



# Eastern Community Law

## Newsletter

Autumn 2007

### Access for Ashburton

ECLC is delighted to announce that it has established an outreach service in Ashburton. The Access for Ashburton project commenced in March in partnership with the Craig Community Health Centre and the financial support of the City of Boroondara and the Rotary Club of Balwyn. While a fortnightly outreach service for the residents of Ashburton and surrounding suburbs is the key element, community legal education and working with existing services are also underway to ensure an integrated response.

Lisa Watts, Manager of Health Services for the Inner East Community Health Service said, "We were committed to support the co-location of the Eastern Community Legal Centre at the Craig Community Health Centre. This arrangement has enabled local residents to access free legal advice at the community health centre in Ashburton. We look forward to continuing support of this initiative and further developing the partnership."

Much work has already occurred behind the scenes to ensure that this outreach will be successful and be of assistance to the Ashburton community. In 2006 and early 2007, substantial links were developed with community agencies to identify the legal needs of the people of Ashburton and promote the service, to ensure it responded to community issues and would be well utilised. Links are being built with the public housing estates through their Health Time Project and these will be further strengthened over the coming months to ensure that residents are aware of the new service.

The Ashburton outreach is offered on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday each month at the Craig Community Health Centre. So far, this service has been well utilised, however ECLC encourages all agencies in the Ashburton and surrounding areas to inform their clients of this outreach service.

This is an appointment only service, so please call the Box Hill Office to make an appointment. Thanks to the City of Boroondara and the Rotary Club of Balwyn for supporting this initiative.

## ECLC Statistics

2006-2007

Since the 30th June 2006, ECLC has assisted almost 1900 clients. This figure is **up 20%** on last year. More significantly, the number of cases opened and pursued (work beyond initial advice) has increased dramatically - **up by 64%** on the similar period with **over 100 additional** clients being assisted in more depth.

The top five issues that ECLC has assisted clients with are Intervention Orders (mostly family law), Child Contact/Contact Orders, Separation, Motor Vehicle Accidents and Wills.

The rise in clients is due to the stable lawyer team, introduction of new outreach locations, promotion of ECLC's services and referrals from community agencies.

Of course, ECLC has a wonderful, large, dedicated team of volunteer lawyers and paralegals who offer their assistance at the Ringwood Court, the Box Hill and Boronia offices and at ECLC's outreach locations. Their support and assistance has also contributed to the large number of clients being seen, throughout the day and also at night. The Centre is incredibly grateful for their high quality service!



*Sarah, an ECLC Volunteer, pictured at ECLC's display at the Box Hill Town Hall Hub Open Day. More details on page 3.*

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### ECLC Services

#### Box Hill Office

Suite 3, Town Hall Hub  
27 Bank Street, Box Hill 3128  
Mon – Fri 9:00am – 5:00pm  
Ph: (03) 9285 4822 Fax: 9285 4833  
eclc@eclc.org.au

Outreach locations:  
Hawthorn  
Ashburton  
Ringwood Magistrates Court

Serving the Cities of Whitehorse, Boroondara & Manningham

**For an appointment for these services, call (03) 9285 4822**

#### Boronia Office

Suite B, 6 Floriston Road, Boronia 3155 (PO Box 747)  
Mon – Thurs 9:00am – 5:00pm  
Ph: (03) 9762 6235 Fax: (03) 9762 9751  
Freecall: 1300 79 70 88  
outereast@eclc.org.au www.eclc.org.au

Outreach Locations  
Rowville  
Lilydale  
Yarra Junction  
Ringwood Magistrates Court

Serving the Cities of Knox, Maroondah & the Shire of Yarra Ranges

**For an appointment for these services, call (03) 9762 6235**



## Staff Snapshot

This edition, ECLC is introducing Jenni Smith, Principal Lawyer, Since joining the team in 2006, Jenni has made many positive changes to ensure the Centre is offering high quality, professional and timely legal advice and casework.



### What work do you do at ECLC?

I am the principal lawyer, which means that I am responsible for ensuring that the legal advice and casework of the service is of a high standard.

### What do you like about ECLC?

We know how to enjoy a good cake.

### Any funny or embarrassing moments on the job so far?

I came in yesterday with my skirt on inside out - sometimes life gets so busy.

### Any legal issue that frustrates you?

Family law cases where the clients are unable to focus on the children and the long term negative impact of not being able to have a relationship with both parents.

Assisting clients in motor vehicles accidents when they are absolutely not responsible and the other party or both of them are not insured.

### Favourite holiday destination?

I have recently come back from Bryon Bay and it is so beautiful and green it reminds me of what Melbourne used to be like. My other favourite place in the world is Vietnam I have been there 3 times.

### Favourite Food?

Good quality vanilla slices, oysters and smoked salmon although possibly not in that order and a good quality champagne.

### Favourite time of the year and why?

Summer (although not the 45° days) because you have hours after you get home of sunlight and this means I can go to the local lake with my partner and dogs for picnics and long walks.

## Staff Team

### Manager

Michael Smith

### Inner East Co-ordinator

Leonie Burnham

### Outer East Co-ordinator

Denise Budge

### Financial Administrator

Cathy Oliver

### Community Development

Kate Johnson

### Lawyers

Jenni Smith (Principal)

Danni Baylis

Eve Bodsworth

### Administration

Naomi Milnes

Armita Yaresh

Craig Rossi

In early 2007, ECLC had a flurry of staff changes, with people returning to study or taking up more senior positions elsewhere. Some staff also changed roles within the Centre. The Centre wishes Deborah, Stephanie, Noel and Eve well in their future endeavours! (Eve has continued to undertake some outreach work for the Centre). A new lawyer will also join the Boronia team in June.

## Preventing Violence Against Women

Family violence is on the increase in the City of Knox. According to Victoria Police, Knox has the highest rate of reported family violence incidents in the outer east metropolitan area. Over the past 6 years, there has been a 78% increase in the number of family violence incidents reported by police in Knox. This compares with the Victorian average of 30%.

Knox Community Health Service, ECLC, Knox City Council, Knox Police, Knox Infolink and Anglicare Victoria have joined forces to focus on the area of violence and in particular, on preventing violence against women. Developed by Knox Community Health Service, The Knox Accord Project will commence in June 2007.

The Project, which has recently received funding from VicHealth, has been designed as a community strengthening initiative to develop a women's safety strategy in Knox. Another feature of the project will be the development of a local Commitment Statement which clearly identifies the City of Knox as a community which does not tolerate violence in general, and violence against women in particular.

"The data on family violence in Knox is extremely concerning" said Knox CHS CEO Anne Lyon. "Violence against women is a major risk factor for poor mental health in women and has been identified both nationally and internationally as a health, social and economic problem requiring urgent attention. Within Victoria family violence has been identified as the leading contributor to death, disability and illness in Victorian women aged between 15 and 44 years."

"We believe that this initiative sets the scene for a concerted effort in addressing such a serious issue which has far reaching consequences for women and families who experience family violence".

## Community Legal Education Partnerships

If your agency is hosting an information session to educate workers or client groups and would like to include a speaker to advise on the legal aspects of a topic, please call ECLC!



One of ECLC's volunteers, Helen, doing a great job staffing the ECLC display at the Box Hill Town Hall Hub Open Day

## Newsletter

If you would like to receive a copy of ECLC's Newsletter via email, please email [eclc@eclc.org.au](mailto:eclc@eclc.org.au)



## Community Projects Volunteer Team

ECLC has recently created an exciting new role for volunteers, through Community Projects Team. They are working with Kate Johnson on a range of projects to promote the Centre and educate the community, particularly at public events.

### Town Hall Hub Open Day

Recently, the team participated in the Box Hill Town Hall Hub Open Day, and ran a promotional stall. All of the volunteers did a wonderful job talking to people, informing them about the service and offering brochures and self help information to the hundreds of people who visited the stall.

### ECLC @ Your Library

Another project will occur during Law Week, 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May. ECLC is conducting large displays in eight libraries across the East to promote the service. This promotion is important because it targets all walks of life including young people, the elderly, young families and people of CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) backgrounds.

The team are on the look out for great project ideas, so if you have ideas or potential project/partnership opportunities, please contact ECLC.



*Michael Smith, Manager, with Clare, one of ECLC's volunteers, promoting the service at the Box Hill Town Hall Hub Open Day*

## Who's in the Hub?

In December 2006, ECLC shared the news that they had moved location to a wonderful office in the Town Hall Hub.

There are many great organisations that share the Town Hall Hub. ECLC would like to introduce its neighbours...

- Bor Community Association of Australia
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Box Hill Historical Society
- University of the Third Age (U3A) Box Hill
- Chinese Health Foundation of Australia
- Eastern Volunteer Resource Centre
- Extended Families Australia
- Inner East Primary Care Partnership (IEPCP)
- Gateway Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENS)
- Life Activities Club Whitehorse
- Louise Multicultural Centre
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne)
- Whitehorse Boroondara Community Radio (94.1FM)
- Whitehorse Preschool Association

For more information on these services, you can visit [www.boxhilltownhall.com.au](http://www.boxhilltownhall.com.au) and click on "Community Facilities".

## Community Development

*Michael Smith, Manager*

Eastern Community Legal Centre has always been committed to responding to the legal and related needs of its community through a range of methods, not only direct legal services. Indeed, the Centre's mission statement, aim and objectives all emphasise a broad approach beyond just assisting individuals.

While not always as visible as the advice, casework and advocacy, the Centre is active in a range of other areas, under a broad framework of 'community development'.

Community development has origins in a range of community sector contexts, with professionals and community called to action from their ongoing engagement with people operating under great difficulties. A planned approach, it can include a range of strategies to engage with a community, whether local or interest-based, responding to their issues.

ECLC is committed to an integrated approach to community development, with client and broader community input each informing both the direct legal services and broader work. This Community development activity is a primary function of the Centre that adds value to its commitment to provide direct legal services.

All staff have a role to play within the community development approach, as well as volunteers working on specific projects. The priority in this work is again on disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community.

A range of activities are undertaken including: Community Legal Education workshops; Partnerships and Projects; Promotion and Communication; Publications; and Research and Advocacy. None of these areas stand alone. Each overlaps and is complementary to other modes as well as to the direct legal services. This requires a high level of collaboration and consultation between relevant staff and components of the service.

For example, the Centre has a particular concern in the area of family violence. While this is reflected in much of the daily advice and casework, it is also highlighted by our partnership with EDVOS, VLA and the Ringwood Magistrate's Court in delivering the Intervention Order Support Service. Family violence is also the focus of:

- community legal education workshops (often with family violence support groups);
- partnerships including with family violence networks, Women's Legal Service and the Family Relationship Centre;
- promotion and communication, including community awareness projects such as The Knox Accord (see left)
- publications such as the *Eastern Intervention Orders Guide*, a new partnership project currently seeking funding support; and
- research and advocacy, including submissions to the Victorian Law Reform Commission and co-operative work with police regarding the implementation of the *Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence*, that is making a major contribution to assisting victims' safety.

The integrated approach that brings together all this work with a common theme, both direct and indirect holds great excitement and potential. Some work is local, some regional and some involves state-wide collaboration. This methodology is also applied to other areas of concern.

As the Centre's mission statements states, ECLC is "committed to reform that achieves equality and social justice within the legal system for disadvantaged members of the community." There are many methods for achieving this equality and justice and much work yet to done. We continue to welcome your collaboration in this quest.



## Changes to Family Dispute Resolution

In July, further changes will be introduced regarding family law. These changes focus on family dispute resolution.

The requirement to attend family dispute resolution prior to applying to the court for a parenting order is being introduced to encourage families to resolve disputes about children's matters outside the court system.

The government hopes these changes will give families an opportunity to focus on the child's needs by dealing with family relationship issues in a non-adversarial environment.

For more information on the changes to be introduced in July, please visit the Attorney-General's website [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au) and click on "Family Dispute Resolution"

**If you would like any more information about anything you have read in this newsletter, please contact us.**

## Introducing GordonCare

Co-located in ECLC's Boronia office is GordonCare, who operate the following programs:

- A Contact Orders Program- "Stand by Me"
- THRIVE Children's groups
- Two Children's Contact Services
- Counselling Services for families referred by the Family Magistrates Service.

For more information, visit their website [www.gordoncare.org](http://www.gordoncare.org)

## Do Not Call Register

The Do Not Call Register is now open and individuals can now register their telephone numbers, if they are used primarily for private or domestic purposes, through the Do Not Call website, at [www.donotcall.gov.au](http://www.donotcall.gov.au) or by post to Do Not Call Register, PO Box 42, North Melbourne Vic 3051.

The website is experiencing very high demand, so please be patient. Registration of a telephone number is easy, quick and free.

Only the relevant account holder for the telephone number being listed, or someone nominated by the account holder in writing can register the number. Individuals will be able to register by phone from 22 May 2007.

It may take up to 30 days for a registration to become effective. From 31 May 2007, it will generally be unlawful to make telemarketing calls to numbers placed on the register.

More information is available on the Do Not Call Register website at [www.donotcall.gov.au](http://www.donotcall.gov.au).

## Young People ... What do I do when...?"

Youthlaw has produced a new guide about the law for people who work with young people in Victoria. "What do I do when...?" provides accessible information about the law to help **youth workers** feel more comfortable in their interactions with the law and the legal system.

It details areas of the law that youth workers may come across in their work with young people and provides answers to common legal questions. Some of the issues covered in the resource include;

- Duty of care
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Parents and guardians
- Working with police
- Court procedures
- Professional boundaries

Through the Youthlaw website copies can be downloaded or hard copies ordered. See [www.youthlaw.asn.au](http://www.youthlaw.asn.au).

**For information on ECLC's services or to view a map of our office locations, please see the website or call the office directly.**

**New ECLC brochures and posters are also available. If you would like additional copies, please let the Centre know.**

**Would you like to donate to ECLC? Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.**

## Support

**The ongoing support of these financial and other partners is gratefully acknowledged:**

- Victoria Legal Aid
- Commonwealth Government
- City of Boroondara
- City of Whitehorse
- Knox City Council
- Rotary Club of Balwyn
- Anchor Inc.
- EACH (Eastern Access Community Health)
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service)
- Family Access Network
- GordonCare
- Inner East Community Health Centre
- Knox Infolink
- Migrant Information Centre
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Volunteers and Members of ECLC