



## New Space, Resources lead way with FV Integration Project

A range of new initiatives are underway to improve services responding to family violence at Ringwood Magistrates' Court. Involving numerous agencies, the developments have been facilitated and encouraged by the progress of the Family Violence Integration Project (FVIP), a new and innovative partnership project led by ECLC and funded by the Legal Services Board.

While still early, these improvements have been driven by strong consultation with women who have experienced the Court system and the agencies working at the Court. An early issue identified was a lack of separate waiting areas for people attending the Court, extending the fear of violence and lack of safety to the actual Court experience. With the active support of the Court, the Police Family Violence Liaison Officer, agencies and the project, a separate waiting space has now been established at the Court for vulnerable women and children.

The Project's Vision is to instil trust and confidence in the most vulnerable of victim/survivors that their safety and support needs will be upheld through their interaction with the legal components of the family violence system.

Its aim is to improve the response of legal and support services to victim/survivors of family violence in a coordinated and integrated manner, through the partnership and collaboration of key agencies working at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court.

*(continued p2...)*

***'I really thought  
that I would be  
judged but  
everybody made  
me feel comfortable  
and respected.'***

Feedback from a victim/survivor of family violence on the strengths of the Intervention Order process.

### This Edition

- Family Violence Integration Project
- Staff Snapshot
- National Human Rights Roll-out
- Client Statistics 2010-11
- Yarra Ranges Older & Wiser
- National CLC Conference

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Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Whitehorse,  
Boroondara & Manningham

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Healesville - Yarra Glen  
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Knox & Maroondah &  
Yarra Ranges Council

[www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au)

### Human Rights are Aussie Rules launches new team!

See story inside.....





## Staff Snapshot

### Belinda Lo

#### Principal Lawyer

This month ECLC would like to use the Staff Snapshot to introduce our brand new Principal Lawyer!

#### What did you do before working at ECLC?

I've been a CLC lawyer for about ten years- and have worked and volunteered in various CLCs including Brimbank, Broadmeadows, Whittlesea, Youthlaw and Fitzroy. My most recent job has been as the team leader of Policy, Development Law Reform and Policy at Fitzroy Legal Service.



#### What do you like about ECLC?

I like the location, the ever changing demographic of community members and Naomi's stationery!

#### What are you looking forward to?

I'm really looking forward to working with a such a close-knit happy team.

#### Any funny or embarrassing workplace moments?

Many! However, in order to keep this newsletter short, the funniest one I can think of is when I was the Principal solicitor out in Whittlesea, and a client kept asking me when he was going to get advice from the 'real lawyer.' I kept trying to explain to him that I was the actual lawyer he was referring to, but he didn't believe me. He then took out from his pocket a local newspaper article (where I featured) and pointed at me in the article, saying, "I want to speak to her. Look it says she's a lawyer". I kept trying to tell him that it was me! It wasn't until he put the article all the way up to my face and closely peered at it that he realised that I was in fact the same person as the one in the article. I obviously don't photograph that well!

#### Any legal issue that frustrates you?

Many legal issues frustrate me, I guess the main one is that the legal system is often unfair, and people want to try and use the system to achieve a just outcome, but in fact, the legal system is unable to cater to lots of different situations which can make people understandably lose faith in the system.

#### Favourite food

My mum's wonton noodles.. and her crispy roast pork.

#### Favourite time of year

Summer Summer Summer.

#### Favourite holiday destination

The Daintree Rainforest in Queensland.

## FVIP Achievements

The project commenced with a consultation phase that successfully identified the integral issues for victim/survivors of family violence through their experience of applying for an Intervention Order:

- Limited access to information
- Limited support
- Risks to safety and privacy
- Limited legal response
- System issues
- Agency issues

The project also identified some key elements to an 'effective legal response'. These all informed the Recommendations for improving the Court experience for victim/survivors of family violence.

Some of the achievements of the FVIP so far have included:

- Improved relationships and collaborative practice between the services involved at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court.
- Protected Persons Space - a safe and comfortable waiting area for victim/survivors of family violence that is separate to the main waiting area.
- Increased information available for service providers
- IOSS Roles and Responsibilities document
- IOSS Guide
- Increased information available for Court users
- 'Commonly Asked Questions' - Court Information Sheet
- 'Results letter' (summary of the legal outcome with added information to be provided by the legal services)

The FVIP partnership is both excited and committed to the progress of the project. For more further updates on the project in coming months visit [www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au)

The FVIP is supported by a great partnership including Eastern Domestic Violence Service (EDVOS), Victoria Legal Aid Ringwood, Ringwood Magistrates' Court, EACH Eastern Victims Assistance Program (EVAP), Victoria Police, Eastern Men's Behaviour Change Consortium (EMBCC) and the Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership (EMRFPV).

The Partnership acknowledges the support of the Legal Services Board in providing funding for this project.

### Would you like to donate to ECLC?

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



## Human Rights are Aussie Rules launches new team in WA!

The last week in October marked an important milestone in the development of the pioneering Human Rights are Aussie Rules program. It was with great pleasure that I attended the Northern Suburbs CLC in WA and helped establish the HRaAR program over in Perth. Our national roll out had well and truly arrived!

The visit's purpose was to lead the new team's teaching of the program's educational content, but also to help in establishing its procedures and systems. While there, the program was performed at Poseidon Primary School in Heathridge, a small northern suburb near Joondalup. The program was extremely successful and was met with tremendous enthusiasm by students and teachers alike. The WA team also worked hard in trying to develop a promotional video which highlights the work the HRaAR program does in schools. Given the level of preparation, organisation and commitment which was demonstrated, we are all excited by the results and potential.

I would like to take thank the Northern Suburbs Legal Centre for the amazing hospitality extended to me during my time in WA. The team of Karen Merrin, Scott Johnson, Alana Bernstein and Tich have demonstrated how committed and enthusiastic they are about this program. They all understand the potential this program has in making a real difference in the greater WA community. On behalf of the ECLC, we are thrilled to have them on board and are excited about the future partnership we have forged together.

**Ali Abachi**  
Community Educator

## Yarra Ranges gets Older & Wiser!

ECLC is delighted to partner with Yarra Ranges Council to develop the fifth edition of the popular seniors' resource, Older & Wiser.

Speaking at the launch in Mooroolbark during Seniors' Week festivities, Yarra Ranges Mayor Cr Terry Avery spoke of the need for such a publication. "Many people in our community need to access legal information and older residents are often facing these issues for the very first time.

"Older and Wiser contains fact sheets covering a range of legal issues and includes simple tips on what seniors should ask themselves when faced with a legal issue.", Cr Avery said.

Yarra Ranges Council is active in the Eastern Elder Abuse Network, led by ECLC in partnership with the Inner East PCP and Seniors Rights Victoria.

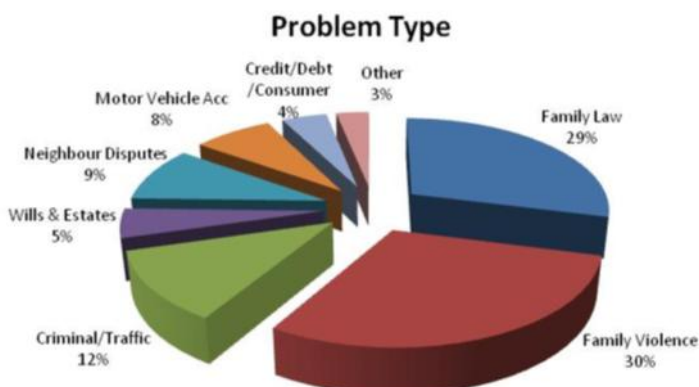
The Mayor stated, "We're confident this free guide will be a great asset to many in our community. It's an excellent book and I congratulate them highly."



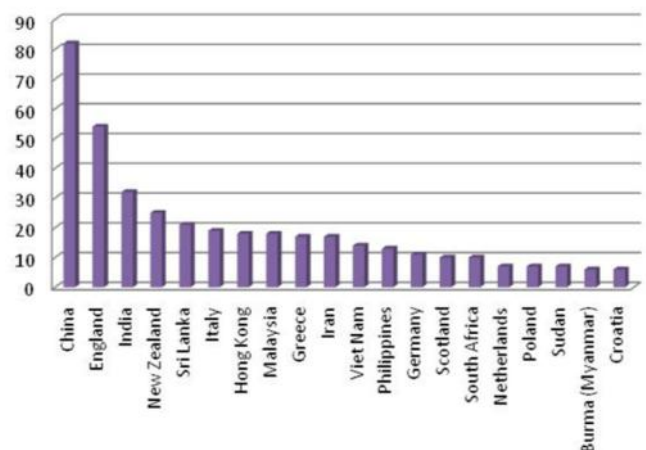
*The Launch of Older & Wiser was held at the Mooroolbark Community Centre as part of Seniors Week in October.*

## ECLC Client statistics- 2010-11

With another busy year completed, the team at ECLC has stopped to take a breath and reflect on our client statistics in our latest Annual Report, 'Access all Areas.' With the full report available at [www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au), here is a taste of what you can expect:



Top 20 Countries of Birth of Clients (excl. Australia)





### Rights, Representation and Reform:

## ECLC at the National CLCs Conference

Building on the theme 'Rights, Representation and Reform', the 32nd National Community Legal Centres Conference took place in Hobart this October, with the ECLC team and all the Centre's hard work well-represented:

- Michael Smith (CEO) opened and 'MCed' the conference in his role as Convenor of the National Association of Community Legal Centres, but also managed to fit in a workshop on the application of primary legal interventions to reduce the risk of elder abuse, co-presenting with Sonya Mitchell, a social worker from Townsville CLSs seniors program;
- Amy Johnstone (Community Development) facilitated a session on Asset-Based Community Development at the Community Legal Education Workers pre-conference network meeting, exploring ways to incorporate new approaches to community development into the work of CLCs;
- Tanja Kovac (National HRaAR Coordinator) ran a hands-on session for workers to experience the fun of the Human Rights are Aussie Rules Program; and
- Marika Manioudakis (FVIP Coordinator) provided a workshop about the Ringwood FVIP, exploring the challenges and encouraging discussion on tools for effective partnership. In this session Michael also showcased Steps2Safety, the Partnership's earlier successful collaborative venture.

The Conference gave staff the opportunity to explore new ideas and approaches, develop skills, share experiences and even have a bit of a dance (at the official Conference dinner; sadly there were no dancing workshops)! With all that sharing, networking and inspiration, stay tuned for some new ideas at ECLC!



*ECLC Staff enjoying their time at the National Conference Dinner.*

## Support

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

- Victoria Legal Aid
- Australian Government
- Attorney-General's Department
- Victoria Law Foundation
- Legal Services Board
- Department of Justice (Vic)
- Department of Planning and Community Development (Vic)
- City of Boroondara
- City of Whitehorse
- Knox City Council
- Manningham City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Sports Without Borders
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission
- Anglicare Victoria
- Balwyn Welfare Association
- Blackburn English Language School
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Bulleen Baptist Church
- Bulleen & Templestowe Community House
- Carp Productions
- Castan Centre for Human Rights Law (Monash University)
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Centrelink
- Clayton Utz
- Council On The Ageing (Victoria)
- Darwin Community Legal Service
- Devenish & Co
- DLA Piper
- EACH
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Service)
- Family Access Network
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Gateway LLEN
- GordonCare
- Healesville Living and Learning Centre.
- Holding Redlich
- Inner East Community Health Centre
- Inner East PCP
- JH Legal
- Knox Community Health Service
- Knox Infolink
- Loddon Campaspe CLC
- Louise Multicultural Community Centre
- Maurice Blackburn
- Mercader
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern)
- Moores Legal
- NACLCL
- Northern Suburbs CLS (WA)
- Outer East Health & Community Support Alliance
- Public Interest Law Clearing House
- Ringwood Family Relationship Centre
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court
- Robinson Gill
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- Shire of Yarra Ranges
- Victoria Police
- Whitehorse Community Health Centre
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Yarra Valley Community Health Service
- Volunteers and members of ECLC