



Eastern Community Law

Newsletter

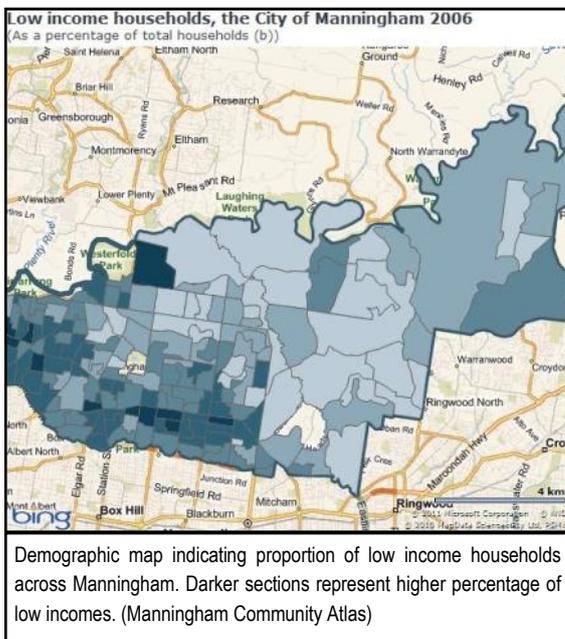
Spring 2011

Access to Justice for Manningham: The Legal Needs of the Bulleen Community

A new report by Eastern Community Legal Centre has revealed that significant disadvantage experienced by residents of Bulleen is leading to higher rates of legal issues requiring assistance.

ECLC established the Bulleen Legal Outreach Service in 2010 with the support of a Community Development Grant from Manningham City Council. The outreach provides legal advice and assistance to residents in Manningham who are unable to attend the Box Hill Office and quite early in the development of the service, ECLC commenced an evaluation project to ensure the outreach met the legal needs of the local community.

The 'Bulleen Outreach Service Evaluation' report released this month highlights key legal issues experienced by Bulleen and surrounding communities including high rates of family violence, complex debt and infringement matters and housing and tenancy issues. A majority of clients who sought support from the Outreach service were on low incomes and many had not previously accessed legal support. The evaluation revealed that the Bulleen Outreach was addressing these issues and barriers to a great extent by adopting a community development model and developing a strong partnership with the local neighbourhood house and other key service providers.



The final report makes a series of recommendations as follows:

- That the Bulleen Legal Outreach service be ongoing and secured by a more sustainable funding source, in recognition of the importance of a locally based accessible service.
- That the Bulleen Legal Outreach service increase the number of days of operation to be able to better serve the local community and respond more immediately to clients in crisis.
- That a Supported Legal Case Manager model be explored to work with clients with complex needs.
- That ECLC continue to foster relationships with key services to ensure that disadvantaged members of the community are referred appropriately.
- That ECLC continue to target Community Legal Education to community services and groups in Manningham to raise awareness of relevant legal services.
- That ECLC continue to work closely with Family Violence services in the region.
- That ECLC target Community Legal Education to reflect legal needs of the Manningham community as identified by services and residents in the region.

ECLC thanks Manningham City Council and BATCH for their support of this outreach service.

To make an appointment for legal advice in Bulleen, please contact ECLC on 9285 4822.

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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:

Bulleen - Hawthorn - Ashburton
Ringwood Family Relationship Centre
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Whitehorse,
Boroondara & Manningham

Boronia Office

Suite B, 6 Floriston Road, Boronia 3155
(PO Box 747)
Mon – Thurs 9:00am – 5:00pm
Ph: (03) 9762 6235
Toll free: 1300 79 70 88
Fax: (03) 9762 9751
outereast@eclc.org.au

Outreach locations

Rowville - Lilydale - Yarra Junction
Healesville - Yarra Glen
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Knox & Maroondah &
Yarra Ranges Council

www.eclc.org.au



Staff Snapshot

Susan Hillman-Stolz

**Youth Referral and Independent Person Program (YRIPP)
East Metro/Inner City Volunteer Coordinator**

What do you do at ECLC?

I work as the East Metro/Inner City Volunteer Co-ordinator for the Youth Referral & Independent Person Program (YRIPP). I coordinate the volunteers who work as independent persons for young people being interviewed by police if a parent or guardian can't attend. I also follow up referrals and reports that have been made by the volunteers to link young people to further support.

What did you do before working at ECLC?

I'm a trained Secondary and Steiner teacher but I haven't taught for many years. In another life I have conducted some short term projects one of which was a Youth Suicide Prevention project for Lifeline and I have worked as a Volunteer Co-ordinator for an organisation that is now known as Scope. I have also worked as a Financial Counsellor in East Gippsland and for a number of years worked as an Employment Trainer in the disability sector. The last job I had was with the Villamanta Legal Service in Geelong as an Outreach Worker.

What do you like about ECLC?

I love working with such a dynamic, warm and friendly team who love food (especially coffee, cakes & chocolate) as much as I do!

Highlights of the work so far?

Finding out that a young person who went through the YRIPP program turned his life around after a referral by one of our volunteers.

Any funny or embarrassing moments in the job?

I accessed my phone messages one day and when the message had finished I started talking to the person as if she was on the line!!!

Any legal issue that frustrates you?

This is not a legal issue as such but it is frustrating when the young people who come through the program aren't interested in obtaining any legal assistance even though it is free and confidential.

Favourite food

All food, but especially partial to Indian food.

Favourite time of year

Autumn. I love the colour of the trees and the crisp sunny days.

Favourite holiday destination

It has to be Paris because of the language, the food, the landmarks and the city vibe. There's something about it being exotic that I can't put my finger on.

But if I was answering next month, I might be saying Norway...



ECLC Celebrates its Volunteers in Style!

On 21 June 2011, 70 volunteers, special partners and guests of Eastern Community Legal Centre attended the annual Volunteers Dinner to celebrate the successes made possible through the commitment of its many volunteers.

The evening was hosted by ECLC Patron and Chief Magistrate, Ian Gray, who reaffirmed his admiration of volunteers and his commitment to improving both the services available and the experience of clients in the Eastern region.

This commitment was echoed by keynote speaker, the Hon. Mary Wooldridge, Minister for Mental Health, Women's Affairs and Community Services, who left the audience reassured of a shared vision for Melbourne's East.

For more information on volunteering with ECLC, visit www.eclc.org.au/volunteering or call (03) 9285 4822.

Law Week 2011

In recognition of the work of community services in the region, Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) celebrated Law Week (16-20 May) this year by hosting a free event for service providers and community workers whose clients may have legal issues. The free lunchtime events in Box Hill and Boronia provided an opportunity to share information with lawyers, community workers and intake staff about working with legal services for better client outcomes.

Michael Smith, CEO said the sessions were in response to a growing demand from community workers for legal information. "Community workers in the region are overstretched and work incredibly hard to help people from the most disadvantaged communities, but workers are telling us they feel poorly informed when supporting clients to address their legal needs. ECLC's Law Week events aimed to build the capacity of workers to respond to their client's legal issues."

"We are not trying to turn workers into lawyers, but want to give them the ability to recognise a legal problem, make an appropriate referral and support their clients throughout the legal process."

After the success of the events during Law Week ECLC is inviting community agencies to host free in-house sessions on how workers can support clients to access legal services. For more information please contact the Box Hill or Boronia offices.

Lawyers - want to make change and work for ECLC?

ECLC is currently recruiting two exciting community lawyer roles.

Applications close 1.00pm October 4.

For details, see www.eclc.org.au/employment.



Elder Abuse – a “No Ball!”

Playing a casual game of cricket with Max Walker at the 'G' is all in a days work for ECLC staff...

As part of the annual Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, ECLC organised an exciting indoor cricket match, umpired by Max Walker. Our very own Michael Smith, ECLC's CEO took part, playing up a storm with famous AFL coach and player Tommy Hafey, former Justice Frank Vincent and Australian cricketer Clint McKay. Everyone had a go at batting, bowling and fielding, and throughout play Max Walker cried 'No Ball for Elder Abuse!'



Famous faces at the World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Cricket Event: (L-R) Clint McKay, Tommy Hafey, Max Walker and Frank Vincent.

The match was an effective means of raising public awareness about the growing issue of elder abuse. Research indicates that the percentage of people aged 70+ will double by 2050, with dementia possibly tripling over that time. Sadly, we know that elder abuse increases with both of these factors.

Elder Abuse has been on ECLC's agenda for some time, with its important partnership with Seniors Rights Victoria, now well-established. ECLC is also working closely with the Inner East PCP, in raising community awareness of elder abuse and co-ordinating the Eastern Elder Abuse Network.

There has been a significant response to ECLC's Elder Abuse Information Sessions, which are offered free of charge to community groups and organisations in the Eastern suburbs. So far over 25 information sessions have been booked for 2011. If your group or organisation is interested in holding on of these sessions, please contact Kaz Mackay at ECLC on 9285 4822.

ECLC Annual General Meeting
Wednesday November 9, 2011
A highlight of the events calendar, ECLC's AGM will be held on this afternoon.
Guest speaker - Anna Burke, Member for Chisholm.
More details to follow

HUMAN RIGHTS, FAIRNESS, JUSTICE

In June ECLC's Board adopted a new Strategic Plan which sets the broad direction for the Centre's work and development over the next three years.

With the vision of Human Rights – Fairness - Justice, the new plan builds on the existing strengths of the Centre and affirms many areas of its current practice and priorities. It seeks to develop the Centre further by:

- Assisting communities and people not currently being reached (whether by location or other characteristics) through outreach and service development;
Integrating a holistic approach that recognise people's legal and broader needs and prioritises the most vulnerable communities;
Developing tools to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the work and focus quality improvement;
Extend the systemic advocacy with an emphasis on the opportunities within the connections of the service's delivery, development, education and research.

The plan identifies the key values of the Centre as:

- Respect - treating ourselves and others with dignity, honesty and appreciating diversity
Compassion - being non-judgmental and supportive, showing empathy
Advocacy - providing a voice for those who cannot advocate for themselves
Safety - assuring confidentiality, showing courage
Justice and Human Rights – access, equity, advocacy and empowerment
Strong Governance and Assurance – open and transparent management and communication
Resourcefulness and Practicality – finding solutions through working collaboratively
Innovation and Entrepreneurship – encouraging implementing new ideas and strategies.

The plan commits the Centre's to six priority areas, namely:

- Family Violence
Human Rights Education
Cultural Diversity
The Yarra Ranges
Seniors Rights
Children and Young People

The plan was developed through a process of review and consultation. For a copy of the plan, please feel free to contact the Centre.

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.



MP Briefing

With the recent change of government in late 2010 it was important for Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) to inform the new members of parliament and their staff about the services that ECLC offered and how these would benefit their constituents. To facilitate this, an MP Briefing was held in the Shire of Yarra Ranges.

The choice of the location was two-fold; to not only inform but highlight some of the region specific issues facing the outer east, particularly the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Christine Fyffe, Member for Evelyn, kindly hosted the briefing on the 27th of April at the Council offices of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Council's support of this event was appreciated and relevant and supported the need for an additional legal service in the Shire.

In partnership with the Eastern Domestic Violence Outreach Service (EDVOS), ECLC addressed the representatives from 8 of the local MP's offices about family violence, access to services, and the increasing needs of the Intervention Order Support Service at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court. Participants were informed about the innovative education project *Steps2Safety*, designed to support those accessing the Intervention Order program at the court.

With a population of more than 830,000 in the eastern region, ECLC serves the largest catchment of any community legal centre in Victoria, with 17% of Victoria's total population. This highlights the need for MPs to support an additional office for the ECLC in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, to not only assist those that are geographically isolated, but to improve access to legal services in general for residents of the eastern region.

There was lively discussion around numerous issues and referral pathways were established between the MPs offices and ECLC and EDVOS and we will be looking forward to further discussions around funding, family violence and additional services.

Denise Budge, Outer East Manager

New Multicultural Policy

Eastern Community Legal Centre celebrated the theme of this year's Refugee Week, "Freedom from Fear" with the launch of their new Multicultural Strategy. The strategy takes steps to make sure the legal service is more welcoming and responsive to all of the culturally diverse communities that live in the Eastern region.

CEO Michael Smith stated, "We are committed to providing an excellent legal service for the entire community and that includes newly arrived refugees and migrants. We especially want to build trust and learn better what their legal needs are."

As part of this process, ECLC spoke to several members of these new communities. One person they spoke to arrived in Australia two years ago as a refugee from Chin State in Burma. He was persecuted by the military junta because he was a Christian. He told ECLC that it is important that the legal centre and his community, "Have a good, interrelated understanding of each other, like friends or family."

Michael Smith, CEO, said "We welcome anyone to contact our free legal service. If you think you're English isn't very good, we can provide an interpreter. And if we can't help with your specific legal issue, we will refer you to someone who can."

If you are newly arrived in Australia and think you may have a legal problem, please call the Box Hill office on 9285 4822 today to make an appointment. ECLC's new Multicultural

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