

Eastern Community Law

Newsletter

Spring 2007

'YRIPP' coming to the East

What is YRIPP? It is the Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP)!

YRIPP provides trained volunteers to support young people through police interviews where a parent or guardian is unavailable. YRIPP also refers young people to culturally appropriate health and welfare support services to reduce their chances of future offending.

YRIPP operates a 1300 telephone number that police can call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to obtain an Independent Person for interviews with young people under 18. These Independent Persons are trained in relevant police and legal processes as well as in working with Indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.

Eastern Community Legal Centre is proud to announce that this program will now be established in the eastern region, in a partnership with the Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues (CMYI) as the lead for a Statewide consortium. The Eastern YRIPP Regional Co-ordinator will be based at ECLC and will recruit YRIPP volunteers to cover 14 police stations.

For three years YRIPP has been operated on a pilot basis in five locations with 16 police stations in Victoria CMYI, along with the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, the Federation of Community Legal Centres, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service and regional partners including ECLC have been successful in a \$2m tender bid to expand YRIPP across Victoria. Over the next two years, the program will work closely with Victoria Police and other agencies to make the program available to young people interviewed in 103 police stations across the State. The program is funded by Crime and Violence Prevention (Department of Justice).

Sally Reid, YRIPP Program Manager, said, "It is very exciting that the program model has been recognised as a valuable addition to the youth justice landscape and an important service for young people. We look forward to building on the successes the program has achieved to date to ensure that vulnerable young people are assisted through police interviews and connected to community support services across the State."

The law requires Independent Persons to attend police interviews with young people under 18 where a parent/guardian is not available. It is therefore essential - for police and young people - that there are trained volunteers available to perform this role. The YRIPP program at ECLC will also develop strong links with Victoria Police, youth, Indigenous and multicultural agencies within the Eastern region. A key focus of the program is to divert young people, including refugee, newly arrived and Indigenous young people, from progression to higher levels of the criminal justice system, based on culturally appropriate early intervention and diversion support efforts.

YRIPP Volunteers

The role of the Independent Person (IP) is to observe the interview process and to ensure that the young person feels supported and that his or her rights are protected.

Eastern YRIPP will shortly be seeking enthusiastic, community minded people to become IP volunteers

If you would you like to know more please contact ECLC to register your interest. Full training and other details will be available once the program commences.

Eastern YRIPP Regional Co-ordinator

CMYI and ECLC are now recruiting for this position, based in Box Hill (0.8 eft)

For details, see www.cmyi.net.au.

Applications close
Monday September 3.

This program will also build on ECLC's large and strong volunteer base with this new role of Independent Person. Volunteers currently play important and valuable roles in assisting ECLC to provide a range of legal and other services and the Centre looks forward to welcoming this new group of volunteers to the team.

ECLC anticipates that the YRIPP Regional Co-ordinator will commence in October 2007 and volunteer recruitment will then follow immediately.

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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

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

www.eclc.org.au



Staff Snapshot

This edition, ECLC profiles Armita Yareh, Outer East Administration Worker since February. As a long time volunteer, Armita brings great experience to this role.

What work do you do at ECLC?

Administration & Community Development at the Boronia office.

What did you do before working with ECLC?

I did a BA (Melb. Uni) majoring in criminology and socio-legal studies.

Why do you want to work in this area?

It's important to help people who are disadvantaged as they don't have an equal opportunity to access services, education and information.

What do you like about ECLC?

We have a team of friendly staff and volunteers. We always know how to enjoy a good cake!

Highlights of your work so far?

It's been great to participate in and learn about networks such as the Knox Youth Network and VCOSS policy forums.

Favourite holiday destination?

Brazil or Dubai

Any funny or embarrassing moments on the job so far?

Any moment when I mumble the wrong words over the phone is embarrassing. The person on the other phone always thinks it's funny.

Favourite Food?

Lasagne and dumplings.

Any legal issue that frustrates you?

Neighbourhood Disputes. Neighbours need to learn to communicate with each other.

Favourite time of the year and why?

Spring! The flowers look beautiful.



Armita Yareh & Ann Lightowler at the Boronia Office

Introducing new Outer East Community Lawyer

In early June, [Ann Lightowler](#) joined the team as the new Community Lawyer for the Outer East.

Ann is an Outer East resident and has a wonderful knowledge of the needs of the region. Ann's compassionate rapport with clients is an asset to the Centre. Ann sees clients at Boronia and outreach locations (appointment only), assists with Community Legal Education and the Intervention Order Support Service.

Putting the Focus on Young People

Denise Budge, Outer East Co-ordinator

Approximately 17% of the Outer East population is made up of young people between the ages of 15 and 25 with the highest concentration of young people in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Traditionally, CLCs have had difficulty engaging with young people and the Boronia office of the Eastern Community Legal Centre has been making a concerted effort to break down these barriers.

Since April this year, the Boronia office has been trying to raise the Centre's profile with young people in the Outer East. This 6-8 month project has included the development of an ECLC community education module specifically targeting young people called "The Law and You".

This gave the team a better understanding of the issues that young people face. A bright, eye-catching promotional poster targeting young people was also designed and identified issues relevant to young people, such as, 'crashed a car', 'fines', 'minor criminal stuff' and 'driving without a license'. This poster is being used as a tool to introduce ECLC to youth service providers in the area.

It was important to recognise that many of the existing youth services in the region already had great connections with young people and run a wide variety of programs. To more effectively reach young people, it was identified that the Centre should become regular participants in youth networks, become known and respected and engage better with youth services and student welfare co-ordinators so that they felt confident to recommend the service to the young people they already interact with.

ECLC now participates in both the Knox and Yarra Ranges Youth Networks and will be making contact with the Maroondah Youth Network in the near future. As a result of this work, professionals are ringing on behalf of their young clients to see if ECLC can help, ECLC has been invited to speak to JPET groups for 'at risk' young people and been asked to submit articles to newsletters that are specifically for secondary schools, youth networks and young people. Finally, ECLC has been invited to participate as a panel member for a 'critical sharing' session. These results have been very pleasing and ECLC will continue to foster these new connections forging strong and respected relationships.

To finalise our youth focus, ECLC will be visiting a number of key youth organisations in the Outer East, surveying them about resources and gaps in service delivery from a legal perspective, in the hope of developing stronger partnerships to address these shortfalls.

ECLC's aim is to continue raising community awareness of the services that are on offer with the effect of making the law more accessible to young people.

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!

Newsletter

If you would like to receive a copy of ECLC's Newsletter via email, please email eclc@eclc.org.au

Any suggestions or feedback? Contact Kate Johnson, editor.



Recognising ECLC's

Volunteers

Leonie Burnham, Inner East Co-ordinator

ECLC held its inaugural Volunteer Dinner in May at the Emperor Court restaurant in Mitcham, to recognise the wonderful service that the Centre's volunteers provide.

We were joined by Centre Patron Ian Gray, Chief Magistrate of Victoria. It was wonderful to hear him speak about the importance of volunteers not only to community legal centres but also to the legal system in general. Mr Gray acknowledged the support of volunteers at the Ringwood Court with the Intervention Order Support Service and the important role that plays in advising unrepresented clients and helping them through a very stressful time.



The evening was an opportunity to meet fellow volunteers and challenge everyone's knowledge on the trivia quiz as well as thank all the wonderful volunteers at ECLC. More importantly, it was an opportunity to publicly acknowledge a significant milestone for a few volunteers who have tirelessly provided their time for over 10 years.



Rhonda Goodall and Tony Daquino were presented with a Certificate of Appreciation and a small gift to acknowledge their outstanding contribution to the Centre. Both Tony and Rhonda have served ECLC very well in many roles and continue to do so.

Both Rhonda and Tony gave a small speech which was very heartfelt and demonstrated to all the importance of community involvement. Rhonda, in particular, discussed how volunteers can empower clients through sharing their knowledge of the law and how this information has the potential to minimise a client's problem.



They spoke with inspiration and enthusiasm and despite having seen many office locations, sacrificed many nights and offered so much, their passion for the clients and the importance of ECLC's service is alive and firing. Their service, commitment and sacrifice of time and effort, along with all of ECLC's volunteers are fundamental to the Centre's ability to see clients, day and night, throughout the year.

Overall the night was a great success and coinciding with Law Week, National Volunteers Week and (most importantly) the anniversary of ECLC's first ever night service (May 4, 1974) it is planned to make this an annual event.

ECLC sincerely thanks all who attended and hopes that the next one will be inked on your calendar as a night not to be missed. ECLC also thanks its staff for organising the dinner and hope to see all volunteers at the next ECLC event.

Older People's Guide and Forum

ECLC has been awarded an exciting Community Grant from the City of Whitehorse to develop a Guide to assist older people with issues such as Wills, Powers of Attorney, going Guarantor for children, Elder Abuse, Family Law and Neighbourhood Disputes.

Once developed, ECLC will also host a forum for Whitehorse residents, where ECLC staff and volunteers will discuss these topics. Each participant at the Forum will receive a Guide and a list of appropriate referral points to assist them in their situation.

This project builds on ECLC's existing services and project work focused on older people and links with some major projects being developed.

ECLC is passionate about providing Community Legal Education to the community, client groups and professionals. It has a strong belief that proactive education is the best approach to assisting the community and is adopting new approaches to educating and empowering the community to solving their problems, before they become major issues.

If you would like to learn more about the services that ECLC offers or have a client group that would benefit from one of our Education Workshops on Wills and Powers of Attorney, Youth and the Law, Family Law, Family Violence and Intervention Orders, please call or email the Centre.

Anti-Hooning

Since the introduction of Anti-Hoon legislation 12 months ago, 2000 vehicles have been impounded across Victoria. By mid March this year approximately 60 of those originated from the outer east and it has been identified that 73% of hoon-related offences were committed by young people between the ages of 15 and 25.

To assist young people and their families, Eastern Community Legal Centre has developed a simple fact sheet about Anti-Hoon Legislation, explaining what is considered hoon-related driving offences, the possible penalties and the costs associated with releasing the impounded vehicle. (This is the first in a series of fact sheets that ECLC will be offering to the community.

Michael Smith, Manager of the Eastern Community Legal Centre said, "Some hoon driving offences are having a major impact on the driver's friends and family because the car may not be the driver's own vehicle, but rather a friend's or parent's. The vehicle gets impounded regardless." In some instances this may mean the vehicle is impounded for more than the required 48 hours because the vehicle cannot be released over the weekend and the owner of the vehicle must wait until the next business day after the 48 hour impoundment period has expired.

"Families may find the fact sheet a helpful resource to remind young people that apart from endangering themselves and others on the roads, they risk losing their most prized possession, their car, possibly permanently." said Denise Budge, Co-ordinator of the Outer East office.

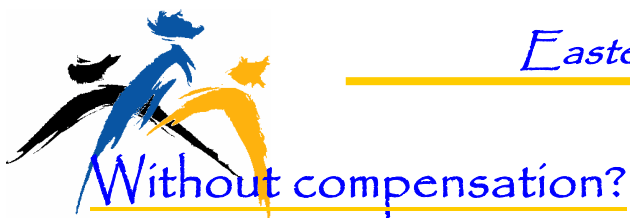
If you would like a copy of the Anti-Hooning Fact Sheet, please email or call the Centre office near you.

You know you've made it when...

For the exact location of ECLC's Box Hill Centre & to find your way, check out the latest Melway – Edition 35
Mel Ref Ref 75A H5.

Would you like to donate to ECLC?

For more details on how to donate and how your donation will be used, please visit ECLC's website. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and can now be made on-line.



Michael Smith, Manager

The notion of volunteering has probably been around forever. People have helped other people or broader causes with no expectation of financial or other reward. Within legal circles, the loftier title pro bono is often used, from the Latin 'pro bono publico' meaning 'for the public good' (without any payment or compensation).

However, the notion that there is no compensation for volunteer or pro bono work has been seriously challenged. Research has demonstrated that people volunteer because they gain some personal satisfaction, develop social networks, learn new skills, gain work experience and maintain existing skills. (*Volunteering Victoria*).

Similarly, the *National Pro Bono Resource Centre* has identified that for lawyers, paralegal staff and their firms, pro bono involvement can increase job satisfaction, allow staff to experience variety and control over their work, develop skills and confidence, provide the opportunity to contribute to the community, improve morale, and improve the public's perception of the firm and of lawyers generally.

In any case, Eastern CLC and particularly its clients and community rely heavily on volunteers to exist and operate. Indeed it is a relationship of dependency, but one that we hope provides many mutual benefits.

The Centre currently has about 100 fantastic volunteers across 14 distinct programs and roles. The new YRIPP volunteer program will be number 15. The recent dinner and other activities to thank the many volunteers are small acknowledgements of their excellent and highly professional efforts in a wide variety of tasks. Keep up the great work!

**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.**

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
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Centre for Multicultural Youth Issues
- EACH (Eastern Access Community Health)
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service)
- Family Access Network
- GordonCare
- Inner East Community Health Centre
- Knox Infolink
- Louise Multicultural Community Centre
- Migrant Information Centre
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Volunteers and Members of ECLC

Intervention Order Support Service

As part of a State Government election commitment, funding has been provided for eight Family Violence lawyers to assist courts at Ringwood, Dandenong, Sunshine, Broadmeadows, Werribee, Frankston, Melbourne, Latrobe, Geelong, Warrnambool and Colac.

Following some negotiation, ECLC has received half-time funding to support our Intervention Order Support Service at Ringwood Court. This service has been operating for five years in partnership with Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service and Victoria Legal Aid and the Court. ECLC staff and volunteers attend the Court each Tuesday and Friday.

Although ECLC assists many clients on their Intervention Order day, it emphasises the importance of referring clients to the Centre as early as possible, so that the client has the best opportunity to receive timely and professional advice, which can help to prepare them for Court.

Due to a significant increase in Intervention Order applications and hearings at Court, ECLC has recently adopted a policy to ensure that priority is given to clients presenting with family violence related Intervention Order matters. This means that ECLC will not be advising applicants or defendants with 'stalking' matters (non-family violence) on Intervention Order days. However, the Centre can assist people with these matters through their normal day service and night service, as well as at the outreach locations.

For a free, confidential appointment regarding an Intervention Order, please call either the Box Hill office or the Boroondara office to arrange a day or night time appointment.

ECLC highly values and appreciates the support of volunteer lawyers and paralegals that make this program possible. In particular, the Centre acknowledges the regular commitment to professional pro bono assistance of legal firms Mercader, Moores Legal and Robinson Gill.

ECLC's Libraries Project

As reported in the last Newsletter, the Centre undertook a large promotional project at libraries across the Eastern region.

ECLC is pleased to report that over 47,000 people had the opportunity to view ECLC's displays, brochures and posters and as a result, many appointments have been booked.

A BIG thank you to the volunteers and staff that did an amazing job setting up creative exhibits at each library!

ECLC also wishes to acknowledge the Law Institute of Victoria and Victoria Law Foundation for their support and for distributing ECLC's materials to libraries in Boroondara.

Free Legal Resource

The Guardianship and Administration Advocates' Guide, which was officially launched on Tuesday 14 August 2007, is now online.

Just follow the links from the 'Education and Information' section of the Mental Health Legal Centre's website:

<http://www.communitylaw.org.au/mentalhealth>