



# Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc.

## 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Monday, 25 November 2019, 3.00pm at  
Ringwood Bowls Club, 2-12 Loughnan Road,  
Ringwood

### MINUTES

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#### **In Attendance**

See list at back.

#### **ECLC Staff in Attendance**

See list at back.

#### **1. Welcome and opening**

Chairperson, Janet Matton welcomed all to the 45<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC). Janet acknowledged the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which people were gathered today and paid respects to their Elders both past and present.

On behalf of ECLC, Janet also acknowledged the special guests present at the AGM, as well as members, volunteers, staff and supporters.

#### **2. Apologies**

See list at back.

#### **3. Welcome to Country**

A Welcome to Country was presented by Ms. Julie Coombes, Aboriginal Elder.

#### **4. Acceptance of Minutes from 2018 AGM**

A copy of the Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting held on 20 November 2018 was provided to attendees.

**Motion:** *That the minutes of the Eastern CLC 2018 AGM be accepted as a true and accurate record.*

**Moved:** Guy Masters

**Seconded:** Katherine Dowson

**CARRIED**

#### **5. Matters arising from the minutes**

No matters were raised.

#### **6. Board Report**

Janet highlighted that funding security throughout 2018-19 has enabled the Centre a year of stability and less uncertainty. Janet noted the growth of funding which enables services to expand. Through this growth and service delivery, new partnerships have been formed and Janet welcomed these partnerships. This combination presents the Board with some interesting opportunities for robust discussions.

Janet extended her thanks to members of the Board for their dedication and expertise.

Janet officially launched the Strategic Plan 2020 – 23. This Strategic plan highlights the collaboration and partnerships of ECLC and a list of these partnerships can be found in the Annual Report 2019.

## 7. Financial Report: *Luong Ta, Treasurer*

Luong highlighted that Centre's income for 2018 – 19 is stable and this is due to funding partnerships. This reflects that hard work that has been done by Michael Smith and the board.

Luong noted that the centre has had substance growth this year, up 80% to last year, including a 56% increase in surplus and the centre's current reserves are at \$284,000.

Our current assets will need to be monitored to cover liability and this will be monitored by the board.

**Motion: That the Financial Report be received.**

Moved: *Christine Cowin*

Seconded: *Guy Masters*

**CARRIED**

## 8. Chief Executive Officer's Report

Michael Smith welcomed everyone in attendance and acknowledged the Wurundjeri People, the Traditional Owners of the land on which people were gathered today and paid respects to their Elders both past and present.

Michael thanked Julie Coombes for her Welcome to Country and John Kennedy MP for his attendance.

Michael also acknowledged the attendance of Bonnie Bedwell, who is a Life Member of ECLC.

It was highlighted by Michael that the campaign '16 days of activism against gender based violence' starts today and runs until the 10<sup>th</sup> December. This is a campaign that is run by Women's Health East and Together for Equality and Respect (TFER) partnership of which ECLC is privileged to take part in.

Michael noted that each year, the Centre's AGM has a theme. This year the theme was 'Communities Collaborating'

Michael touched on updates from throughout the year which saw the introduction of 3 new programs as well as new staff members. These new projects were:

- ROSE: Rights of seniors in the East. This is an Elder Abuse Specialist Unit, which integrates the work of a Community Lawyer, Advocate and Financial Counsellor.
- ELSA: Engaging & Living Safely and Autonomously is an Elder Abuse Health Justice Partnership with Eastern Health. Staff at Eastern Health have been trained to identify Elder Abuse and refer cases onto the ELSA team.
- WELS: Women Engaging and Living Safely is an antenatal Health Justice Partnership. This is a two year pilot program to respond to the needs of women attending Eastern Health for maternity services and will play a key role relating to family violence and child safety.
- OPERA: Older People, Equity, Respect and Ageing. This is a prevention program with research and digital intervention components developed with Swinburne University.
- HEAL: Holistic, Empowerment, Advocacy, and Legal. This builds on the Enhanced Entry Project and aims to develop understanding and integrate practices within ECLC and the community sector.

These projects are all working in different areas and this is something that is shown in the new strategic plan; multidisciplinary partnerships coming together to get fair outcomes in the East.

Michael reiterated that the Centre cannot do any of this alone. A shared voice is much more effective and powerful. Michael acknowledged the Centre's funding partners.

A special thanks was given to Malcom Cummings who finished up this year on the ECLC board. Malcolm served the ECLC board for six years.

Michael closed by thanking Janet Matton, Chairperson and the Board for their support, as well as all staff and volunteers for their efforts.

The growth and success that is celebrated today, is not just from ECLC but with our communities collaborating.

## 9. Formal Presentation of Annual Report

Janet Matton presented the Centre's Annual Report and thanked the team at Eastern Community Legal Centre for their work on the publication.

**Motion:** *That the 2019 – 2020 Annual Report be received.*

*Moved:* Janet Matton

*Seconded:* Dilnaz Billimoria

**CARRIED**

## 10. Appointment of Board Members

Three nominations were formally and correctly received for the three vacancies on ECLC's Board in accordance with the Centre's Rules:

- Guy Masters
- Jeanette McRae
- Tabitha Lovett

**The nominees were declared elected for a two year term.**

Janet extended her gratitude to the Centre's Board members for their active participation and help to guide the evolution and success of the Centre in the past year.

## 11. General Business

Dilnaz Billimoria who is a valued Community Volunteer of ECLC congratulated ECLC on their great work in the Inner and Outer East. Dilnaz always gets get pleasure when hearing about ECLC at community events and is proud to be a volunteer. She also paid tribute to the board and its members, who should be proud to be part of a wonderful organisation.

## 12. Preview of the OPERA Project

Donna Askew; Director Partnerships and Community Development introduced ECLC's project in collaboration with Swinburne University. The program was led by Dr Diana Bossio, who is the Program Director, Media and Communication postgraduate program. Jill Exon and Kate Gibson from ECLC also played pivotal roles in getting this program developed.

Swinburne, along with ECLC spoke with about 200 older people about their experience with ageing. These experiences were then developed into digital interventions which will help reframe the conversation around ageing and hopefully frame ageing in a positive way.

Through the launch of OPERA, there is the prospect of additional projects within the community sector between ECLC and Swinburne.

Donna announced the official launch for the OPERA project will be Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2019 at Ringwood Hoyts. This was followed by a short video from the project.

## 13. Elder Abuse Response

Belinda Lo, Director of Legal Services spoke about the introduction of the new Elder Abuse programs that have recently been implemented. Up until now, Elder Abuse work was primarily done through the Partnerships and Community Development team, with an example of this being the Matter Of Trust project.

However, extensive work has been done locally and nationally and ECLC is now offering a holistic approach to Elder Abuse through the national Elder Abuse Service Trials. Often the traditional legal approach for Elder Abuse is not the best for the client, often seeking out legal help can make the situation worse.

Belinda introduced Shahaan Murray who is the leader of the two new Elder Abuse teams at ECLC, ELSA and ROSE. ELSA is a partnership with Eastern Health, which looks at early intervention and ROSE is a centre-based model.

Belinda and Shahaan highlighted that the use of a financial counsellor within these two programs is what makes them unique. Financial abuse is a large factor in elder abuse and the use of a financial counsellor can assist clients with this matter discreetly.

## **14. Key Note Address: Dylan Langley**

Michael spoke and briefly introduced the Brighter Futures Outer East program that the Centre has been involved in.

Brighter Futures Outer East is a program that connects young people with local community members and help them reach their goals. Together with the community, Brighter Futures is opening doors and creating new opportunities for young people in the outer east.

The program was developed by a broad group of government and community agencies and members, under the Victorian Government's Child and Youth Area Partnerships initiative.

A brief video was shown outlining Brighter Futures Outer East.

Michael welcomed and introduced Dylan Langley, who is a youth consultant and public speaker.

Dylan is currently on the Executive for the Brighter Futures Initiative and also an ambassador the Home Stretch campaign. Both these programs look engage young people within Out of Home Care and what can be done to support them after the age of 18.

Dylan noted that the Brighter Futures program is a co-design initiative which is run by different organisations and community groups. The collaboration that comes with these group working together really creates a positive change for a young person before they leave Out of Home Care. Brighter Futures has been a definite highlight in Dylan's short career and he has experienced personal growth and lasting connections.

Home stretch is another program that Dylan is a part of and is something that is very significant for him. Home Stretch works with a young person after they turn 18 to help them transition from Out of Home Care. This is not something that Dylan had as an option, when he turned 18 he was told his best option was a homeless shelter. This program has been extended to include 50 more people over 5 years. Dylan would like to see every young person have a shot a life and they deserve to be put on the right path.

Dylan reiterated that these initiatives need to have impact on more than 50 people. Support needs to be given to the young person to help them transition into an adult life, not just extending the care they receive.

Dylan was asked about his mental health during this difficult time in his life. He noted that it was an extremely dark time for him, but working on his fitness and forming a network of community helped. He commented that 'Humans were designed to be social creatures'.

Dylan concluded by saying the work that ECLC does in working together to help clients solve their problems, is similar to the work that he does with Brighter Futures, and this is a good example of communities collaborating.

## **15. Thanks and Close**

Michael thanked Dylan again and congratulated him on his leadership.

Janet closed the meeting at 4.42pm by thanking the ECLC Board, staff and volunteers for their ongoing dedication, passion and enthusiasm, and everyone in attendance for their ongoing support of the Centre.

Attendees were invited to remain for afternoon tea

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## **In Attendance**

Akeer Garang, Alasdair Gall, Anand Shome, Anne Chan, Bonnie Bedwell, Bree Morrison, Bwe Thay, Christine Cowin, David Cooke, Deb Robert, Debra Styles, Denise O'Shannasy, Dilnaz Billimoria, Dylan Langley, Eddie Thomson, Gavin Hodgkinson, Geoff de Young, Guy Masters, Heidi Tucker, Helen Gay, Helen Jurcevic OAM,

James Thangman, Janet Matton, Jennifer Fisher, John Kennedy MP, Julie Coombes, Katherine Maywood, Kellie English, Kevin Treacey, Kim Nguyen, Kristine Olaris, Lauren Gordon, Tammy Schiltz, Luong Ta, Marg Willis, Noah Hiet, Sharon Porteous, Sui Ting Tse, Tabitha Lovett, Tracey Blythe, Trish McCudden, Vicki Middleton.

## **ECLC Staff in Attendance**

Anita Koochew, Belinda Li, Belinda Lo, Connie Chen, Deborah Miller, Donna Askew, Emma Pryce – Baxter, Gergis Felicity Ellis, Gergis Ayoub, Holly Phillips-Kliska, Iresha Buthgamuwa, Jennifer Faulkner, Jenny Stewart, Jill Exon, Josie Kirk, Kate Gibson, Kathleen O’Callaghan, Kathy Pullman, Katrina Barrett, Kelly Reid, Kirrilli Ryland, Kirsten Matthews, Marika Manioudakis, Melissa Dowsett, Michael Smith, Michael Woollard, Nikki Harris – Allan, Samantha Liddy, Sammy Dixon, Sara Molenaar, Shahaan Murray, Stephanie Streets, Susan Amos, Trish Cameron and Emma O’Brien (minutes)

## **Apologies**

Barbara Crisp, Bridget Vallance MP, Carmel Guerra, Hon Daniel Andrews MP, Dustin Halse MP, Erskine Rodan, Jenny Scicluna, Judith Voce, Kay Hackworth, Cr. Prue Cutts, Cr. Richard Higgins, Roz Williams, Cr. Sharon Ellis, Tanya Scicluna, Tom Conley, Hon Tony Smith MP.