

MEDIA RELEASE

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR BUSHFIRE VICTIMS

February 10, 2009

Lawyers and community volunteers in Melbourne's east have offered to give free legal advice to people affected by the fires in their region.

Michael Smith, Manager of Eastern Community Legal Centre, said that people were keen to help in whatever way they can.

"Within the destruction and loss of the fires, people will have concerns about a range of issues with a legal dimension – insurance, property matters, tenancy issues, replacing legal documents, estate issues and more."

"People can call the Centre now and our lawyers will assist people directly and work with our pro bono partners to provide longer term assistance as needed."

ECLC already operates a Healesville legal clinic and will expand this to respond to needs of the affected people in our communities.

The Centre is also working with Victoria Legal Aid, its existing volunteer lawyers and paralegals and a number of law firms offering pro bono (free) assistance.

"We are committed to responding to the needs of our communities across the east and will assist in whatever way we can. The Community Legal Centre relies on the voluntary support of legal practitioners and others who are keen to give back to the community" Mr Smith said.

People seeking legal advice can contact the Eastern Community Legal Centre on 1300 79 70 88. Telephone and 'in person advice is available.

Key Phone Contact for Yarra Ranges and Knox residents
(but all can call):

Eastern Community Legal Centre (9am – 5pm): 1300 79 70 88

People on the western side of the mountain (Kinglake communities) may contact Whittlesea Community Legal Service on 9401 6655

People in Bendigo can contact the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre on 1800 639 121

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