sector, share quantitative data and build understanding of the local context and relationships that are essential for good service planning and have guided community legal sector planning for many years.

The process with VLA is an opportunity to design services directly with people and communities that need them and with our partners to provide a holistic, coordinated and connected service system to address inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

With our members, we will ensure this process can help build our evidence-base for legal need and collaborative efforts across the sector, in an effort to grow our services to meet the escalating community need.

LINKING THE COMMUNITY TO THE RIGHT LEGAL HELP

The Federation provides a direct information and referral service for the public through our telephone referral line and via our website. Each year we help the community to obtain the right legal assistance for a range of legal issues.

2,824

people assisted by phone
a 232% increase from 2016.

A BETTER RESPONSE TO FAMILY VIOLENCE

Support and Safety Hubs (Hubs) are a core recommendation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence (Royal Commission). The State Government has committed to spending over \$448 million to create 17 Support and Safety Hubs across the state. The Hubs will be a single, area-based entry point into the local specialist family violence services and allow for co-location of other services likely to be required by victims and any children.

FOLLOWING THE HISTORIC RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ROYAL COMMISSION, WE CONVENED A WORKING GROUP OF OUR MEMBERS TO DEVELOP A LEGAL SECTOR RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS TO ENSURE CENTRES ACROSS THE STATE COULD MEET SURVIVORS' NEEDS.

The Royal Commission also found that the provision of adequate legal services is crucial, and Victoria Legal Aid and community legal centres must be resourced.

Legal issues can arise as part of violent and coercive behaviours – such as debt and visa status – and play a significant role in the ability to escape a violent partner safely, such as intervention orders, finances and housing.

This year the group has worked with Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) to develop a service delivery model for legal services in the Support and Safety Hubs, and together we advocated to Government for their inclusion. Potential users of the Hubs have identified, ‘navigating the justice system and legal matters’ as one of their biggest service needs.

Consistent with the Access to Justice Review, we believe legal services should be included in the design of the Hubs so that legal professionals can identify the full range of potential legal issues, assist victims to seek the advice and assistance they need at an early stage, connect people with the right services, and reduce referral fatigue for people experiencing or at risk of family violence.

We are currently in discussions with Government on implementing this important work for people experiencing family violence.



FAMILY VIOLENCE APPLICANT LAWYERS NETWORK

CONVENOR: REBECCA HELBERG
(WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA)

The network shares experiences from people working primarily with applicants and affected family members, as well as respondents, in the family violence jurisdiction.

The experiences of the members form the basis for further or ongoing education, particularly in relation to other areas of law that intersect with family violence, as well as gathering information, planning and responding to issues and concerns within the family violence jurisdiction.

The focus for FY 2017-2018 has primarily been around information gathering in relation to:

- ▼ police accountability;
- ▼ misidentification of respondents;
- ▼ identification of access to services and service providers at the different Magistrates' Courts across the state; and
- ▼ collaborative learning from case examples.

The information gathered and collaborative learning during FY 17-18 has provided members with information to feed back to their own organisations in relation to projects that other organisations are working on. This in turn has opened up pathways for referrals to other organisations in the working group to the benefit of clients and also to those organisations in the advocacy and reform work that they are engaged in.

This information has also allowed the network to begin the process of identifying problematic localised Court practices as well as problematic Court practices at a systems level.



INTEGRATED LEGAL AND SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORK

CONVENOR: SARAH MCMAHON
(JUSTICE CONNECT)

The network is made up of 13 CLCs with integrated models responding to various legal and non-legal issues, as well as target groups of people, including: mental health, housing, seniors' rights, youth, family violence and institutional abuse.

The network seeks to drive best practice in integrated services delivery and to champion the benefits of the model, which are being increasingly well-articulated.

In August 2017, the network presented at the NACLC Conference on the benefits and challenges of integrated practice, as well as highlighted some unique projects run by CLCs in our network.

The network is anticipating the release of the long-awaited Integrated Practice Toolkit and will seek to contribute to the body of evidence on the model, as well as develop frameworks to measure the effectiveness of the work.

RESPONDING TO THE VICTORIAN ACCESS TO JUSTICE REVIEW



The legal assistance sector is under pressure. The Victorian Access to Justice Review found, *'While the system is not broken, it is under considerable strain'*. In fact, every recent review into the justice system is unanimous in their view that legal assistance needs more funding.

The Review endorsed the mixed model of legal assistance delivery, recognising that legal aid, community legal centres and private practitioners each play an integral role in providing Victorians with access to justice. Each limb brings its own strength and experience in delivering services and assistance.

The Review made 60 recommendations to change and improve the legal assistance sector, including to system coordination and planning.

The Federation worked hard to secure a positive outcome for the community legal sector and the community in the legislative changes resulting from the Review, including:

- ▼ Recognition that the role of system manager undertaken by Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) is a high level coordination role;
- ▼ That the system manager function should be undertaken collaboratively and that a formal mechanism should be created to ensure this into the future;
- ▼ The important role of CLCs should be recognised by way of an aggregate budget and the express recognition of the mixed model; and
- ▼ That while the transparency and accountability of Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) is critical, so is ensuring their independence.

'ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS FUNDAMENTAL TO ENSURING THAT CORE VALUES OF OUR COMMUNITY ARE TRANSLATED INTO PRACTICE. THOSE VALUES INCLUDE THE RULE OF LAW, FAIRNESS, AND EQUITY... YET THE PRACTICAL CAPACITY OF MANY CITIZENS TO GAIN ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS DIMINISHING, AND THE GAP BETWEEN THE VICTORIAN COMMUNITY'S NEEDS, AND THE JUSTICE SYSTEM'S ABILITY TO MEET THOSE NEEDS, IS GROWING.' -VICTORIAN ACCESS TO JUSTICE REVIEW

The Federation's recommendation to ensure collaboration at a governance level was accepted, with the establishment of a new Collaborative Planning Committee to provide advice and recommendations to the VLA Board.

The Collaborative Planning Committee will consist of organisations working across the mixed model, with the Federation representing the sector on the Committee. The legal assistance sector working collaboratively, informed by the experiences of our communities, sees us best placed to ensure services can grow and more people receive the help they need.

© LAUREN CAULFIELD OF FLEMINGTON-KENSINGTON CLC AND NICK HUDSON OF BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE DISCUSS HOW TO IMPROVE JUSTICE AT OUR WE MUST STAND TOGETHER EVENT.

OUR TEAM

Chief Executive Officer	Serina McDuff
Director of Engagement	Melanie Poole
Director of Policy & Advocacy	Katie Fraser
Office Coordinator	Joady Bye
Finance Officer	Deborah Wilson
Office Assistant	Tanya Wasylewski
Victorian Accreditation & Capacity Building Coordinator	Natalie Hallam
Senior Policy Adviser	Michelle Reynolds
Impact & Evaluation Coordinator	Tory Norris
Smart Justice Officer	Tyrone Connell
Sector Support Coordinator	Vaishali Pattni
Advocacy Adviser	Wāni Le Frère
Engagement Coordinator	Tracey Martinovich
Project Manager - Specialist-Generalist Project	Michael Tamblyn
Project Manager - Outcomes Measurement Project	Rohan Thwaites
Project Manager - Data Standards	Kieran Prendergast
Project Manager - Website Re-development	Kieran Bennett
Project Manager - Client Surveys	Keirin McCormack

VOLUNTEERS & INTERNS

We could not do the work we do without the generous help of our interns and volunteers. They make a significant difference to our capacity to drive change and we are grateful for their help and support.

INTERNS

- Ali Al Ebrahimi

Arabella Close

Tyrone Connell

Ryan Donaghey

Tim Graham

Rachel Hovendon

Elizabeth Li
- Katherine Lo Presti

Tom Malone

Alex McGhee

Marionne Tolentino

Paola Vega

Charlotte Ward

VOLUNTEERS

- Hodo Abdulle

Steven Baras-Miller

Taslyn Govender

Alice Hardinge
- Jacqui Honeycombe

Angelea Karageorge

Kresta Lokumarambage

Demyana Thomas



OUR BOARD

Chairperson	Kristen Wallwork from April 2018 (Springvale Monash Legal Service)
	Belinda Lo until April 2018 (Eastern Community Legal Centre)
Treasurer	James Ferguson (KPMG)
Secretary	Jackie Galloway from April 2018 (Peninsula Community Legal Centre)
	Kristen Wallwork until April 2018 (Springvale Monash Legal Service)
General Members	Zana Bytheway (JobWatch)
	Claudia Fatone (Fitzroy Legal Service)
	Chris Povey from April 2018 (Justice Connect)
	Hayley Mansfield from May 2018 (ARC Justice)
	Clare Sauro until March 2018 (ARC Justice)
	Ben Zika until September 2017 (Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre)

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

We gratefully acknowledge the support from our funders, sponsors, pro bono and community sector partners. Their generous help makes our work possible.

FUNDERS

- Victoria Legal Aid Community Legal Services Program
- Victoria Legal Aid Community Legal Centre
- Innovation & Transformation Fund
- Department of Justice and Regulation
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Legal Services Board
- Myer Foundation
- Reichstein Foundation

SPONSORSHIP, IN KIND & PRO BONO

- Innovative Knowledge Development and Jill Toovey
- City of Melbourne
- Clayton Utz
- Russell Kennedy
- Allens Linklaters
- Herbert Smith Freehills
- Collins Biggers & Paisley
- Maddocks
- Reichstein Foundation
- cohealth
- VCOSS
- Jesuit Social Services



FINANCIAL
REPORTS

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE
INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THIS FINANCIAL REPORT.

	Note	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
INCOME			
Victoria Legal Aid - Recurrent	6(a)	704,447	691,222
VLA - ERO State	6(a)	145,061	47,228
VLA - ERO Extra	6(a)	-	-
Victoria Legal Aid - Other Income	6(b)	474,044	149,935
Grant Income - Other Projects		262,486	295,370
Other Income		137,298	56,152
Interest		26,597	26,890
		1,749,933	1,266,797
EXPENDITURE			
Employee benefit expenses		874,041	832,723
Occupancy expenses		22,080	21,480
Operating expenses		99,241	50,270
Project related expenses		584,737	351,966
		1,580,099	1,256,439
Surplus before income tax		169,834	10,358
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus after income tax		169,834	10,358
Other comprehensive income net of income tax		-	-
Total comprehensive income attributable to the entity		169,834	10,358

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2018

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THIS FINANCIAL REPORT.

	Note	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	2	3,698,495	1,368,878
Trade and other receivables	3	210,711	12,620
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		3,909,206	1,381,498
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	4	-	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		-	-
TOTAL ASSETS		3,909,206	1,381,498
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	5	309,234	91,246
Amounts received in advance	6	3,048,339	929,007
Provisions	7	47,808	32,959
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		3,405,381	1,053,212
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	7	9,288	3,583
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		9,288	3,583
TOTAL LIABILITIES		3,414,669	1,056,795
NET ASSETS		494,537	324,703
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained profits		494,537	324,703
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		494,537	324,703

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THIS FINANCIAL REPORT.

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from Gov't Grants – recurrent		704,447	690,634
Receipts from Gov't Grants – non-recurrent		172,426	426,138
Receipts from Other Sources		2,758,965	202,336
Interest received		27,024	33,065
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		(1,333,245)	(1,352,680)
Net Cash provided by operating activities	8	2,329,617	(507)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		-	-
Net Cash provided by (used in) investing activities		-	-
Net increase (decrease) in cash held		2,329,617	(507)
Cash at the beginning of the year		1,368,878	1,369,385
Cash at the end of the year	2	3,698,495	1,368,878

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity. The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historical costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuation of non-current assets. The following significant accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in preparation of this financial report.

a. Cash and Cash Equivalents - Cash and cash equivalents includes cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, and other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of three months or less.

b. Income Tax - The Association is exempt from paying income tax by virtue of Section 50-45 of the Income Tax Assessment Act, 1997. Accordingly, tax effect accounting has not been adopted.

c. Property, Plant and Equipment - Furniture and equipment are carried at cost less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation. The depreciable amount of all furniture and equipment is depreciated over the useful lives of the assets to the Association commencing from the time the asset is held ready for use.

d. Employee Entitlements - Provision is made for the Association's liability for employee benefits arising from services rendered by employees to the end of the reporting period. Employee benefits have been measured at the amounts expected to be paid when the liability is settled. Provision is made for the Association's liability for long service leave from commencement of employment.

e. Provisions - Provisions are recognised when the Association has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

f. Impairment of Assets - At the end of each reporting period, the entity reviews the carrying values of its tangible and intangible assets to determine whether there is an indication that those assets have been impaired. If such an indication exists, the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less costs to sell and value in use, is compared to the asset's carrying amount. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is recognised in the income and expenditure statement.

g. Revenue - Revenue is brought to account when received and to the extent that it relates to the subsequent period it is disclosed as a liability. Grant Income - Grant income received, other than for specific purposes, is brought to account over the period to which the grant relates. Deferred Income - Unspent grant income received in relation to specific projects and events is not brought to account as revenue in the current year but deferred as a liability in the financial statements until spent for the purpose received. Interest Revenue - Interest revenue is recognised using the effective interest rate method, which for floating rate financial assets is the rate inherent in the instrument. Donations - Donation income is recognised when the entity obtains control over the funds which is generally at the time of receipt. All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax (GST).

h. Goods and Services Tax (GST) - Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). Receivables and payable are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the assets and liabilities statement.

i. Economic Dependence - The entity receives a significant portion of its revenue from Victoria Legal Aid. At the date of this report the Committee has no reason to believe Victoria Legal Aid will not continue to fund the entity.

	Note	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
NOTE 2: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS			
Cash on hand		349	14
Cash at bank		2,671,834	363,697
Term Deposit		1,026,312	1,005,167
		3,698,495	1,368,878

NOTE 3: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES			
Accounts Receivable		207,340	585
Prepayments and Sundry Receivables		2,134	10,371
Accrued Bank Interest		1,237	1,664
		210,711	12,620

NOTE 4: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT			
Furniture and fittings - at cost		129,908	129,908
Less accumulated depreciation		(129,908)	(129,908)
		-	-

NOTE 5: TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES			
Creditors and accruals		275,015	69,118
Salary and wage accruals		34,219	22,128
		309,234	91,246

NOTE 6: AMOUNTS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE			
Victoria Legal Aid (ERO) - Extra - Future Years		115,342	115,342
Victoria Legal Aid (ERO) - State (unused)		206,465	179,100
Victoria Legal Aid (recurrent)		7,051	-
Total Generalist Funds carried forward	6 (a)	328,858	294,442
Victoria Legal Aid (Outcomes Measurement Program)		-	142,081
Victoria Legal Aid (S&G CLC project)		63,089	395,052
Total VLA Project Funds carried forward	6 (b)	63,089	537,133
Non-VLA Project Funds carried forward		2,656,392	97,432
		3,048,339	929,007

NOTE 6(A) RECONCILIATION OF VLA GENERALIST FUNDS				
	VLA (\$)	VLA SACS ERO State (\$)	VLA SACS ERO Extra (\$)	Total (\$)
Funds Brought Forward - 1 July 2017	-	179,100	115,342	294,442
Funds received	704,447	172,426	-	876,873
Funds utilised (net of interest)	(697,396)	(145,061)	-	(842,457)
Funds Carried Forward - 30 June 2018	7,051	206,465	115,342	328,858

VLA (ERO) - Extra includes funds carried forward from 2016: \$44,703, 2015: \$38,215, 2014: \$25,927 and 2013: \$6,493.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

NOTE 6(B) RECONCILIATION OF VLA PROJECT FUNDS

	OMP (\$)	S&G CLC (\$)	Total (\$)
Funds Brought Forward - 1 July 2017	142,081	395,052	537,133
Funds received	-	-	-
Funds utilised	(142,081)	(331,963)	(474,044)
Funds Carried Forward - 30 June 2018	-	63,089	63,089

2018 (\$) 2017 (\$)

NOTE 7: PROVISIONS

Current		
Provision for annual leave	47,808	32,959
	47,808	32,959
Non-Current		
Provision for Long Service Leave	9,288	3,583
	9,288	3,583

NOTE 8: RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOW
FROM OPERATIONS WITH PROFIT

FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER INCOME TAX		
Profit after income tax	169,834	10,358
CASH FLOWS EXCLUDED FROM OPERATING PROFIT ATTRIBUTABLE TO OPERATING ACTIVITIES;		
Non-cash flows in profit:		
- Depreciation	-	-
Changes in assets and liabilities;		
- (Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors	(198,091)	15,175
- Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	217,988	(42,254)
- Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance	2,119,332	71,520
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions	20,554	(55,306)
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	2,329,617	(507)

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS
OF FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES
(VICTORIA) INC. ABN 30 036 539 902

OPINION

I have audited the accompanying financial report, of Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc., which comprises the assets and liabilities statement as at 30 June 2018, statement of changes in equity, statement of cash flows and the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies and the certification by members of the committee.

In my opinion, the accompanying financial report of Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. has been prepared in accordance with Div 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (ACNC Act) including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the Association's financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its financial performance for the year then ended; and
- b) complies with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic) and Div 60 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013.

Sean Denham | Dated: 15th October 2018
Suite 1, 707 Mt Alexander Road. Moonee Ponds VIC 3039

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018

The Committee has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements. In the opinion of the committee of Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc.:

- a) the financial statements and notes of Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. are in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act (Vic) 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, including:
 - i. giving a true and fair view of its financial position as at 30 June 2018 and of its performance for the financial year ended on that date; and
 - ii. complying with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Regulation 2013; and
- b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:



Kristen Wallwork, Chairperson
Dated: 4th September 2018



James Ferguson, Secretary
Dated: 8th October 2018



OUR PRINCIPLES:

COMMUNITY

Our priority is to be fully accountable to the communities we serve and belong to.

SOLIDARITY

With each other. All Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are a part of a movement for justice. We know that we must work together to be a powerful, effective voice. We practice our principles through our engagement with each other. We back each other up, make time and space for everyone's viewpoints to be heard, and act collectively, with a focus on long term, systemic change.

With communities most affected by injustice. We recognise that people and communities most directly affected by injustice and discrimination are experts in their own lives and have their own voices. We are allies, not saviours.

STANDING WITH
FIRST NATIONS PEOPLES


We celebrate the strength, leadership and resilience of First Nations Peoples. We recognise the ongoing injustices perpetrated against them, and we stand with them in fighting for self-determination and equality.

RESPECT

In all of our work, we show respect. We acknowledge and celebrate differences and commonalities, and the strength that diversity brings to our communities.

LEARNING

We are inquisitive and reflective, committed to adapting and growing in response to evidence about what works, and to sharing our learning with our communities. We learn from our successes and failures.

 WE APPRECIATE AND CELEBRATE DIVERSITY IN ALL ITS FORMS. WE BELIEVE DIVERSITY OF ALL KINDS MAKES OUR TEAMS, SERVICES AND ORGANISATIONS STRONGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE.



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REGISTRATION A0013713H

*Community Legal Centres are
the heart of a movement for justice.*



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