



FEDERATION
OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES VIC



ANNUAL REPORT
2020 – 2021

ABOUT THE FEDERATION

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 of Community Centres Victoria Inc (the Federation) is the peak body for Victoria's 47 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 problems.

For nearly 50 years, Community Legal Centres have been part of a powerful movement for social change; reshaping how people access justice, creating stronger more equitable laws, and promoting a more accountable government and democracy. We pursue our vision of a fair, inclusive and thriving community through challenging injustice, defending rights and building the power of our members and communities. The Federation:

- ▼ Enables a strong collective voice for justice and equality.
- ▼ Mobilises and leads Community Legal Centres 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 PRINCIPLES

COMMUNITY

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

SOLIDARITY

With each other. Community Legal Centres are a part of a movement for justice. 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.

STAND 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 success and failure.

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COVER IMAGE: JUSTICE CONNECT'S RACHELLE DRIVER, WITH A FORMER CLIENT, MAGGIE



THE FEDERATION ACKNOWLEDGES THE ORIGINAL CUSTODIANS 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.



© KRISTEN WALLWORK FCLC CHAIRPERSON
ATTORNEY GENERAL VIRTUAL ROUND TABLE

CHAIRPERSON REPORT



It is very hard to know where to start in acknowledging the last year, given the times we live in.

The community legal sector has witnessed first-hand the devastating impact of COVID-19 on our communities including, but not limited to: job losses, housing issues, increased family violence, and young people unable to attend school. I also want to acknowledge the impact on our staff, volunteers, partners, and stakeholders as we collectively stayed committed to providing critical services while also bearing the weight of the unknowns of COVID-19 and pressures in our personal lives.

Over the past year, we have seen community need for legal assistance skyrocket. Requests for assistance with housing legal issues along with consumer credit and debt services have doubled since the same time last year. The need for assistance in family law has intensified with Community Legal Centres (CLCs) advising on an additional 10,000 cases per year.

The agility the CLC sector demonstrated in pivoting to remote work while continuing its vital outreach to communities has been phenomenal. This sheer determination has been driven by the courage and commitment that have always been the hallmarks of the community legal workforce. As Chair of the Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria Inc (the Federation), I want to acknowledge the additional funding we received to address the backlog in the family violence courts. I also want to note the ongoing need for securing long-term funding to meet the heightened demand and the significant unmet and hidden need within our communities.

It is fantastic to see a political appetite for redesigning the service systems to be holistic and people-centred. The 2020/21 Victorian Budget committed a resounding \$3.8 billion to rebuilding a new mental health and wellbeing system focused around holistic, people-centred and trauma-informed care. We saw substantial investment in social and affordable housing, and a shift towards early intervention.

We are a vital (and often overlooked) piece of the social sector. This year, the Federation embarked on the journey of co-designing our 10-Year Plan, and work has been undertaken to build the evidence-base for the significant social and economic value of our work.

Finally, on behalf to the sector and on a personal note, I'd like to thank the outgoing Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Federation, Serina McDuff, for five years of service and courageous leadership. Serina's tenure saw an incredible growth within the Federation and an even stronger, respected reputation and voice of the sector. Serina drove the work of the 10-Year Plan and the key sector impact project. Congratulations on your new position as CEO at Women's Legal Service Victoria; continuing to take on new challenges and opportunities in an area you are passionate about is always a positive life decision.

We are very excited to welcome Louisa Gibbs as CEO to lead the charge on behalf of the Federation in firming up the sustainable growth of the sector and, most importantly, ensuring all Victorians have access to justice.

KRISTEN WALLWORK
CHAIRPERSON

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REPORT



Earlier this year, the Victorian Attorney-General, the Hon. Jaclyn Symes MP described CLC workers as the 'heroes' of the legal system. Speaking at the launch of the consultations for our new 10-Year Plan for the sector, the Attorney-General remarked that the ability of CLCs to continue to meet the needs of vulnerable Victorians was 'outstanding.'

With over 4,000 heroes working across 47 CLCs, it has been my absolute honour to join the Federation as CEO this year.

CLCs play a unique role in the Victorian legal sector. For nearly 50 years, CLCs have acted at individual and systems levels to promote communities that are fair, inclusive and thriving.

I am grateful to be stepping into the role at a time when the Federation is in a strong and forward-looking position. I extend my thanks to former CEO, Serina McDuff, for her vision and leadership over the past five years. Serina has made an outstanding contribution in her role as CEO of the Federation, and I am pleased that she continues as an actor of positive change as the new CEO of one of our member CLCs, Women's Legal Service Victoria.

It's an exciting and important time to be a part of the community legal services sector. This year, we began developing a sector-wide 10-Year Plan. Starting by consulting thoroughly and deeply with CLCs, we have been reflecting on the changes within our sector, the justice landscape and our communities. We are mapping ideas and strengths, noting gaps, and developing a plan that will ensure the sustainability and success of Victoria's CLCs into the future.

Through conducting a comprehensive workforce survey, we now have greater insight into the makeup of the community legal sector's staff and volunteers. Findings are supporting workforce reflection and planning.

CLCs have also been responding to the challenges of the past year. With communities hit hard by bushfires, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, CLCs have been at the forefront of responding through Integrated Services, advocacy and law reform initiatives. Legal preparedness and early legal assistance are making a significant difference for clients when they face disasters. We continue to raise awareness of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our communities, advocating for funding and monitoring the impact of changing laws on those most affected by economic, social and cultural disadvantage.

The Federation supports community collaboration by administering the Integrated Services Fund on behalf of the Victorian Government. This supports CLCs' pioneering work with partner organisations to address individuals' legal, medical, and social concerns more holistically.

We were also delighted to launch the Climate Justice Legal Project. This innovative partnership is leading legal and policy change grounded in the latest climate and social science in Victoria.

**WE CHALLENGE INJUSTICE,
DEFEND RIGHTS, AND BUILD
THE POWER OF OUR MEMBERS
AND COMMUNITIES.**

- LOUISA GIBBS, FEDERATION CEO

Indeed, the Federation's legal policy and advocacy work is a key way we work towards our vision of a fair, inclusive and thriving community. We challenge injustice, defend rights, and build the power of our members and communities. This report highlights some of the law reform submissions and working groups coordinated by the Federation over the past year.

You will also learn about the Federation's expanded training program, and our work to introduce a legal practice management system that supports CLCs to manage clients, services, and data. We continue to support CLCs through the National Accreditation Scheme, ensuring good practice and quality in the delivery of community legal services.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the first documented free legal service in Australia, run from Monash, Victoria. As CEO of the peak body of 47 Community Legal Centres in Victoria, I want to acknowledge those who had the passion and foresight to plant the seed for a movement that is now a central and crucial part of legal service provision and law reform in our state. Heroes indeed.

LOUISA GIBBS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

SECTOR SNAPSHOT

EVERY 24 HOURS VICTORIAN CLCS PROVIDE

LEGAL ADVICE FOR 96 CLIENTS

REFERRALS FOR 172 CLIENTS

DUTY LAWYER SERVICES FOR 30 CLIENTS IN COURTS

REPRESENTATION AT COURTS/TRIBUNALS FOR 4 CLIENTS



OUR CLIENTS

50,000 Victorians accessed CLCs over the last year for assistance on one or more legal issues:		
3 in 4 are women	1 in 4 identify as having a disability/ies	
3 in 4 are experiencing financial difficulty	At least 1 in 5 have a mental ill-health condition	
7 in 10 are victim-survivors of family violence	3 in 5 with six or more legal issues have a mental ill-health condition	

OUR WORKFORCE 4,000 AND GROWING

	52% are volunteers
	77% are women
	17% identify as LGBTIQ+
	10% are living with disability
	4% are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

OUR WORKFORCE IS AS DIVERSE AS THE COMMUNITIES WE SERVE

Source: Kutin, J. J., McDonald, H. M., Hagland, T., Kennedy, C., & Balmer, N. J. (2021). Working in community legal centres in Victoria. Results from a survey of the community legal sector workforce: Landscape report. Melbourne, Australia: Victoria Law Foundation. Available at: victorialawfoundation.org.au/research/research-reports/

SURGE IN DEMAND 2020-2021 COMPARED WITH THE PREVIOUS YEAR

	113% increase in Housing Services from 3,518 to 7,506
	52% increase in Family Violence Intervention Orders from 17,059 to 25,982
	35% increase in Family Law Services from 28,750 to 38,790
	16% increase in Employment Services from 2,761 to 3,199

SINCE LAST YEAR CLCS PROVIDED



ASSISTANCE IN HOUSING, DEBT COLLECTION AND FINANCIAL LEGAL ISSUES DOUBLED;	X2
ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILY LAW SUPPORT GREW WITH AN ADDITIONAL 10,000 CASES IN THE YEAR; AND	+10,000
ASSISTANCE IN FAMILY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION ORDERS WENT UP WITH AN ADDITIONAL 8,000 IN THE YEAR.	+8,000

FEDERATION OUTREACH

	106 meetings with DJCS*		7 submissions
	24 COVID Updates/e-news		6 meetings with ministers
	14 public statements		3 media outreach events

*Department of Justice and Community Safety (DJCS)

FEDERATION MEMBERS

22 PLACE-BASED SERVICES + 25 SPECIALIST

2 ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICES

8 GENERAL MEMBER MEETINGS + ONE AGM

80% MEETING ATTENDANCE

Figures only reflect 31 Victorian CLCs. Actual figures will be higher.



CLCS ON THE FRONTLINE

RESPONDING TO COVID-19

"THE LAST 12 MONTHS HAVE BEEN SOME OF THE MOST CHALLENGING FOR MANY OF US... I WANT TO CONGRATULATE THE SECTOR IN ADAPTING QUICKLY AND INNOVATIVELY: THE ABILITY OF CLCS TO CONTINUE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE VICTORIANS HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING."

- VICTORIAN ATTORNEY-GENERAL, THE HON. JACLYN SYMES MP

CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE AT FINANCIAL COUNSELLING VICTORIA'S COVID SUMMIT 2021

When the world woke up to the COVID-19 pandemic sweeping through our communities, few of us could have imagined the true impact and ongoing social and economic effects that would emerge as a result.

Law and order have touched our lives in ways they never have before, with enforceable public health orders affecting our movement, our capacity to work, and even our ability to see loved ones.

The effects of COVID-19 lockdowns on the safety, security, wellbeing and livelihoods of many Victorians cannot be overstated, and it is within this context that the vital role of CLCs as an essential public service has come to the fore.

Victoria's 47 CLCs – both placed-based and specialist – have rallied around their communities, providing essential services, advice, and advocacy to cushion some of the fallout of the pandemic.

Over the past 12 months, the number of Victorians seeking legal advice on debt and financial issues has doubled, as have requests for assistance on housing.

"At its current capacity, Victoria's community legal assistance sector will be unable to meet the demand for legal assistance caused by the social and economic implications of COVID-19. This will leave huge numbers of Victorians vulnerable to the serious consequences of unresolved, escalating legal problems – and create the risk of considerable future costs to government." - EY, MEETING DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

The skyrocketing demand across these areas highlights that CLCs are on the frontline to protect our most basic rights and needs: for shelter, security and safety.

These figures not only demonstrate the surging community need for legal assistance, and the demand that is projected to rapidly increase – they also illustrate the ability of our sector to rapidly respond. Our CLCs are not just working for the communities they serve; they are fundamentally a part of them.

CLCs work tirelessly to reach their communities. They attend public libraries, schools and other public spaces, and partner with other community services to assist Victorians to identify their legal needs and seek remedies.

Throughout the course of the pandemic, CLCs have innovated and implemented online and digital tools to engage as many Victorians as possible. These have included, but are not limited to:

- ▼ Tenants Victoria's COVID-19 guide for renters (website hits have increased by 400 per cent since the start of the pandemic).
- ▼ JobWatch's 30 factsheets on employment law and Unfair Dismissal Self-Representation Kit.
- ▼ Fitzroy Legal Service's COVID-19 fines self-help kit.
- ▼ Inner Melbourne Community Legal's international student online resources.
- ▼ Justice Connect's Dear Landlord: a free online self-help resource.



When 3,000 residents in nine public housing towers in North Melbourne and Kensington were forced into lockdown without notice, local CLCs (Inner Melbourne Community Legal, Flemington and Kensington Legal Service and Mooney Valley Legal Service) were some of the first on the scene, working alongside residents to fight for a fair, proportionate, and human rights-based response.

The failure of public health authorities and enforcement officials to treat public housing residents humanely and with dignity was later confirmed in a December 2020 Victorian Ombudsman report concluding that: "The rushed lockdown was not compatible with the residents' human rights, including their right to humane treatment when deprived of liberty."

THE FEDERATION'S IMPACT:

- ▼ Provided regular updates for the sector via fortnightly newsletter on changes to restrictions and other COVID-19 impacts on CLCs, and opportunities for advocacy around specific COVID-related issues in Victorian communities.
- ▼ Participated in fortnightly meetings on residential tenancies during COVID-19, working with the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) to develop a cross-sector residential tenancies position with respect to tenancy relief and financial support packages and broader legal and policy protections for tenants.
- ▼ Together with partners, including Tenants Victoria, secured the extension of the moratorium on evictions and tenancy protections and improvements.
- ▼ Worked with VCOSS and Financial Counselling Vic to lobby Fines Victoria for suspension of the debt campaign, withdrawal of COVID-19 fines issued to children under 18 and improved internal review processes for COVID-19 fines. Fines Victoria has agreed to target debt collection practices to safety related offences only.
- ▼ Collaborating with the sector, collectively stopped hard lockdowns in public housing towers and ensured future lockdowns were aligned to health responses and non-punitive isolate directions.

69% of Victorians experienced financial disadvantage during lockdown

*Tenants Victoria, Pandemic Pain

A JUST AND FAIR RECOVERY FOR ALL

The Federation is committed to building a society where all communities are resilient, and laws and policies protect those who are most vulnerable to pandemics, economic downturns or climate disasters.

Up to 75 per cent of CLC clients experience financial disadvantage, living pay check to pay check and regularly foregoing essentials like food, medicine, electricity and/or trips to the doctor. Many of our clients have limited safety nets and the mass job loss created by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that many Victorians slipped into harder financial difficulties.

Data captured during Melbourne's fifth lockdown indicates seven in 10 Victorians are experiencing financial disadvantage by ongoing lockdowns. Many are struggling to pay off debt, and are experiencing the compounding effects of rental arrears, utilities bills, mortgage stress, and health expenses, as well as adverse action in relation to unpaid fines and escalating infringements.

We know the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities will continue for years to come.

The collective advocacy of CLCs and the broader legal and social services sector spurred government initiatives such as increased social support payments, rental relief and mortgage holidays. However, many initiatives are short-lived and unevenly distributed according to community need.



"VICTORIA'S CLCS HAVE A CRUCIAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THE STATE'S RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 CRISIS AND INVESTING NOW TO PREPARE THE COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR TO RESPOND TO THE INCREASED DEMAND FOR ITS SERVICES WILL ULTIMATELY REDUCE HARMS TO INDIVIDUAL VICTORIANS, STRAIN ON THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE, AND THE LEVEL OF COSTS TO BE BORNE BY GOVERNMENT"

- EY, MEETING DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES

In November 2020, the Federation launched *A Just and Equitable COVID Recovery: A Community Legal Sector Plan*; the sector's collective blueprint to ensure no Victorian is left behind in the state's recovery.

The blueprint for a "new-normal" argues for the continuation of many measures that worked to support and strengthen the experience of Victorians during COVID-19, to move away from those measures that haven't, and to make fundamental changes that strengthen protections for people experiencing disadvantage while building the future resilience of our social support system.

 Read the full report online: fclc.org.au/covid_recovery_must_protect_most_vulnerable

REPORT'S RECOMMENDATIONS:

× STOP

The requirement for Victoria Police or prosecutions to consent to a diversion under the *Criminal Procedure Act 2009* (Vic); instead, make diversion available at the instance of a magistrate.

The reverse onus categories in the *Bail Act 1977* (Vic); rather, require all bail decision making to be based on the single test of 'unacceptable risk'. There should be a presumption in favour of bail, except in circumstances where there is a specific and immediate risk to the community or individual.

Fining children for COVID-19 breaches.

Imprisoning children - raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14 years.

✓ START

Legislating to prevent unethical and predatory conduct by debt management firms.

Increasing amounts available under Utility Relief Grants.

Introducing enforceable regulatory measures to protect telecommunications consumers.

Introducing a standardised reference form to enable a more objective assessment of rental applications.

Requiring employers to automatically convert casual employees to part-time or full-time employees after 12 months' continuous employment by amending the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

Training magistrates in youth crime, child protection and causes of adolescent violence in the home; and expanding the Children's Court to headquarter courts across Victoria.

Allowing the extension of family reunification obligations and supporting families and carers to safely reinstate meaningful contact with their children by amending the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* (Vic).

Encouraging the exercise of discretionary powers by Victoria Police to divert children and young people from the justice system, including through the development of a comprehensive Victoria Police Manual Procedure and Guideline.

✓ CONTINUE

Suspending debt recovery action by Fines Victoria for all non-safety related fines, including public space, public transport, toll, council and voting offences, until at least six months after the lockdowns.

Increasing social security payments and the suspension of the liquid asset means waiting period.

Retaining and enforcing existing responsible lending laws.

Supporting the integration of legal services into the family violence system.

© THE FEDERATION'S CLIMATE JUSTICE AND DISASTER RESPONSE LEAD, DR BRONWYN LAY (LEFT), WITH KRISTI PEMMELAAR FROM HUME RIVERINA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE (RIGHT), CONDUCTING BUSHFIRE RECOVERY LEGAL OUTREACH IN CORRYONG AND WALWA.



PROTECTING COMMUNITIES IN CLIMATE CRISIS

As we have witnessed in the Black Saturday fires, the fires of 2019/20, and the June 2021 floods, climate disasters give rise to multiple and compounding legal issues that significantly impact Victorians' abilities to recover financially, socially, and emotionally.

Extreme weather events and bushfires are becoming more and more commonplace as the impacts of climate change manifest, damaging homes and properties, causing significant trauma, and stripping Victorians of their livelihoods.

Legal issues come to the forefront in climate disasters: a significant number of Victorians residing in disaster-prone areas do not have any or adequate insurance for their homes, properties

and businesses; they experience prolonged delays in insurance payouts; they live without essential services to properties due to damage of infrastructure; and they encounter issues with rental properties, loss of livelihoods, and forced evacuation with nowhere to go.

Workplaces might refuse leave to deal with the fallout of climate disasters, and business as usual is suspended, leading to significant delays in court proceedings and access to justice.

The significant community and individual distress from climate disasters and their ongoing impacts leads to family breakdowns, poorer mental health, higher substance misuse, and escalating family violence.

Climate disasters hit the most marginalised and disadvantaged within our communities, where legal literacy is low, meaning that many do not know what rights they have and where to turn.

FRONTLINE LEGAL RESPONSE

SUPPORTING SUBURBS AFFECTED BY SEVERE STORMS

In the eye of the storm, Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) swiftly responded to the needs of its community.

In June 2021, the eastern suburbs of Melbourne were lashed by wild storms and ensuing floods. Residents lost power, homes were damaged, and many local residents were forced to relocate due to flooding.

ECLC has a long-held commitment to disaster response, which has been embedded within local emergency management plans. This meant that ECLC were consulted by the local council and emergency management services as part of a holistic response.

Many community members contacted ECLC for information and support. However, the centre's active reach into community events, hubs, and gatherings was crucial in supporting more people more effectively. ECLC staff attended community meetings at Olinda, Kalorama, Mount Evelyn as well as drop-ins at Belgrave, Lilydale and Yarra Junction.

The floods and storms also exacerbated mental health issues and trauma within the community, meaning ECLC staff needed to deliver services with extra care.

With many people troubled by the lack of support from their insurance providers, insurance training was another important factor in ECLC's response. Recognising the capacity gap in legal insurance expertise ECLC collaborated with Consumer Action Law Centre to deliver insurance training where there were knowledge gaps.



This is where our CLCs come to the fore - reaching out to communities affected by climate disasters, informing them of their legal rights, and assisting them to access the vital supports they need.

"IN A JUST SOCIETY, HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOT A CONVENTION TO BE IGNORED DURING A CRISIS, BUT A FRAMEWORK FOR HOW WE WILL TREAT AND BE TREATED AS THE CRISIS UNFOLDS." - DEBORAH GLASS, VICTORIAN OMBUDSMAN

The Federation, with support from Bushfire Recovery Victoria, has employed a Disaster Response Lead. This senior legal advisory position plays a centralised role in coordinating disaster legal response across the state, connecting place-based CLCs And Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations with specialist CLCs (Justice Connect, Social Security Rights Victoria, Consumer Action Law Centre, Tenants Victoria and Women's Legal Service Victoria), and building the capacity of the sector to prepare for and respond to disasters.

THE FEDERATION'S IMPACT:

- ▼ Built partnerships with Bushfire Recovery Victoria, and disaster affected CLCs to see legal assistance be recognised as essential in emergency response.
- ▼ Coordinated disaster orientation training and materials delivery to members in conjunction with specialist CLCs and Disaster Legal Help Victoria.
- ▼ Developed a Legal Health Check Tool currently being tested by centres.
- ▼ Actively participated in the Disaster Legal Help Victoria partnership.

CLIMATE JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

PREPARING COMMUNITIES FOR THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate disasters will continue to impact every part of our lives and every part of the law. But the concept of resilient communities, disaster planning, and response is relatively new to the legal sector.

This year the Federation partnered with CLC Environmental Justice Australia and the Climate Council to establish the Climate Justice Legal Project. The project is a pioneering approach to embed climate conscious practices and advocacy within Victoria's CLC sector.

Climate justice focuses on how the most marginalised communities are disproportionately affected by climate change and seeks to ensure legal and policy responses to climate disasters are driven by equitable, fair, and inclusive principles.

Through prioritising the lives of Victorians who will take the hardest hit in the impending climate crisis the Climate Justice Legal Project works at state-wide and local levels to prepare, advocate, reform and respond to the acute threat climate change poses on the wellbeing and livelihoods of Victorians.

The Climate Justice Legal Project has four priorities:

ADVOCATE: for equitable and accessible climate solutions that address the root drivers of disadvantage and simultaneously highlight the need for immediate cuts in emissions.

AMPLIFY: the voices, experiences, and legal needs of those impacted by climate change particularly the most marginalised.

ABILITY BUILD: the capacity of the community legal sector and integrated services to identify, anticipate and respond to legal needs arising from climate change impacts including extreme weather events.

ADAPT: community legal services and legal practice to a climate justice model that embeds equitable adaptation practices and legal advice across the wider justice and legal sectors using collected evidence and data.

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CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY
VIOLENCE PROVIDING
ADVICE TO A CLIENT



ADDRESSING FAMILY VIOLENCE

The pandemic has continued to have an acute impact on women and children experiencing family violence. Sadly, family violence increases in the wake of disasters, and this has been felt on a local, national, and global level over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has led to a significant backlog in family violence matters in Magistrates' Courts across Victoria, and an ongoing need for family violence legal assistance and support.

In this context, CLCs have played a critical role in supporting victim-survivors of family violence, offering intersectional and trauma-informed holistic support.

Over the past 12 months, the Federation has led and supported the sector in securing additional investments for family violence legal assistance, and in ensuring family violence legal assistance is key priority for reform across the state.

EARLY RESOLUTION SERVICE – PRE-COURT ENGAGEMENT

Under the Early Resolution Service, clients can access free legal assistance before their court date and are supported to negotiate, where possible, to resolve Family Violence Intervention Orders matters. The Early Resolution Service model supports victim-survivors of family violence through the court process at an early stage, reducing stress and increasing client safety. The Early Resolution Service is also intended to streamline court processes for Family Violence Intervention Orders matters, making it a more effective system particularly in the context of the significant court backlog.

The CLC sector and Victoria Legal Aid received funding to implement pre-court engagement processes for Family Violence Intervention Orders at seven Magistrates' Courts. The Federation and its members have worked closely with Victoria Legal Aid, the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, and Victoria Police to design and implement the Early Resolution Service.

FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES

KEEPING MOTHERS AND THEIR BABIES SAFE, AND TOGETHER

Women experiencing violence in their relationship can risk having newborn babies removed from their care. To address this, Women's Legal Service Victoria and Monash Health launched *Together from the Start*, a partnership that supports mothers so they can keep their babies from birth.

The program brings together lawyers, health workers, social workers and financial counsellors to support at-risk women who attend Monash Hospital for antenatal care. It provides women with legal support and representation, as well as healthcare, social work and other supports. This allows mothers to make more informed decisions about their lives and provide a safe home for their babies.

The partnership has already made a big difference to clients' lives. Most women who were referred to the program in the first year were discharged from hospital with their baby safely in their care and appropriate support services in place.

Women's Legal Service Victoria has also helped a number of clients from the program with other legal issues stemming from violence, as part of their unique approach to helping women recover and gain financial independence. By providing women with family law and family violence legal assistance – as well as representation in Children's Court proceedings – victim-survivors can receive all the legal help they need to move on with their lives.

DELIVERING SPECIALIST FAMILY VIOLENCE LEGAL SERVICES

Specialist Family Violence Courts now operate in five locations and will expand to a further seven locations across Victoria. The Federation and its members, alongside Victoria Legal Aid, continued to develop a Specialist Family Violence Courts Legal Practice Model to better meet the needs of victim-survivors of family violence, and deliver more integrated client-focused services in court.

Victoria's Orange Door program promotes a single-entry point into services to help victim-survivors of family violence. The program operates in several locations across Victoria, with more hubs opening in 2021 and 2022.

The Federation's and Victoria Legal Aid's advocacy has resulted in the announcement of seed funding to integrate legal services into the Orange Door network. The Federation will continue to work with partners to advocate for more funding for this crucial initiative.

FAMILY VIOLENCE REFORM ROLLING ACTION PLAN

After extensive advocacy from the Federation and CLCs, legal assistance was included as a priority area in the *Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023* (the Plan). Previously, legal assistance had been absent from the Plan. The Plan now recognises legal services as an integral part of responding to family violence and commits to ensuring that legal assistance is embedded across the family violence system. Key initiatives in the Plan include:

- ▼ Increasing capacity for early access to legal assistance.
- ▼ Embedding legal services within the Orange Door network.
- ▼ Enhancing workforce capability to identify and respond to client risks and needs.

The Federation co-chair the Family Violence Legal Assistance Working Group with the Department of Justice and Community Safety, which supports, advises and delivers on key activities under the legal assistance priority area of the Plan.



THE ONLINE LAUNCH OF THE INDIAN WOMEN'S FAMILY VIOLENCE PROJECT, AN INITIATIVE FROM NORTHERN COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE.

THE FEDERATION'S IMPACT:

Together with our partner CLCs and Victorian Legal Aid we:

- ▼ Developed resources to assist remote service delivery in family violence matters, such as a guide to promote clients' safe participation in online hearings.
- ▼ Secured funding for legal services to be to be embedded in the Orange Door network.
- ▼ Successfully lobbied for family violence legal assistance become a priority area in the Family Violence Reform Action Plan.
- ▼ Secured \$7 million for the Early Resolution Service.

INTEGRATED SUPPORT SERVICES

PATHWAYS TO SAFETY FOR MIGRANT VICTIM-SURVIVORS

Family violence is pervasive across the Victorian community, but social isolation, limited English language skills, and recent trauma mean new migrants are particularly at risk. Women on temporary visas can be more vulnerable still, if they are dependent on perpetrators of violence for economic security and the right to remain in Australia.

Since 2015, Northern Community Legal Centre (NCLC) has developed strong ties to the growing South Asian community in Melbourne's north-west. Many of the Indian women seeking advice from NCLC's lawyers were recently married and then separated, after experiencing multiple forms of abuse related to their migration status; yet they were often ineligible for services and support.

In early 2019, NCLC secured funding from the Legal Services Board for a two-year pilot program to deepen their understanding of these issues and test a new integrated service model, combining legal advice with community engagement and education.

Since then, the Indian Women's Family Violence Project has provided family violence and migration support for 164 Indian women on temporary visas, giving them legal options and a pathway to safety.



MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE



© BRIMBANK MELTON CLC
(A PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY PLUS
SERVICES) DELIVERING A TENANCY
LEGAL EDUCATION SESSION
DURING LAW WEEK 2021 AT THE
CAROLINE SPRINGS LIBRARY

FACT: IF IT WERE NOT FOR THE
FREE ON-SITE LEGAL CLINIC AT
THE HOSPITALS, 40 PER CENT
OF PATIENTS SURVEYED SAID
THEY WOULD NOT HAVE
SEEN A LAWYER. COST AND
ACCESSIBILITY WERE THE MAIN
REASONS PROVIDED.

- EY, MEETING DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

The CLC integrated service model is built around the understanding that people most in need are often the least likely to seek help directly. To be truly responsive to individuals' needs, CLCs work alongside the community, health, social, and education sectors to meet the complex and intersecting needs of clients.

Integrated Services, or justice partnerships, have grown out of this knowledge, and continue to grow across the state. The Federation plays a key role in administering funding on behalf of DJCS, for Integrated Services and convening the Integrated Services Community of Practice.

Integrated service delivery can take various forms, such as:

- ▼ The co-location of a lawyer at another organisation, such as a school, alcohol and drug service or family violence service.
- ▼ Regular outreach by a lawyer to a community service.
- ▼ Health Justice Partnerships between legal services and health services (e.g., hospital, maternal child health service or community health service).
- ▼ Partnerships between legal services and community services.
- ▼ Multidisciplinary teams within a legal service or other community organisation (for example, consisting of lawyers, social workers, health professionals and/or financial counsellors).
- ▼ Two or more organisations merging to offer services together.

Recognising the critical role integrated legal services and partnerships play in the Victorian community legal sector, the Federation has continued to showcase our members' work and advocate for increased funding. In the 2021/22 State Budget, the Victorian Government extended the funding for CLCs to deliver Integrated Services within their communities for three more years under the Integrated Services Fund.

The Federation continues to convene the Integrated Services Community of Practice which encourages sharing expertise, best practice approaches, and resources among CLCs with Integrated Services and Health Justice Partnerships. Topics ranged from integrated legal service and place-based approaches in the context of disaster recovery, legal service integration in the new mental health landscape, and guidance on integrating financial counselling in legal centres.

The Federation was also part of a Collaborative Advisory Group which supported the development of the Integrated Practice – Better Practice Principles, a project led by Eastern Community Legal Centre. The Better Practice Principles were launched by Eastern Community Legal Centre in September 2021.

THE FEDERATION'S IMPACT:

- ▼ Secured funding in the Federal 2020/2021 Budget for lapsed Integrated Services funding and successfully advocated for ongoing funding for some lapsed Integrated Services funding in the 2021/22 Victorian State Budget.
- ▼ With technical assistance from EY, demonstrated the avoided cost modelling for legal assistance in Integrated Services through modelling and economic analysis on avoided costs.

INTEGRATED SERVICES

WORKING TOGETHER TO PROVIDE HOLISTIC SUPPORT

Felicity* has faced trauma throughout her life, having experienced family violence from multiple perpetrators.

When she initially engaged with Justice Connect’s Homeless Law integrated legal services, Felicity had been pushed into homelessness after fleeing her community housing property, where her violent ex-partner had breached security and kicked in the door.

Felicity had been using her limited income to prioritise her safety, so she was also struggling financially and had fallen into significant rental arrears. She also had minor criminal charges directly related to her complex vulnerabilities.

Justice Connect’s specialised social worker advocated for Felicity, which led to the housing provider repairing her property’s door and changing the locks. The social worker directly connected Felicity with Homeless Law’s lawyers for tailored tenancy and criminal legal assistance, including ongoing representation and advice about her rights.

Given her experiences of trauma and the compounding impact of COVID-19, Felicity’s mental health was continuing to decline, and she was admitted to hospital for intensive treatment.

After treatment, Felicity continued to fear her safety at her property. Through detailed negotiations and advocacy with the housing provider, Justice Connect’s specialised tenancy lawyers and integrated social worker helped Felicity to have her tenancy transferred to a new property, along with having her rental arrears waived and her bond returned.

JUSTICE CONNECT’S SENIOR CRIMINAL LAWYER AND SOCIAL WORKER COLLABORATED TO MAKE SURE THAT FELICITY SUCCESSFULLY ACCESSED AND NAVIGATED THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM DURING THE PANDEMIC.

Throughout this time, Justice Connect’s social worker engaged with Justice Connect’s community and health justice partners to secure aid and services to reduce her financial stress.

The intensive combination of Justice Connect’s legal and social work services also obtained long-term supports for Felicity through the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and made a successful Victims of Crime Administrative Tribunal compensation application.

Justice Connect’s wrap-around assistance supported Felicity at every point in her journey through the justice system, which has ensured that she can prioritise her long-term safety and health during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Client’s name has been changed.*



PLANNING FOR A STRONGER, MORE JUST FUTURE

THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

The past year has seen a significant whole-of-government commitment towards building a holistic, place-based and people-centred social service sector: an operating model the CLC sector has displayed for nearly 50 years.

The 2021/22 Victorian State Budget invested \$3.8 billion to implement all recommendations from the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System in order to build a new mental health and wellbeing system.

In the last year we have also seen significant investment into social and affordable housing through the Big Build initiative, and promising commitments from the Treasurer to orientate government spending towards an early intervention investment model.

The Federation applauds government commitments to tackling complex social issues, acknowledging the life-changing impact this will have on many Victorians. But there is still more to be done – the ongoing effects of unmet legal issues continue to be unresolved, impacting disadvantaged Victorians and presenting significant social and economic costs in the long-term.

The Victorian Government's 2016 *Access to Justice Review* found the consequences for individuals of unresolved legal problems often generate costs ultimately borne by the state, both within the justice system and in other publicly funded systems.

In September 2020, the Federation commissioned EY, global professional services and tax specialists, to take a deep dive into the value of our services, investigate our impact and chart the long-term cost-benefit our early investment model delivers.

"While many of these system reforms [family violence, mental health, and housing] are closely linked with the community legal sector, the lack of understanding of the value of the CLC sector by key government stakeholders creates a mismatch in funding across wider service systems that creates a service supply imbalance. In the past, increased funding for police does not result in increased funding for CLCs, increased funding for family violence services does not result in funding for increased community legal support. If current and future social services reforms are to be successful in achieving better outcomes for Victoria, then the community legal sector needs to be appropriately resourced to provide people with the support when they need it most."

- EY, MEETING DEMAND FOR COMMUNITY LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The report found:

- ▼ Legal issues can have a profound impact on an individual's everyday life and adversely impact their financial, emotional, physical and social wellbeing.
- ▼ More than half of Victorians report that legal issues have had a severe or moderate impact on their everyday life.
- ▼ 19 per cent of Victorians report that legal issues have affected their emotional wellbeing.
- ▼ 18 per cent of Victorians report that legal issues have affected their physical health.
- ▼ 10 per cent of Victorians have reported a relationship breakdown due to legal issues.

When legal issues are unresolved, they can escalate and put significant pressure on other social services and government systems, such as child protection, courts, prisons, housing and homelessness as well as the broader health and wellbeing sector.

OUR COMMUNITY LEGAL WORKFORCE

“THOSE WHO CHOOSE TO WORK IN CLCS DO SO BECAUSE YOU CARE ABOUT THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITY – [YOU] VALUE YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY, WHETHER IT BE CENTRAL MELBOURNE, SUBURBIA OR BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY VICTORIA. YOUR FIGHT OF COURSE, IS NOT ALWAYS GLAMOROUS AND TOO OFTEN GOES UNRECOGNISED,”
VICTORIAN ATTORNEY-GENERAL, THE HON. JACLYN SYMES MP

4,000 people in our workforce		85% want to stay in their jobs beyond their contract	
52% are volunteers who generously provide...		11,654 hours every year to help Victorians experiencing disadvantage	
45 languages are spoken by our workforce		83% were drawn to the sector to help people	

WE ARE MORE DIVERSE, INCLUSIVE AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POPULATION COMPARED WITH THE VICTORIAN PUBLIC SERVICE:

77% of our workforce are women compared with 66%
19% identify as LGBTIQ+ compared with 5%
10% are living with and/or affected by disability compared with 5%
4% are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander compared with 1%

Source: Kutin, J. J., McDonald, H. M., Hagland, T., Kennedy, C., & Balmer, N. J. (2021). Working in community legal centres in Victoria. Results from a survey of the community legal sector workforce: Landscape report. Melbourne, Australia: Victoria Law Foundation. Available at: victorialawfoundation.org.au/research/research-reports/

OUR WORKFORCE BELIEVES THEIR WORK MAKES A “SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION” IN HELPING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, RESOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS, AND IMPROVING THEIR HEALTH AND SAFETY.



DEVELOPING OUR 10-YEAR PLAN

Our CLCs are as diverse and unique as the communities they serve.

Within inner Melbourne, more than 50 per cent of CLC clients speak a language other than English at home and more than 60 per cent were born overseas, with up to 55 per cent experiencing rental stress.

In other areas of the state, we see a different story, with up to 75 per cent of those CLCs’ cases focused on family law, and CLCs in climate-affected areas on the frontline of emergency response. More than half of our CLCs offer specialist services, focused on a particular area of law (consumer rights, tenancy, disability discrimination, employment, animal law) or catered to a specific cohort (youth, seniors, women, migrants, refugees, international students, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders).

Despite their uniqueness and specialty focus areas, CLCs have more in common than what differentiates them.

A majority of our clients are women and are experiencing financial difficulty and/or family violence. A quarter of our clients have disabilities. Without the support and resolution of their legal needs, they can be driven into entrenched poverty and further cycles of social and economic disadvantage.

We know we need to mobilise a collective voice to advocate for law and systemic reform that will not only protect our communities, but see them thrive well into the future.



"AT A TIME OF SUCH SIGNIFICANT CHANGE AND OPPORTUNITY, IT IS VITAL THAT WE CONTINUE TO HAVE A SHARED VISION OF THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR OUR COMMUNITY, AND FOR OUR SECTOR AS A WHOLE."

- FORMER FEDERATION CEO, SERINA MCDUFF AT CONSULTATIONS LAUNCH

FORMER FEDERATION LEADERSHIP
BELINDA LO AND SERINA MCDUFF

As a sector, we are struggling to keep up with the demand. We provide services to the capacity we can, but know there is still significant unmet need. An estimated one in five Victorians have a legal issue at any given time – and, with growing inequality within Victorian communities and low levels of legal literacy, CLCs play an essential service in helping Victorians identify their legal issues and ensure they have their legal rights met.

A VCROSS review found that out of all community sector charities, CLCs are the most dependent on government grants, which accounted for 85 per cent of their income in 2014. Many CLCs are heavily reliant on the goodwill of volunteers to deliver their exceptional range of quality services.

"I applaud the sector for undertaking this important work... we know we go faster alone but we go further together." -EMMA KING, VCROSS CEO

We know technological advances will allow us to reach far more Victorians offering better referral pathways to ensure no one falls through the gaps, tracking changing community need, and monitoring our impact to increase our efficiencies and improve services overall.

It is with these factors in mind that the Federation has brought the sector together to plan for a connected, sustainable and strong community legal sector well into the future.

WORKSHOPPING FOR CO-DESIGN AND SECTOR CONTRIBUTION

To ensure broad input from across the sector, the Federation hosted a series of workshops with CLCs to reflect, consider and contemplate the next 10 years. With emphasis on big picture thinking, we saw incredible depth and breadth of discussion, with thoughtful consideration of the kind of sector we want to be, the impact we want to have, and the communities we want to help create.

Held over four weeks, the workshops were led by strategic facilitator, Mark Madden, focusing on four priority areas: access to justice and vision for the future; service design and delivery; having a strong, collective voice; and funding, resources and sustainability.

"The [workshop] participants... understood by working together, the sector could be more than the 'sum of its parts'."

- MARK MADDEN, FACILITATOR, 10-YEAR PLAN WORKSHOPS

During the workshops, we explored our commitment to collaboration, innovative ways of working, driving systemic change, and considered how we will continue to meet the needs of our communities.

"The Federation's 10-Year Plan is a vital discussion to continue to deliver vital services and help vulnerable Victorians engage meaningfully."

- VICTORIAN ATTORNEY-GENERAL, THE HON. JACLYN SYMES MP

OUR 10-YEAR PLAN SO FAR

- 2020
 - 30 October to 4 December Workforce survey for CLC staff and volunteers
 - 1 December to 1 February 2021 CLC CEO survey
- 2021
 - 31 March Discussion paper launched
 - 20 April Development of sector-wide 10-year plan launched by the Federation, Victorian Attorney-General and VCROSS
 - 27 April to 18 May Strategic workshops facilitated by Mark Madden held with industry experts
 - 28 May Written submissions to discussion paper closed



For more information about the 10-Year Plan: fclc.org.au/10-year_plan

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR JUSTICE

REDUCING THE INCARCERATION OF WOMEN

The Federation has convened Smart Justice, a coalition of more than 60 legal and social services organisations for over 10 years. In 2019, the Federation created a new subcommittee, Smart Justice for Women (SJFW) with a focus on building a coordinated policy and advocacy response to the increasing rate of women’s incarceration.

In its second year, Smart Justice for Women and partners advocated for the decommissioning of 41 beds from the proposed \$189.9 million-dollar expansion of the Dame Phyllis Frost Centre, a maximum-security prison for women.

The move would have seen the facility expand its capacity for an additional 106 inmates – now reduced to 65 – signifying an ongoing complacency with the rising criminalisation and incarceration of women.

Despite falling incarceration rates of Victorian women during COVID-19, data pre-COVID indicates women are the fastest growing prison population in Australia. Between 2009 and 2019, the women’s prison population in Australia increased by 64 per cent, compared with 45 per cent for men.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are grossly over-represented in these figures, with 33 per cent of women in Australian prisons identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander despite only accounting for 3 per cent of the overall Australian population.

Women’s criminal profiles are distinctly different from men’s. They are far less likely to have committed violent or sexual crimes, and are much more likely to be criminalised due to issues associated with drug dependence or poverty.

AN ESTIMATED 70 TO 90 PER CENT OF WOMEN IN PRISON HAVE EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT ABUSE OR TRAUMA FROM SEXUAL VIOLENCE OR FAMILY VIOLENCE. APPROXIMATELY ONE THIRD HAVE AN ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY AND MANY HAVE POOR MENTAL HEALTH AND A HISTORY OF HOMELESSNESS.

More than half of these women are mothers, and their incarceration will have ongoing intergenerational impacts.

In April 2021, for the first time in the history of reported prisoner statistics, the number of unsentenced women in Victoria exceeded the number of sentenced women, with 53 per cent of women in custody being held on remand.

There is an urgent need for bail reform to reduce the unprecedented number of women held on remand in Victoria’s prison system. Smart Justice for Women has written to all Victorian parliamentarians, highlighting the need to repeal the reverse-onus provisions of the *Bail Act 1977* (Vic) and invest in community-based support systems that are responsive to the specific needs of women in the criminal justice system.



YOUTH JUSTICE REFORM

Smart Justice for Young People, a coalition of over 40 leading CLCs, social services, health, and youth advocacy organisations, continues to provide a coordinated and expert voice on youth justice reform. The Federation participates in this coalition co-chaired by Youth Law and WEstjustice.

In 2021 Smart Justice for Young People formed two new working groups to work on priorities of:

- ▼ Tackling overrepresentation of groups of young people in the criminal justice system, especially young people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, and those with out-of-home-care backgrounds, led by WEstjustice.
- ▼ Humane and rehabilitative treatment of young people in detention, led by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service.

The Smart Justice for Young People ‘Raise the Age’ Working Group, led by the Human Rights Law Centre, continues to play a critical role leading Victoria’s contribution to the national Raise the Age campaign. The group is lobbying the Victorian government to stop the incarceration of children as young as 10 and commit to raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14.

Smart Justice for Young People has continued to call on the Victorian Government to adopt a justice reinvestment approach to crime prevention. While there is still a long way to go, the new Crime Prevention Strategy sets up a framework for government to partner with, support and invest in communities to innovate and deliver local solutions that address the underlying causes of crime.

Smart Justice for Young People has also supported the advocacy and media work of the Federation’s COVID-19 Fines CLC Working Group. Together they have called for a more age-appropriate response to children receiving COVID-19 fines, fairer fine review processes of COVID-19 fines, and solutions to deal with unaffordable and crippling COVID-19 fines.

Over the last year Smart Justice for Young People has made several key collective submissions on the Youth Justice Bill (September 2020), the Victorian Youth Strategy (December 2020), and a joint statement in support of the Spent Conviction Bill which passed in March 2021.



STRENGTHENING OUR SECTOR

BUILDING OUR CAPACITY

832

community legal sector staff participated in

35

capacity building experiences

*1st July 2020 to 30 June 2021

THE FEDERATION WAS BEEN ABLE TO INCREASE ITS TRAINING CAPACITY FOR MEMBERS THROUGH NEW VIRTUAL DELIVERY

The Federation plays a vital role in upskilling the sector, ensuring best practice, and coordinating state-wide responses.

Over the course of the last 12 months, the Federation delivered 35 learning and development opportunities to 832 CLC staff, and saw increased attendance from rural, regional, and remote members in the new online format.

A few highlights of the training delivered are included on the following pages.

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

The Federation saw a need to help members navigate the uncertain and destabilising environment caused by the pandemic. We implemented a series of learning and development opportunities focused on Trauma Informed Practice, including how to manage personal wellbeing and the wellbeing of colleagues, managing in uncertain times and Mental Health First Aid. The Federation worked closely with David Cherry, a forensic psychologist, and the College of Law to run several sector-specific sessions held over the year.

"I spoke to a man... currently in rehab and on strong medication. Accessing the website or clicking on an email was not an option. I used all the knowledge I learnt in the Mental Health First aid (sic) Training during the call... At the end of the call he thanked me profusely and thanked me for my understanding and patience. He said I was incredibly kind and helpful and I went above and beyond. Talking to me made him feel a lot better. I noticed in his voice he sounded better at the end of the call than the beginning. The gratitude was unmistakable. I feel so great about making a difference in the life of another human being. It's moments like these that makes me feel so proud to do my job."

- COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE STAFF PARTICIPANT FROM THE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING

BUILDING STRONG LEADERS

Empowering, insightful, practical, inclusive, excellent, engaging, consistent; this was how the sector summarised the two levels of targeted Leadership and Management training the Federation provided this year. The training built on strategies to lead, to create and nurture relationships, and to inspire and motivate teams to achieve organisational goals. It drew on understanding leadership in different contexts and encouraged attendees to think about the type of leader they want to be.

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION SCHEME AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The National Accreditation Scheme and the Professional Standards and Support Committee ensure a high standard of excellence and accountability in our sector. The National Accreditation scheme is an industry-based certification process for CLCs that supports and recognises good practice in the delivery of community legal services.

Through the National Accreditation Scheme, the sector’s ability to develop and implement effective governance and management practices is enriched. This improves service delivery and creates positive outcomes for our members, their staff, clients and communities.

This year we thank the following Professional Standards and Support Committee members for their contributions and dedication in supporting the sector and the Federation in risk management responsibilities and support:

Kate Ross - Peninsula Community Legal Centre
Martin Ha - Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre
Joanne Carlton - Moonee Valley Legal Service
Marquita Nolan – Northern Community Legal Centre
Galit Aflalo– Consumer Action Law Centre

We said farewell to:

Brendan Lacota – previously Justice Connect (until April 2021)
Amanda Storey - previously Consumer Action Law Centre (until February 2021)

CONNECTING TO CULTURE

Cultural considerations for members and their clients remained strong in 2020 and 2021. After significant uptake and interest in the Building Aboriginal Cultural Competence training, the Federation, working with Koorie Heritage Trust, offered the next level of training, Building Aboriginal Cultural Safety. The training ensures the sector continues to build its understanding of Aboriginal culture.

SECTOR DATA

The Federation is introducing a legal practice management system to help CLCs manage their clients and services, make it easier to report to funding authorities and help evaluate and plan services. The project is funded by a one-off grant from the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety.

The project started in early 2021 and by midyear vendors and products had been selected. During 2022, CLCs will put their relevant systems in place.

The project will ensure the data collected by CLCs is more readily accessible to the Federation and CLCs to improve sector planning.



We convened and were involved in

23

CLC working groups

INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTRE AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE STAFF AT A MEETING IN LATE 2020

WORKING GROUPS

ROYAL COMMISSION INTO FAMILY VIOLENCE WORKING GROUP

CONVENOR 2020-2021: RACHAEL PLINER

The Royal Commission into Family Violence Working Group has played an instrumental role in advocating for key family violence reforms over the past year.

We successfully advocated for much needed funding to implement pre-court engagement processes for family violence matters in the Magistrates’ Courts in Victoria.

We were also instrumental in formulating recommendations for the *Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan*, which led to legal assistance being included as a priority in the Plan. This is a critical development in legal assistance being recognised as an integral part of addressing family violence.

Members from the Royal Commission into Family Violence Working Group have also contributed to consultations and inquiries in the following areas:

- Court processes for family violence matters in light of COVID-19 restrictions.
- Key topics for the Family Violence Reform Implementation Monitor’s monitoring plan 2021-2022.
- Misidentification of victim survivors as perpetrators.
- The Victoria Law Reform Commission’s inquiry into stalking.



GABRIELLE MARCHETTI, PRINCIPAL LAWYER AT JOBWATCH, AND TWO JOBWATCH INTERNS DELIVERING COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION AT BRUNSWICK SECONDARY COLLEGE

VICTIMS OF CRIME ADVISORY GROUP

CONVENOR 2020-2021: LARA FREIDIN

The Victims of Crime Advisory Group was established in August 2020 to advise on the work of the CLC sector; both to assist victims of crime, and to help with advocacy. This responds to increased funding for legal assistance for victims of crime emerging as a priority for the Federation and CLCs.

The Advisory Group collected data to demonstrate the vital assistance CLCs provide to victims of crime, including helping with applications for financial assistance for the Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal, restitution and compensation orders, and in navigating the criminal justice system. Some CLCs have also established Integrated Services to provide specialised support to victim-survivors of family violence and/or sexual assault.

We briefed the Victorian Government on the important work that CLCs do to support victims of crime, and the need for additional funding to establish Integrated Services to assist victim-survivors. This advocacy led to the government allocating \$7.3 million to establish a victims' legal service in the 2021/22 Budget.

We will continue to advocate for the new victims' legal service funding to go to the CLCs with expertise in providing trauma-informed, holistic and integrated assistance to victim-survivors.

DISASTER RESPONSE WORKING GROUP

CONVENOR 2020-2021: DR BRONWYN LAY

The Federation's Disaster Response Working Group is made up of place-based CLCs affected by disasters and specialist CLCs. We convene monthly meetings to prepare CLCs to respond to disasters within their region.

During the disasters over the past year, such as the June storms and floods, the Federation coordinated responses in affected local centres and assisted Disaster Legal Help Victoria in their communications, intelligence, and impact gathering. Consumer Action Law Centre was commissioned to deliver insurance law training for CLCs.

We have developed and distributed a legal health checklist to CLCs and Disaster Legal Help Victoria (a joint initiative of justice sector actors formed following the 2009 Victorian bushfires) to be used and adapted in each disaster and location.

INTEGRATED SERVICES

CONSUMER ACTION LAW CENTRE

Delivering integrated consumer, credit and debt legal services to Victorian Aboriginal communities.

FITZROY LEGAL SERVICE

Supporting sustainability of services provided by Fitzroy Legal Service through the Darebin drug outreach lawyer project.

FLEMINGTON AND KENSINGTON COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

Policing Family Violence: Changing the Story Project.

INNER MELBOURNE COMMUNITY LEGAL

A partnership with Royal Melbourne Hospital providing advice, casework, community legal education, and strategic policy work.

JUSTICE CONNECT

Providing tenancy, housing, legal assistance and other support services to women and children experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

LAW AND ADVOCACY CENTRE FOR WOMEN

Providing pathways out of the justice system for socially and economically disadvantaged women who are in or at risk of entering the criminal justice system.

LODDON CAMPASPE COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE

Providing a legal-health service for clients with complex needs.

REFUGEE LEGAL

Supporting people seeking asylum who are subject to the Commonwealth's Fast Track Assessment process.

SENIORS RIGHTS VICTORIA

Supporting those who have been recently diagnosed with dementia to plan ahead and to make informed choices about their future financial, health or care arrangements, as well as to put those choices into an appropriate legal format.

SOCIAL SECURITY RIGHTS VICTORIA

Designing, implementing and evaluating an integrated service bringing together social security law specialists and financial counsellors.

SPRINGVALE MONASH LEGAL SERVICE

Sporting Change: empowering and educating diverse young people to engage constructively in society.

WESTJUSTICE

Providing settlement services to newly arrived people in Melbourne's western suburbs.

OUR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Chairperson	Kristen Wallwork (Springvale Monash Legal Service)
Treasurer	Thomas Green (Deloitte Australia)
Secretary	Jackie Galloway (Peninsula Community Legal Centre)
General members	Zana Bytheway (JobWatch)
	Claudia Fatone (Fitzroy Legal Service)
	Chris Povey (Justice Connect)
	Bryanna Connell (Barwon Community Legal Service)

Thank you to outgoing general board member, Hayley Mansfield (ARC Justice) and former Treasurer James Ferguson (KPMG).

OUR TEAM

Chief Executive Officer	Louisa Gibbs
Executive Assistant	Linda Loveder
Head of Policy and Engagement	Nicky Warner
Senior Legal Policy Adviser	Lara Freidin
Senior Legal Policy Adviser	Rachael Pliner
Climate Justice and Disaster Response Lead	Bronwyn Lay
Communications and Engagement Manager	Rachel McFadden
Digital Communications Officer	Izzy Lyndon-James
Quality and Impact Manager	Natalie Peters
Training Coordinator	Gabby Talmadge
Operations Manager	Michelle Taylor
Office Coordinator	Rosanna Di Grazia
People and Culture Adviser	Tanya Sawtell
Project Manager – Data Systems	Tim McMahon
Finance Officer	Deborah Wilson

FORMER STAFF

We wish to thank all our former team members that have contributed their expertise to the work of the Federation over the last 12 months.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

FUNDERS

Department of Justice and Community Safety
Victoria Legal Aid
Legal Services Board and Commissioner
Bushfire Recovery Victoria
Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department

SPONSORSHIP, IN KIND, PRO BONO

City of Melbourne
Holding Redlich
Maddocks
Victorian Council of Social Services

OUR MEMBERS

AED Legal Centre; Animal Law Institute Inc; Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, Ballarat Grampians Community Legal Service; Barwon Community Legal Service; Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre; Consumer Action Law Centre; Disability Discrimination Legal Service; Djirra; Eastern Community Legal Centre; Emma House Domestic Violence Services; Environmental Justice Australia; First Step Legal Service; Fitzroy Legal Service; Flemington & Kensington Community Legal Centre; Gippsland Community Legal Service; Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre (ARC Justice); Human Rights Law Centre; Hume Riverina Community Legal Service; Inner Melbourne Community Legal; Intouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence; JobWatch; Justice Connect; Law And Advocacy Centre For Women; Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre (ARC Justice); Melbourne University Student Union Legal Service; Mental Health Legal Centre; Monash Law Clinic; Moonee Valley Legal Service; Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre; Northern Community Legal Centre; Peninsula Community Legal Centre; Refugee Legal; Seniors Rights Victoria; Social Security Rights Victoria; Southport Community Legal Service; Springvale Monash Legal Service; St Kilda Legal Service; Tenants Victoria; Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service; Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service; West Heidelberg Community Legal Service; WEstjustice; Whittlesea Community Connections; Women's Legal Service Victoria; Youthlaw; and Young Workers Centre.



TOGETHER, YOUR EFFORTS HAVE HELPED
WORK TOWARDS A FAIRER VICTORIA...

THANK YOU

FEDERATION OF COMMUNITY
LEGAL CENTRES (VICTORIA) INC.
ABN 30 036 539 902

FINANCIAL
REPORTS

YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE
INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JUNE 2020

THE ACCOMPANYING NOTES FORM PART OF THIS FINANCIAL REPORT.

	Note	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
INCOME			
Victoria Legal Aid - Recurrent	8(a)	394,672	758,996
VLA - ERO State	8(a)	351,948	298,315
VLA - ERO Extra	8(a)	51,156	-
Grant Income - Other Projects - net of distributions	2	1,609,060	772,216
Other Income		160,577	166,676
Interest		7,154	28,324
		2,574,567	2,024,527
EXPENDITURE			
Employee benefit expenses		1,648,003	1,360,642
Occupancy expenses		21,795	50,866
Operating expenses		112,406	120,572
Project related expenses		451,168	288,680
		2,233,372	1,820,760
Surplus before income tax expense		341,195	203,767
Income tax expense		-	-
Surplus after income tax expense		341,195	203,767
Other comprehensive income net of income tax		-	-
Total comprehensive income attributable to the entity		341,195	203,767

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	Retained Earnings (\$)	Total (\$)
Balance at 1 July 2019	566,371	566,371
Surplus attributable to the entity	203,767	203,767
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2020	770,138	770,138
Surplus attributable to the entity	341,195	341,195
Other comprehensive income	-	-
Balance at 30 June 2021	1,111,333	1,111,333

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30 JUNE 2021

	Note	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	3	1,896,264	1,314,671
Trade and other receivables	4	13,209	403,091
Financial assets	5	1,428,701	1,422,328
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		3,338,174	3,140,090
NON-CURRENT ASSETS			
Property, plant and equipment	6	-	-
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS		-	-
TOTAL ASSETS		3,338,174	3,140,090
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Trade and other payables	7	200,598	201,776
Amounts received in advance	8	1,942,665	2,033,259
Provisions	9	73,508	117,177
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		2,216,771	2,352,212
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Provisions	9	10,070	17,740
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		10,070	17,740
TOTAL LIABILITIES		2,226,841	2,369,952
NET ASSETS		1,111,333	770,138
MEMBERS' FUNDS			
Retained surplus'		1,111,333	770,138
TOTAL MEMBERS' FUNDS		1,111,333	770,138

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from Gov't Grants - recurrent		747,565	732,907
Receipts from Gov't Grants - non-recurrent		251,791	251,791
Receipts from Other Sources		1,840,216	1,853,007
Interest received		7,777	29,907
Payments to Suppliers and Employees		(2,259,383)	(4,043,271)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	10	587,966	(1,175,659)
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Investment in term deposits		(6,373)	(22,869)
Payments for purchase of property and equipment		-	-
Net cash used in investing activities		(6,373)	(22,869)
Net cash increase/(decrease) cash held		581,593	(1,198,528)
Cash at the beginning of the year		1,314,671	2,513,199
Cash at the end of the year	3	1,896,264	1,314,671

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

NOTE 1: STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Financial Reporting Framework - The Board has determined that the Association is not a reporting entity because it is unlikely there are users of these financial statements who are not in a position to require the preparation of reports tailored to their information needs. Accordingly, these financial statements have been prepared to satisfy the Committee's reporting requirements under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. The Association is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards.

Statement of Compliance - The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the mandatory Australian Accounting Standards applicable to entities reporting under the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012*. These special purpose financial statements do not comply with all the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards. The recognition and measurement requirements that have not been complied with are those specified in AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* and AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities* as, in accounting for income, recognition of all grant income has been deferred until the related expenses are incurred without assessing whether there are enforceable performance obligations to transfer a good or service to a third party which are sufficiently specific to know when the performance obligation has been satisfied. Refer to Note 1(d) Revenue below.

Basis of Preparation - The financial statements, except for the cash flow information, have been prepared on an accrual basis and are based on historical costs unless otherwise stated in the notes. The material accounting policies adopted in the preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless stated otherwise. Where applicable they indicate how the recognition and measurement requirements in Australian Accounting Standards have not been complied with. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

Impact of COVID-19 - FCLC relies on on-going support from both state government and other non-government funders in the form of grant funding to further its principal activities. At the date of this report, there is inherent uncertainty particularly in view of the current global pandemic. The pandemic may have an impact on the Association's financial position and may affect financial performance of the Association in the future.

a. 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. Revenue - Grant Income - All grant income has been deferred upon receipt and not recognised as revenue until the related expenses are incurred, without assessing whether enforceable performance obligations exist. This does not comply with AASB 15 *Revenue from Contracts with Customers* or AASB 1058 *Income of Not-for-Profit Entities*. In future financial years, the Association intends to comply with AASB 1058 and AASB 15. **Membership Revenue** - Membership revenue is recognised as revenue in the year that the membership is for. **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 Association 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).

e. 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.

f. Leases - Exceptions to lease accounting The Association has elected to apply the exceptions to lease accounting for both short-term leases (i.e. leases with a term of less than or equal to 12 months) and leases of low-value assets. The Association recognises the payments associated with these leases as an expense on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

g. Employee Entitlements - Short-term employee benefits Provision is made for the Company's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages, salaries and sick leave. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled. The Company's obligations for short-term employee benefits such as wages, salaries and sick leave are recognised as part of current trade and other payables in the statement of financial position. **Other long-term employee benefits** Provision is made for employees' long service leave and annual leave entitlements not expected to be settled wholly within 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Other long-term employee benefits are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures and are discounted at rates determined by reference to market yields at the end of the reporting period on government bonds that have maturity dates that approximate the terms of the obligations. Upon the remeasurement of obligations for other long-term employee benefits, the net change in the obligation is recognised in profit or loss as part of employee benefits expense. The Company's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current provisions in its statement of financial position, except where the Company does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the end of the reporting period, in which case the obligations are presented as current provisions.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
NOTE 2: GRANT INCOME - OTHER PROJECTS		
Total Grant income	3,573,189	2,947,216
Distribution of Integrated Services Fund	(1,964,129)	(2,175,000)
	1,609,060	772,216

FCLC administered funding from Department of Justice and Community Safety and provided grants to 9 Community Legal Centres (2020: 3 CLC's) to support their work delivering services to disadvantaged people through integrated services partnerships.

NOTE 3: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS		
Cash on hand	94	337
Cash at bank	1,896,170	1,314,334
	1,896,264	1,314,671

NOTE 4: TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES		
Accounts Receivable	12,521	375,274
Prepayments and Sundry Receivables	594	27,100
Accrued Bank Interest	94	717
	13,209	403,091

NOTE 5: FINANCIAL ASSETS		
Term deposits maturity greater than 3 mths	1,428,701	1,422,328

NOTE 6: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT		
Furniture and fittings - at cost	129,908	129,908
Less accumulated depreciation	(129,908)	(129,908)
	-	-

NOTE 7: TRADE AND OTHER PAYABLES		
Creditors and accruals	151,356	150,752
Salary and wage accruals	49,242	51,024
	200,598	201,776

NOTE 8: AMOUNTS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE		
Victoria Legal Aid (ERO)		
- Extra - Future Years	64,186	115,342
Victoria Legal Aid (ERO)		
- State (unused)	59,784	159,941
Victoria Legal Aid (recurrent)	355,894	3,001
Total Generalist Funds		
carried forward	8 (a)	479,864
		278,284

Non-VLA Project Funds carried forward		
	1,462,801	1,754,975
	1,942,665	2,033,259

NOTE 8(A) RECONCILIATION OF VLA GENERALIST FUNDS				
	VLA (\$)	VLA SACS ERO State (\$)	VLA SACS ERO Extra (\$)	Total (\$)
Funds brought forward - 1 July 2020	3,001	159,941	115,342	278,284
Funds received	747,565	251,791	-	999,356
Funds utilised (net of interest)	(394,672)	(351,948)	(51,156)	(797,776)
Funds carried forward - 30 June 2021	355,894	59,784	64,186	479,864

VLA (ERO) - Extra includes funds carried forward from 2016: \$44,703, 2015: \$18,732

	2021 (\$)	2020 (\$)
NOTE 9: PROVISIONS		
Current		
Provision for annual leave	73,508	117,177
	73,508	117,177
Non-Current		
Provision for Long Service Leave	10,070	17,740
	10,070	17,740

NOTE 10: RECONCILIATION OF CASH FLOW FROM OPERATIONS WITH SURPLUS FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES AFTER INCOME TAX			
Surplus after income tax	341,195	203,767	
Non-cash flows in profit:			
- Depreciation	-	-	
Changes in assets and liabilities;			
- (Increase)/decrease in trade and other debtors	389,882	(385,648)	
- Increase/(decrease) in trade and other payables	(1,178)	(74,665)	
- Increase/(decrease) in amounts received in advance	(90,594)	(971,827)	
- Increase/(decrease) in provisions	(51,339)	52,714	
Net cash provided by Operating Activities	587,966	(1,175,659)	

STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2021

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 2021 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: 14/10/2021


Thomas Green, Treasurer
Dated: 13/10/2021

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION UNDER
SECTION 60-40 OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES AND
NOT-FOR-PROFITS COMMISSION ACT 2012

OPINION


In accordance with the requirements of section 60-40 of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act

2012, as auditor for the audit of Federation Of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. for the year ended 30 June

2021, I declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been:

- i. no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012* in relation to the audit; and
- ii. no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Sean Denham Dated: 14/10/2021
Suite 1, 707 Mt Alexander Road.
Moonee Ponds VIC 3039

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ORGANISATIONS STRONGER AND MORE EFFECTIVE.



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



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