



**annual
report
2004 - 05**

**For over 30 years,
Eastern Community Legal Centre
has been working with the community to
address issues of inequality and injustice
in the legal system.**

Mission

The Eastern Community Legal Centre is committed to reform that achieves equality and social justice within the legal system for disadvantaged members of the community.

Aim

To work with our community to identify and address issues of inequality and injustice in the legal system.

Objectives

To provide free and accessible legal services that empower clients to meet their legal needs, within a community development framework.

To identify the legal needs of disadvantaged people in the Eastern region through conducting research.

To provide an organisational structure and policies and procedures to support the above objectives, that specifically includes processes for strategic planning and evaluation of the Centre's activities.

To engage in collaborative partnerships and networks of agencies to assist in meeting the objectives of the Centre.

To promote awareness of the Centre and its activities within the community.

To encourage the community's involvement in the Centre's activities with a particular emphasis on a proactive membership.



Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc.

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ABN 89 833 124 364

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Hours of Operation:
Monday to Friday 9:00am—5:00pm

ECLC Committee

2004/2005 has been a year of achievement for Eastern Community Legal Centre's staff and Committee. The Centre has continued serving the community of the eastern suburbs of Melbourne by providing quality legal services to those most in need within its budgetary framework and looks forward to broadening the number of people who can access the service through the new centre in the Outer Eastern suburbs.

2004 has seen a great change in the Centre's Co-ordinating Committee. A number of new members joined the Committee and the year has been an educative experience for all of us. I would like to thank all committee members for their voluntary dedication to the Centre as without people like you who care about the community, society would suffer. The year has built upon their skills and I am sure this will assist Committee members to adequately oversee the Centre's strategic direction and ensure its continued viability and success.

The Committee has overseen the Centre and its strategic direction, in particular the push for additional services in the Outer East, as well as taking on the challenge of improving the Centre's governance structures and reviewing the Centre's casework guidelines. I thank all of those involved in those subcommittees for the additional time that you gave up to be further help the centre.

Certainly the highlight of the year has been the announcement on 2 May 2005 of the establishment of an Outer Eastern Community Legal Centre. This announcement culminated the hard work of many people and organisations in achieving a long-term dream of many in the Outer East. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to extend our deepest thanks to all those involved in turning the dream into reality - in particular the Outer Eastern CLC Reference Group, the local community organisations who supported the centre, the staff and volunteers at ECLC and the outer eastern MPs, especially James Merlino, whose help and passion for establishing the centre was pivotal in receiving funding from Victoria Legal Aid.

The new Centre presents a wonderful opportunity for ECLC. The expansion into the Outer East with the new office opening in Boronia and outreach services to be provided in Yarra Ranges will enable people previously without practical access to justice to enjoy a quality free legal service. It will further expand the important role that ECLC plays in Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

The Centre would not exist if it were not for its funding sources. On behalf of the Committee I like to thank all our funding bodies including the Federal Government, State Government through Victoria Legal Aid, the Cities of Knox and Boroondara for their funding and the City of Whitehorse for the generous assistance with accommodation and operational support. We are extremely grateful for your funds as these allow us to make a tangible benefit to people's lives.

Additionally, the Centre would not function without its staff and its volunteers. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all of the staff and volunteers of the Centre, as the Centre would not function without such wonderful dedicated staff and volunteers. Also, I would like to thank our Manager, Michael for his tireless work at the Centre and his passion and desire to realize the long held dream of many of creating an Outer Eastern Community Legal Centre.

The future holds some exciting times for the Centre and the region. I encourage all to reflect on 2004/2005 as a year of achievement and look forward to the wonderful opportunity that exists in 2005/2006 to improve the community's access to justice through increased legal services and increasing their awareness through community legal projects and education.

Bradley Tutt

Committee 2004/05

Richard Antill
 Sue Carlile
 Donna Donht
 Natalie Joffe
 Bradley Tutt
 Lance Wilson
 David Tong (from 5/05)
 Vicki Waddington (until 3/05)
 Elizabeth Hall (until 6/05)
 Jenny Finn (until 8/05)
 Dina Winterburn (until 10/05)

Staff

Joanne Knight
 Consumer & Tenancy Advocate

Julie Mouy
 Principal Solicitor

Kate Bennett
 Administration (School-based apprentice)

Kate Johnson
 Consumer & Tenancy Advocate,
 Outer East Project

Katrina Szetey
 Bookkeeper

Leonie Burnham
 Administration & Volunteer Co-ordinator

Louisa van Nugteren
 Community Solicitor

Lucinda Murdoch
 Administration

Michael Smith
 Manager

Richard Duffy
 Community Legal Education / Law Reform



Manager

What a year! ECLC has had an exciting year of developments, challenges and change as it continues to offer a range of professional responses to the community's complex needs.

Early in the year, the Centre promptly reviewed its strategic direction, consulting with volunteers, staff, committee and external partners. Five themes were identified that then guided its strategic work:

1. Partnership development
2. Improving volunteer and staff collaboration
3. Strategic & intentional approach to outer east
4. Quality, targeted & integrated casework, community legal education & law reform
5. Strategic focus (being well-positioned & ready to seize opportunities)

The announcement of ECLC's funding success with the Outer East CLC is the most obvious example of these priorities being realised. However, it would be more accurate to acknowledge that the Outer East campaign actually built upon each of these themes: using a broad partnership methodology with local agencies, local government, parliamentarians and the community; engaging existing and potential volunteers; using the research knowledge from both direct legal services and community development activities; and working with funders and government to place both ECLC and the Outer East community at the forefront of political concern.

While ECLC has always worked with other organisations, this has been a focus this year. While the number of agencies are too numerous to list here, our partnerships with particular organisations on specific projects have been most effective, including with EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service), VLA Ringwood, Migrant Information Centre, Knox Infolink, Lilydale Community Information Centre, Ringwood Magistrate's Court, Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service, Tenants' Union Victoria and Peninsula CLC.

In addition, relationships with each of the six local governments within ECLC's catchment have been strengthened, along with the various funding bodies. More recently, ECLC has emphasised its commitment to collaboration by undertaking a substantial project, re-introducing the Centre to services in the outer east, consulting on legal needs and identifying partnership opportunities.

ECLC's volunteers have continued to be crucial in the quantity and quality of services offered to the community. Whether solicitors or paralegals, by day or by night, the enthusiasm, dedication and commitment of our volunteers is a cause for ongoing pride and celebration. With the advent of the new service, enthusiastic new volunteers are commencing and while existing volunteers will have more options for their involvement, one particularly loyal set of volunteers wrote to essentially say, "We will go where you send us." A number of initiatives have enhanced the joint efforts of volunteers and staff, including training and co-ordination events. Last October, a very successful 30th birthday celebration highlighted the contributions of so many to ECLC over the years. Recently (with the increased funding) the Committee resolved to affirm its commitment to its volunteers and their invaluable services the by employing a dedicated Co-ordinator of Volunteers to support and develop their role throughout the organisation.

While the major projects may have attracted more attention, the Centre has continued to perform a vast amount of direct legal assistance, through the voluminous advice service and significant casework for the most vulnerable clients within the Centre's guidelines. The Consumer and Tenancy Advocacy project, operated in partnership with two other CLC's, offered additional assistance to disadvantaged tenants and consumers with proven success for its pilot phase. The direct legal services have worked closely with the Centre's community development projects, including community legal education and law reform activities. Again, culturally and linguistically diverse communities were a focus for both education sessions and outreach advice. Family violence is an ongoing concern which was again reflected in our law reform work.

In maintaining a strategic focus, the Centre has fostered opportunities for development, with an emphasis on the needs of the vast eastern community. Policy development and governance work with the Committee is laying firm foundations and frameworks for future work. The Centre will continue to refine our approaches in the light of an ever-changing environment and our own experience. Within the staff team, while Julie, Katrina, Louisa and Richard have continued to offer

their experience, skills and energy, a series of new appointments have brought fresh ideas and insights to the work. Leonie Burnham, Lucinda Murdoch, Joanne Knight, Kate Johnson and Kate Bennett have all made major contributions. Unfortunately with the conclusion of the Consumer and Tenancy project, Joanne's talents have been employed elsewhere. I would like to thank each of the staff team for their all of their endeavours and efforts for our clients and the Centre through the year. The many achievements and accomplishments would not have been possible without this commitment and concern.

Finally, the Committee deserves our gratitude and appreciation for the path they have walked this year. Small community-based organisations may be a rare species but are hopefully not endangered. Engaging with the committee's 'governance' role has involved a high level of complexity and engagement and even the exciting growth has brought its own challenges. As we have walked the journey together, I have appreciated their honesty, enthusiasm and openness to tackle even the difficult issues as they arise.

As we look ahead, more change is on the horizon. With the advent of the new outer east service, not only new staff but new opportunities will arise bringing more possibilities for working together to meet the community's legal and associated needs. These will not only be in the outer areas, but will also enable a renewed focus on the issues in the Centre's inner catchment. We will continue to work professionally and passionately, with staff, volunteers and the broader community, to achieve our vision of equality and social justice within the legal system for all. We welcome your companionship in this quest.

Michael B. Smith

Volunteers

ECLC continues to rely heavily - indeed depend - on the support of many volunteers, whether solicitors, students or community members wishing to share their skills for the benefit of others.

ECLC offers its sincere thanks to all of the many and varied volunteers who assisted in the work of the Centre in 2004/05.

SOLICITORS

Adele Katzew
Allan Macrae
Andrew Minahan
Astrid DiCarlo
Carol Barton
Carolyn Cheng
Chiara Auteri
Craig Halfpenny
Denise O'Shannessy
Ephie Bokas
Fe Mercader
Hilary Doyle
James Beeston
Jeanette Smith
Jeff Krins
Jenny Finn
Karen Jones
Karin Costenoble
Kate Dluzniak
Lariss Oana
Lilia Chalfin
Liz Hall
Malcolm Bennett
Mark Fitzgerald
Michael Flynn
Michael Ma
Peter Milford
Petra McHugh
Philip Duffy
Rhonda Goodall
Richard Antill
Richard Edmonds
Roberta Page
Sanaz Naimi
Santina Della Rossa
Simone Fitzgerald
Tanja Kovac
Thomas Mah
Tim Byrne
Tony Daquino

EVENING VOLUNTEERS

Amy Somers
Bradley Tutt
Brian Hamond
Clementina Galati
Cristina Rivero
Dallas Mischkulnig
Dennis Ho
Dina Winterburn
Emily Shafto
Helen Gay
Joshua Morris
Kun Jiang
Lucinda Murdoch
Mark Strong
Nina Leo
Paul Lewis
Seung-Hoon Baek
Simone Britton
Sunil Rao
Sylvia Young

DAY VOLUNTEERS

Adrienne Lyaal
Amruta Bapat
Ann Luttick
Craig Rossi
Dheepna Benoit
Jessica Rowe
John Sheehan
Liam O'Connor
Loredana Gibson
Megan Blake
Melissa Rizzo
Niyati Kothari
Richard Strauch
Stephanie Ng
Vicky Doufa
William Chew

INTERVENTION ORDER SERVICE

Solicitors & Firms

Sheryl Barker,
Moores Legal
Testart Robinson
Tse-Ern Ang,
Holt & MacDonald
Penelope Ralston
Petru Roman
Fe Mercader
Ellie Dellafield
Tom McLaughlin

Paralegals

Coralee Elsum
Tanya Murugan
Joshua Morris
Sally James
Armita Yaresh

Legal Advice

ECLC provides legal information, advice and referral to the residents of our catchment area (Cities and Shires of Whitehorse, Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges).

We provide advice on many different areas of law, including Family Law, Intervention Orders, Crime and Traffic offences, Neighbourhood Disputes and Wills. We prioritise our work and aim to assist the most disadvantaged members of our community.

Night Service

ECLC's Night Service continues to be an important service for the community. Experienced and capable volunteers assist many clients who cannot attend the office during the day or who have legal matters requiring urgent, efficient advice. We are extremely grateful and appreciative of the teams of volunteer solicitors and paralegals who offer their services on a fortnightly or monthly basis.

Over the past year, we have continued to provide free advice sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings. High quality, efficient advice is given on a range of legal issues, including family law, motor vehicle accidents and neighbourhood disputes.

A few volunteers have resigned this year due to work opportunities, moving out of the region or family situations. We thank those who have offered their services and wish you all the best in your future endeavours.

We have also had solicitors and paralegals from various backgrounds that have joined our team. We welcome you all and hope that you are enjoying your volunteering experience.

Day Service

Advice sessions have been offered at our Blackburn office on Wednesdays and Thursdays by the Centre's solicitors Julie Mouy and Louisa Van Nugteren.

During the day, we are also assisted by Jeanette Smith in crime/traffic, Denise O'Shannessy in family law and Richard Edmonds doing Wills. We really appreciate your regular contribution to the Centre. Not only do you offer high quality advice, but you help keep our waiting lists shorter and as with night service, provide the funded service with more opportunities to engage with the community.

Outreach

This year we have offered outreach services in the Cities of Whitehorse, Boroondara and Knox.

The Knox outreach service, funded by Knox City Council, is held at Knox City Council's Eastgate Building and the Knox Council Shop in Stud Park Shopping Centre, Rowville. A big thanks to Council staff for your assistance with the outreach.

In early 2005, we established a new Boronia outreach at Knox Infolink. This service continues to grow and attracts a high number of clients. Thank you to Knox Infolink staff and management for your support and the use of your offices.

The Boroondara outreach service, funded by the City of Boroondara, is held one morning a fortnight at the Inner East Community Health Service in Hawthorn. Thank you to the Health Centre staff for your support of the outreach this year.

The Whitehorse outreach continued to operate from the Migrant Information Centre in Mitcham. We are pleased to be able to assist residents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and look forward to continuing our partnership with MIC. Thank you to the MIC staff for your assistance.

Casework

The Centre continues to be busy, with the demand for legal assistance outweighing the available resources. Therefore, we have to ensure that we offer assistance to those who have the greatest needs. Family law advice continues to be the most sought after service.

We advocate and negotiate on behalf clients in relation to family law matters, debts, criminal law, intervention orders and motor vehicle accidents. We also arrange for Barristers to represent our clients in Court.

Thank you to all of the Barristers that have assisted our clients by working on a pro bono or reduced fee basis. Your support and contribution is very much appreciated.

Julie Mouy
Principal Solicitor

Louisa van Nugteren
Community Solicitor

Intervention Order Service

In partnership with EDVOS and Victoria Legal Aid, ECLC has continued to offer the Intervention Order Service at Ringwood Court on Tuesday and Friday mornings. This service is coordinated by our Principal Solicitor, with the generous assistance of volunteer solicitors from private firms and paralegal volunteers.

The service provides sensitive advice to clients seeking or defending Intervention Orders. Court can be a very distressing and intimidating place. We find clients are grateful for the assistance and support they receive through the Court process.

This valuable community service could not be offered without the support of volunteer solicitors and paralegals, so we thank you for your contribution and time.

Case Study

The following case study demonstrates the diverse range of issues that assist clients are assisted with. It is summarised here with the generous permission of the client.

A year ago, "Christine" came to ECLC desperate for legal advice. She presented with many issues including being the victim of harassment and stalking and being involved in a neighbourhood dispute within her retirement village.

The dispute with the neighbour left Christine fearful of leaving her house and she has, on one occasion, sustained injury as a result of her neighbour's conduct. Knives, wires and sexually explicit material have been left in Christine's mailbox. Also, large kitchen items have been left at the front door, washing stolen off the clothes line and objects thrown at the windows at all times of day and night.

ECLC staff have been assisting Christine in many ways, including assisting with an application for an Intervention Order against her neighbour. The Centre has also been advocating to the management of the retirement village. This has been a long process using the provisions of the Retirement Villages Act. Eventually the retirement village management served a Notice to Vacate on the elderly neighbour.

This case raised challenges for staff, both in the best legal approach and in how to respond to an elderly perpetrator of violence who may have had mental health issues. However, with limited management cooperation, ECLC will continue to follow this process through to protect Christine's rights to live in a safe environment.

Community Legal Education

ECLC's program is based on guidelines developed by the National Community Legal Education (CLE) Advisory Group.

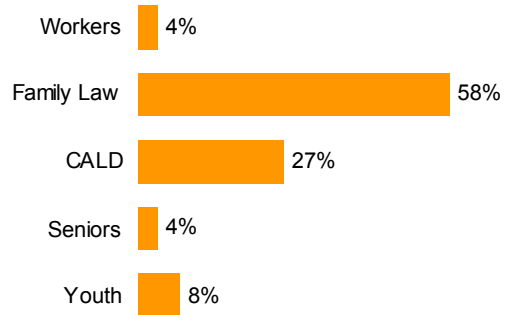
The aims are to:

- Raise the awareness of the community of the law and legal processes
- Increase the ability of the community to understand and critically assess the impact of the law and the legal system on themselves in society generally and in relation to particular sets of circumstances.
- Improve the community's ability to deal with and use the law and the legal system
- Create a climate for participating in or influencing the law-making process and for pursuing law reform, through collective action where appropriate

CLE is a core component of ECLC's work and is interconnected with our legal advice, casework and law reform programs.

Over the past year ECLC implemented recommendations from the CLE needs study completed in 2003/2004. One of the main recommendations was that ECLC should seek additional resources to meet the needs of people in the eastern region. With the state government having agreed to funding the Outer East CLC, staff at both centres will now work closely to ensure that these resources are used to meet identified needs as well as respond to other requests for community legal education as they

Community Legal Education Focus



Family Law continues to be a major focus of our CLE program.

The graph above shows a significant involvement of people from a migrant and refugee background. These are also sometimes known as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

This is an increase from previous years and is an attempt to implement one of the recommendations of the research project, which focused on the needs of people from CALD communities.

The majority of the CALD CLE activities are conducted in partnership with the Migrant Information Centre (Eastern Melbourne).

Community Legal Education Activities 2004-05

Over twenty sessions including:

- Family Law (12)
- General legal education (4)
- Radio Interview – Refugee Legal Issues
- Human Rights for CLC workers
- Wills and Power of Attorney
- Youth Rights

At locations including:

- Ashburton
- Camberwell
- Hawthorn
- Mitcham
- Mooroolbark

With a range of community groups including the

- Afghani
- Chin
- Iranian
- Southern Sudanese communities

Newsletter -**Eastern Community Law**

We distributed one edition of our newsletter *eastern community law* over the last year. By all accounts the newsletter is being well received and many people said they would like to receive it more regularly when they responded to our evaluation.

The newsletter is mainly distributed electronically, via e-mail, to over 500 services and individuals in the eastern region. However we do make a small amount of printed copies available to ECLC members.

Many thanks to our volunteers, in particular Richard Strauch, who did most of the hard work including research and drafting the copy. Contact our CLE and law reform worker if you have ideas for future editions or would like to contribute articles.

CLEWS Working Group

Richard Duffy is the co-convenor of the CLEWS working group at the Federation of CLCs. The aim of CLEWS is to increase access to quality legal education for all members of the community by supporting innovative projects and the exchange of ideas between CLC's.

Some achievements of the CLEWS working group in the past 12 months -

- ⇒ Received project funding for the kit 'making CLE easy'.
- ⇒ Provided ongoing peer support for CLE workers in and outside CLC's.
- ⇒ Supported the CLE work of other working groups. Examples included a human rights training session for CLC staff and assisting the anti-terrorist task group with CLE strategies

Law Reform**Human Rights Community Consultation**

Earlier this year the Victorian Government established a Committee to see whether Victoria should have laws to protect our basic human rights.

To ensure the local community in the eastern region had a chance to participate in the process ECLC held a forum in partnership with the Victorian Council of Social Services (VCOSS) to talk about human rights. At the forum we discussed human rights, showed how they are protected in other countries and asked people what they think should happen in Victoria.

ECLC made a written submission to this committee based on the results of the forum. ECLC's submission is available on our website.

The final report from the committee based on submissions made during the consultation is due to be handed to the Victorian government later this year.

For further information on the human rights community consultation go to <http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/>

Victorian Law Reform Commission & Family Violence Law Reform Project

Over the last year this VLRC project has looked at the effectiveness of the laws that deal with family violence in Victoria. It has focused mainly on the *Crimes (Family Violence) Act*.

This project has involved consultation with the general community in order to determine which areas of the law dealing with family violence need to be reformed. ECLC has been an active participant in this process both as an individual centre and collectively through the work done with the Violence against Women and Children Working Group of the Federation of CLCs.

In March 2005 ECLC made a submission, in person, to the commissioner, Ms. Judith Pierce, involving clients of the Centre.

The final VLRC report will be released later this year. For further information on the VLRC Family Violence Project visit their homepage at <http://www.lawreform.vic.gov.au/>

Richard Duffy

Community Legal Education
and Law Reform

Outer East CLC Campaign

In October 2004, the campaign for a new CLC in the Outer East was relaunched. A Reference Group was assembled to guide the campaign, give an insight into the needs of the Outer East, lobby the State Government for funding and work on the physical establishment of the service. The Reference Group comprised ECLC representatives and:

James Merlino, MP for Monbulk
Kate Hamond, Legal Ombudsman
Maryanne Day, Knox City Council
Dee Locke, Knox Infolink
Barbara Younger, Eastern Family
Violence Network
Carolyn Bolton, Knox Community Health
Kim McCarthy, Harrison Family Services
Mark Doubleday, Shire of Yarra Ranges
Debbie Seddon, City of Maroondah

Initially, a formal submission was prepared, highlighting the large population in the Outer East and the particular needs of the various communities. This was based on significant input from Reference Group members, as well as ECLC's own research.

Concurrently, law firms in the Outer East, community agencies and existing volunteers were approached to support the push for an Outer East CLC. A very favourable response was received and the list of supporters seemed to lengthen everyday.

Formal representations were then made to parliamentarians and Victoria Legal Aid. All were most supportive of the campaign and the Outer East MPs, led by James Merlino, were themselves strong advocates within government. The three local Councils, the cities of Knox and Maroondah and the Shire of Yarra Ranges worked together to strengthen the case for a new Centre.

In early 2005, media releases were prepared to advise the community on the campaign and seek support. Eventually a series of articles were published, informed the community about the lack of legal services being offered and calling for support.

In April 2005, the State Government released its "Fairer Victoria" statement. In this statement, there was provision for 4 new Community Legal Centres to be established, including an Outer East Community Legal

Centre. ECLC was granted \$194,000 p.a. from the State Government, which was a cause for great celebration!

Volunteer Interest

ECLC has had a large number of solicitors and paralegals offer to assist at the new Centre. This response was wonderful and we are looking forward to them coming on board at Boronia.

Since then, staff have been hired, the building is currently being fitted out and volunteers are being trained. The new Centre will be open to see clients in October 2005.

A big thank you to the Reference Group and everyone involved in the Outer East CLC campaign for their hard work, passion, lobbying and commitment.



Consumer and Tenancy Project

In July 2004, Eastern Community Legal Centre was awarded the tender to provide Consumer and Tenancy Advocacy services to disadvantaged and vulnerable clients in Melbourne's East, in partnership with Peninsula CLC and the Tenants' Union..

In September 2004, Joanne Knight and Kate Johnson were employed as Consumer and Tenancy Advocates. After spending a brief time being trained with the partners, the advocates commenced seeing clients in early October 2004.

As advocates, they offered the following service:

- Providing disadvantaged clients with consumer and tenancy advice at Blackburn and at outreach locations in Ringwood and Lilydale;
- Assisting clients with VCAT Application forms;
- Negotiating with Real Estate Agents and businesses on behalf of clients;
- Representing clients at VCAT; and
- Referring to support services as required.

Over the 9 months that this service was operating, the Advocates saw over 200 clients and provided advice and assistance to many more.

The vast majority of the tenancy files were urgent matters, as tenants had impending Court dates with the threat of possible eviction. The consumer matters were also often in depth and labour intensive, due to substantial negotiation of behalf of the client.

There was also a focus on educating clients as to their rights and responsibilities. The Centre's aim, through the provision of materials and strategies, was that they would become empowered and knowledgeable as to tenancy/consumer law and also not repeat any mistakes.

There were many successful outcomes – families able to stay in their homes, tenants not having to pay for landlord renovations and consumers receiving Orders for refunds and compensation for faulty goods.

Consumer Affairs Victoria's new approach, under *The Way Forward* model, was to emphasise telephone advice for 'mainstream' consumers and tenants and offer limited advocacy services for vulnerable clients. While the Eastern pilot was clearly successful, this model was further extended with just one agency to offer an even more focused service for metropolitan Melbourne. The Centre determined it was impractical to partner with multiple other agencies to work with this extended model and the pilot concluded in June 2005.

ECLC continues to receive many referrals from consumers and tenants and has serious concerns regarding the operation of the new model, which will be monitored with great interest.

Kate Johnson

Consumer and Tenancy Advocate

Volunteering at ECLC

At a recent Outer East CLC briefing evening, day volunteer Claire Lindsay-Johns reflected on her experiences as an ECLC volunteer. This is her story...

When Michael first asked me to speak I wondered what on earth I could possibly add! But the more I thought about it the more I realised that if anything, I hoped I could perhaps provide you with an idea about what it is like to be a volunteer at ECLC and my experiences.

Compared to others at the Centre I haven't been there very long. I am currently a fourth year Arts/Law student at Deakin University. I began to consider volunteering early last year when I found that I wasn't being fulfilled by my studies. I enjoyed the work but for those of you studying currently, I am sure you'd agree there's little to no interaction with other people within the system, both clients and practitioners. I just really wanted to get out there and actually see the law in action, to see the reality.

Perhaps the most encouraging thing for me initially was how friendly, open and positive everyone at the Centre was. There was no doubt that I was apprehensive because I didn't think I knew enough to deal with the often thorny and complex issues that are thrown t you over the phone. But I was also surprised at how quickly you begin to pick up the issues and establish whether the Centre is the appropriate avenue or if we need to refer on. I think the one thing that impressed me the most was that the staff and volunteers had a genuine sense of compassion and concern for the clients. If we can't help you we will try to refer on to not only other solicitors but a variety of community agencies and professionals.



The day in the life of an ECLC volunteer is varied and one of the reason I love going is I never know what the day will hold. However, be warned, you can and do get hooked. I also volunteer as a paralegal at Ringwood Court for the Intervention Order Program assisting the duty solicitor and that has been incredibly fulfilling and highly fascinating experience. Boronia is an exciting development and allow to service a greater area.

Whether you are at Blackburn, Boronia or at Ringwood Court, the Centre is an incredibly dynamic place to volunteer. You will certainly never be bored!

It has opened my eyes to another side of the law and society broadly. I have gained a greater awareness of many issues that I previously may have skipped over in the paper while eating my breakfast. If anything, volunteering at the centre has, in some ways, made me angrier, more indignant and much more aware of the social injustices that are too often swept under the carpet. It is not an easy job dealing with the multitude of problems that face members of our community and I admire staff who deal with these issues everyday, I sometimes get overwhelmed in five hours!

However, volunteering at ECLC I guarantee will be an amazing experience that I hope will inspire, encourage and make you think just a little bit more!

Claire Lindsay-Johns

Statistics

Centre Activity Summary

For the period 1 July 2004 – 30 June 2005

Information

Number of information occurrences 2636

Legal Advice

Number of Clients 2047

Casework

Clients with Cases Open 302
Cases Closed 192

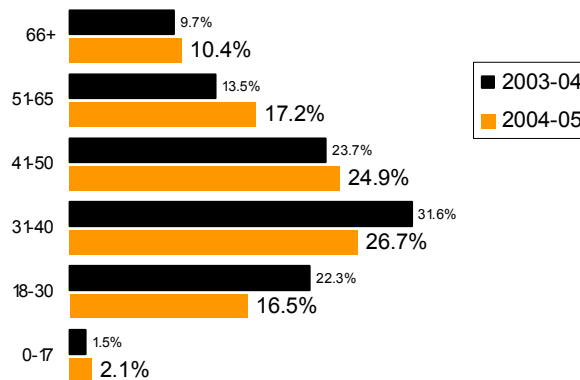
Non-Casework

Community Legal Education Activities 18
Law Reform Campaign Projects 1

Age

During the 2004-2005 period, there was a slight increase in the number of older clients seen for appointments during the past year.

The highly popular Wills service and the Consumer & Tenancy program would be key factors in this rise.



Client Profile

Gender

Around 60% of clients accessing the centre were women, while 39% were men. As in previous years, women were predominant in the 31-50 years age group, largely due to higher numbers of women accessing our centre for advice on both family law & family violence orders.

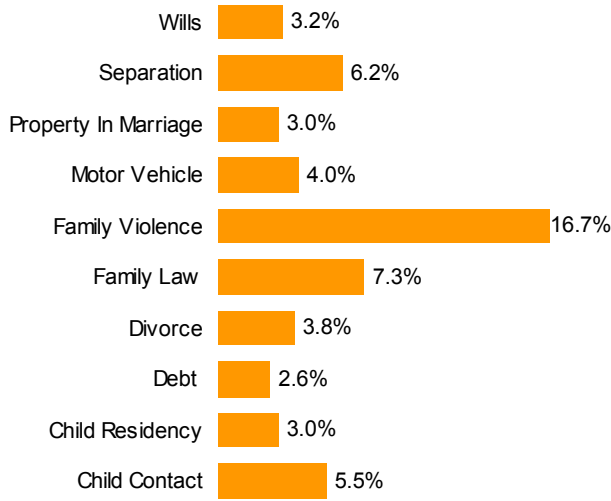


Problem Types – Top Ten

Again family law dominates the matters to which the Centre responds - in total nearly 46%.

Our ability to respond to clients requesting Wills has increased this area with an extension of the Wills program to all residents in our catchment area.

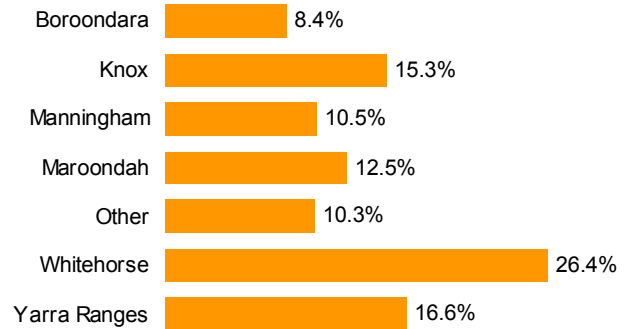
Although not reflected on this graph, consumer and tenancy issues also increased due to the Consumer and Tenancy Advocacy Project, which operated from July 2004 to June 2005.



Location/Shire

Over one quarter of clients are residents of the City of Whitehorse. We are pleased to see that Yarra Ranges form the next largest group. This is a significant increase on the previous year.

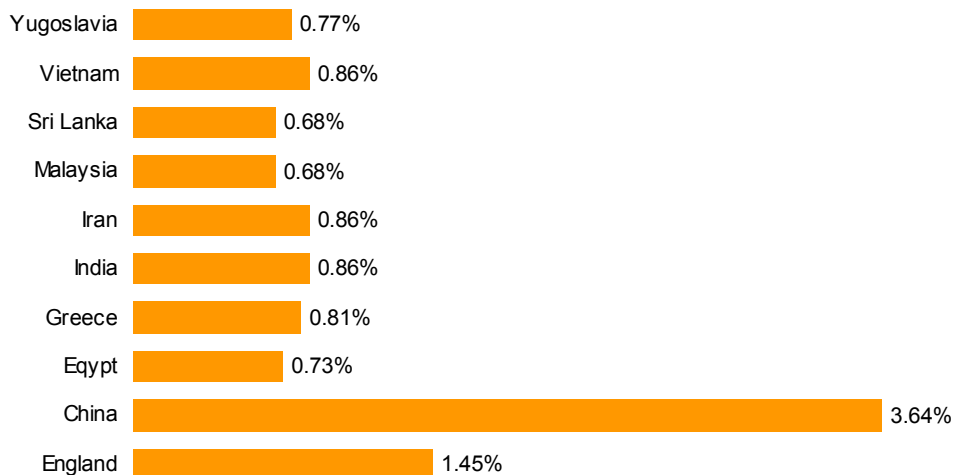
Knox residents continue to access the service. In addition to the Centre's outreach locations in Wantirna South & Rowville, we have established a Boronia outreach. This has grown in popularity, as this outreach services both Knox and Yarra Ranges.



Country of Birth (other than Australia)

Around 22% of our clients were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse backgrounds (CALD). Our partnership with the Migrant Information Centre in Mitcham has been beneficial for clients, as we have continued to service clients on an outreach basis and through CLE.

Over the past year, we have continued to rely heavily on the Victorian Interpreting Translating Service and Telephone Interpreting Service.



History

In 1974 Erskine Rodan, an undergraduate law student had lived in the Nunawading area for a decade. He was aware of social problems faced by local residents and the lack of legitimate legal aid in Victoria. He sought to provide equality before the law by establishing a legal service in Nunawading where lawyers could assist the poor to access the legal system. In Erskine's words "there was no real structure in Australia to look at which would assist in servicing the community".

Erskine received support from the Nunawading City Council and various lawyers who lived locally, who worked to initiate the service. From these small beginnings the service started in May 1974, giving legal advice in the evening from a room in a house in Blackburn Road occupied by the YMCA.

The service aimed to educate the community and co-operate with other helping professions. Some of its early activities included initiating a refuge for women, a duty solicitor scheme at Box Hill Court, and assisting the Spanish community to expose licensing scams.

The demand for the services of the centre continued to grow and it now assists people from six local government areas: Boroondara, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges.

ECLC has been very active in work with all of the local community and in particular people experiencing family violence. The centre has initiated 'outreaches' to provide legal advice at a number of locations. It has organised legal education activities, produced self-help publications and has also been active in law reform activities.

The centre still has a committed team of volunteers who make its work possible and has assisted many thousands of people over the past thirty years to understand and access the legal system.

Life Members

Erskine Rodan
Gwen Williams
Peter Jacobs
Bonnie Bedwell
Eunice Chesterfield
Clive Weston
Shirley Sak



Financial Statements

GRAEME F DELANY PTY LTD
CERTIFIED PRACTICING ACCOUNTANT
(A.B.N. 42 007 268 073)

Governing Director - G F Delany
Director - K M Delany

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GREENSBOROUGH 3088

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Fax 03 94310149
Mobile 0418 373307

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AUDITORS REPORT

To the President and Committee Members,
Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc.

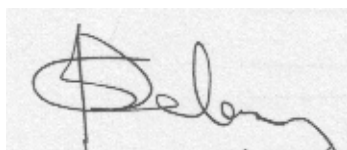
We have audited the financial records of the Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc. for the Year ended 30th June 2005, which have been prepared in conjunction with the Notes to Financial Statements contained herein. The members of the committee are responsible for the preparation and presentation of the financial statements and the information they contain. We have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the members of this service.

The audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatements. Our procedures included examination on a test basis of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements were presented fairly and in accordance the Australian Accounting Standards and statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with our understanding of the Service financial position.

As the service is in receipt of cash income from various sources, it is not possible to report that all income has been brought to account.

In our opinion, the financial statements present a true and fair view of the financial position of Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc. as at 30th June 2005 and in accordance with the applicable accounting standards.

GRAEME F DELANY PTY LTD
CPA



Dated at ELTHAM NORTH this 20th day of September 2005

**Profit and Loss Statement for
year ended 30 June 2005**

	2005	2004
Income		
CLC Recurrent	254,314	252,079
Local government	77,607	66,127
Fundraising/Donations	2,048	1,359
Donations	4,500	5,500
Consumer & Tenancy	36,496	
Publication sales	631	1,807
Rotary Club of Balwyn		5,468
Interest received	2,306	1,456
Other income	273	27
Total income	378,174	333,882
Expenses		
Advertising and promotion		1,998
Audit fees	4,010	2,380
Bank Fees And Charges	517	593
Cleaning	2,025	2,436
Committee expenses	125	750
Computer Expenses	301	2,696
Delivery	441	171
Depreciation - plant	5,472	5,472
Filing Fees	36	32
Insurance	2,012	2,178
Legal Expenses	4,214	1,829
Library	1,454	854
Light & power	2,606	2,700
Postage	2,447	2,287
Printing & stationery	7,621	6,343
Project & Volunteer Costs	234	11,742
Provision - Annual leave	3,784	(5,298)
Provision - Sick Leave	4,744	(11,569)
Rates & outgoings	1,703	1,204
Rent on land & buildings	35,750	29,175
Repairs & maintenance	244	1,442
Salaries & Benefit Payments	252,702	232,002
30th birthday net costs	567	
Staff amenities	1,783	2,296
Staff training	1,704	2,166
Subscriptions & memberships	3,404	12,736
Superannuation	22,1590	17,760
Telephone & Internet Fees	4,375	4,405
Travel, accom & conference	6,191	1,668
Workcover	1,302	1,255
Total expenses	373,929	333,701
Net Profit from Ordinary Activities	4,245	121

Detailed Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2005

	2005	2004
Services' Funds		
Opening Balance	75,906	75,785
Net profit	4,245	121
Total Services' Funds	80,151	75,906
Current Assets		
Cash at Bank – Maroondah Credit Union	9,528	16,757
Cash at Bank – Maroondah Credit Union	5	109
Cash at Bank – Screen Saver Invest. S25	7,748	
Cash on hand	337	148
	17,619	17,014
Receivables		
Trade debtors	13,421	139
	13,421	139
Other financial assets		
Shares – Maroondah Credit Union	10	10
	10	10
Other		
Short term deposits	8,135	50,084
Term deposit	41,219	
Security Deposit	2,775	2,500
	52,129	52,584
Total Current Assets	83,179	69,747
Non-Current Assets		
Property, Plant and Equipment – at cost	97,772	92,316
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(75,467)	(66,995)
Total Non-Current Assets	22,305	22,321
Total Assets	105,484	92,068
Current Liabilities		
Payables Unsecured:		
- Trade creditors	277	5,757
- Other creditors – PAYG June	2,910	1,286
- Superannuation payable	2,300	0
	5,487	7,044
Current Tax Liabilities		
GST payable control account	45,076	43,585
Input tax credit control account	(45,068)	(45,776)
	8	(2,192)
Total Current Liabilities	5,496	4,852
Non-Current Liabilities		
Provision for Annual leave	10,738	6,954
Provision for Sick Leave	9,100	4,536
Total Non-Current Liabilities	19,838	11,490
Total Liabilities	25,333	16,162
Net Assets	80,151	75,906

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ended 30 June 2005

	2005 \$	2004 \$
Cash Flow from Operating Activities		
Receipts from customers	362,586	332,227
Payments to Suppliers and employees	(359,561)	(346,043)
Interest Received	2,306	1,456
Net cash provided by (used in) operating activities (note 2)	<u>5,331</u>	<u>(12,359)</u>
Cash Flow from Investing Activities		
Payment for:		
Payments for property, plant and equipment	(5,456)	(3,100)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities	<u>(5,456)</u>	<u>(3,100)</u>
Net increase (decrease) in cash held	(125)	(15,459)
Cash at the beginning of the year	67,098	82,557
Cash at the end of the year (note 1)	<u>66,973</u>	<u>67,098</u>

Note 1. Reconciliation of Cash

For the purposes of the statement of cash flows, cash includes cash on hand and in banks and investment in money market instruments, net of outstanding bank overdrafts.

Cash at the end of the year as shown in the statement of cash flows is reconciled to the related items in the balance sheet as follows:

Cash at Bank - Maroondah Credit Union	9,528	16,757
Cash at Bank - Maroondah Credit Union	5	109
Cash at Bank - Screen Saver Invest 25	7,748	
Cash on hand	337	148
Short term deposits	8,135	50,084
Term deposit	41,219	
	<u>66,793</u>	<u>67,098</u>

Note 2. Reconciliation of Net Cash Provided By/Used In Operating Activities to Net Profit (Loss)

Net profit (loss)	4,245	121
Depreciation	5,472	5,472
Changes in assets and liabilities net of effects of purchases and disposals of controlled entities:		
(Increase) decrease in trade and term debtors	(13,282)	(139)
(Increase) decrease in prepayments	(275)	
Increase (decrease) in trade creditors and accruals	(5,480)	5,757
Increase (decrease) in other creditors	3,924	(4,512)
Increase (decrease) in employee entitlements	8,528	(16,867)
Increase (decrease) in sundry provisions	2,200	(2,192)
Net cash provided by operating activities	<u>5,331</u>	<u>(12,359)</u>

Auditors Notes

NOTES TO AND FORMING PART OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30th JUNE 2004

NOTE 1 BASIS AND STANDARDS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, the accrual basis of accounting has been adopted in the preparation of the financial statements of the Service for the Year Ended 30th June 2004.

To maintain accounting procedures, the balance sheet includes all known liabilities, including Provisions and Creditors.

NOTE 2 DEPRECIATION

In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles adopted for this Service, depreciation on assets has been calculated and incorporated into the financial statements

NOTE 3 EMPLOYEES ENTITLEMENTS

During the year, the Service provided for Annual Leave entitlements and Sick Leave entitlements.

It should be noted that no provision for Long Service Leave has been included in the financial statements this year. However, as employees' length of service grows, a provision will be implemented. It is envisaged that a provision for long service leave will be accrued in the next financial report.



Treasurer's Report

The financial year of 2004/2005 illustrates how Eastern Community Legal Centre provides quality legal advice to those in need within its limited resources. Eastern Community Legal Centre once again operated with a small surplus for the 2004/2005 financial year.

A big thanks for all the staff who work tirelessly at the centre, to all our volunteers who give up their time to assist the community and the committee of management for all their help and support. In particular thanks to Katrina Szetey who diligently keeps the books in good order.

Eastern Community Legal Centre has a strong financial base to build upon in the 2005/2006 financial year and provide quality legal services to those in need including those who now have access to these services for the first time due to the expansion into the Outer East. The centre looks forward to providing more accessible, quality advice to those who require legal services in 2005/2006.

Bradley Tutt
Treasurer





eastern community legal centre

Acknowledgements

Eastern Community Legal Centre would like to sincerely thank the following people and organisations for their contributions to our centre over the past year.

Donations to ECLC

Our thanks to the many individuals and groups that have made a donation to the centre.

Provision of funding

Victoria Legal Aid
State Government
Department for Victorian Communities
Commonwealth Government
Knox City Council
City of Whitehorse
City of Boroondara
Rotary Club of Balwyn