



Eastern Community Law

Newsletter

Autumn 2011

STEPS 2 SAFETY:

The Family Violence Intervention Order Process

Eastern Community Legal Centre is very pleased to announce a valuable new statewide family violence resource! **STEPS 2 SAFETY** is a short film which explains the Family Violence Intervention Order Process in an easy to understand way.

The video was launched by Supervising Magistrate Cathy Lamble at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court. She commended ECLC and all of the project partners in their efforts to educate the community and explain court processes to people encountering the system, especially people affected by family violence.



The film was produced by Eastern Community Legal Centre together with our project partners Ringwood Magistrates Court, Eastern Domestic Violence Service, Victoria Legal Aid, EACH-Eastern Victims Assistance and Counseling Program, Victoria Police, Anglicare Lilydale and Hand in Hand Productions and was funded by a grant from the Victoria Law Foundation.

The film is available to be viewed on line anytime at www.eclc.org.au/steps2safety or at your clients nearest magistrate's court. Fact sheets and other

information are also available online. Limited numbers of the DVD are available as well as resources including a fact sheet, business cards and A2 posters. Contact ECLC directly for details.

Donna Askew, Lawyer and Project Coordinator

VIEW ONLINE AT
www.eclc.org.au/steps2safety

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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

Amy Johnstone, Community Development Worker

What do you do at ECLC?

I do all sorts of things that fit under the broad definition of 'Community Development'; I coordinate various community legal education projects for the inner east office, sit on a number of local service networks to keep up to date with issues facing the community, write funding applications, develop marketing materials and put together the newsletter you're reading right now!

What did you do before working at ECLC?

I worked as a social worker in the homelessness and family violence sectors before moving into more 'macro level' work with a local council. When I started a law degree part time, the opportunity to combine my previous work experience with my new-found interest in the law by working at a community legal centre was the next logical step.

What do you like about ECLC?

I like the way the Centre has its finger on the pulse in terms of responding to legal issues impacting the community. There's a focus on community development and building relationships with various stakeholders in the community. It's also a great team to work with; everyone is on the same page. And of course, there's the cake. We never miss an opportunity for cake!

Any funny or embarrassing moments in the job?

A month after I started in 2008 I won the 'Lilydale Show Personality' contest while trying to promote ECLC's human rights play, Fred's Fair Play at the Lilydale Show! Once 'crowned' I had to sit on a hay bale on the back of a ute and be driven around the show ground in the grand parade... wearing a sash! I don't remember that being on my job description.

Favourite food?

Croissants, coffee, cheese with crusty bread, cake, champagne... There must be something about the letter 'C'. Oh, and that includes anything to do with chocolate!

Favourite holiday destination?

Based on experience- Paris. Based on what I imagine I'd really like- Paris, but with some cash to splash!



Happy Birthday to the Boronia Office!

Congratulation to Outer East team based in Boronia on FIVE YEARS of operation!

It's hard to believe that such a short time ago ECLC had to service the entire Eastern Region from one little office in Blackburn! In 2004 a reference group of key local stakeholders worked tirelessly to make an Outer East branch a reality and all of their hard work culminated in the Centre opening its doors in October 2005.

In the short time it has been operating, the team has grown significantly and developed a strong reputation in the Outer Eastern region. In recent years the office has been involved in bushfire recovery work, assisting communities with bushfire-related legal issues. The Centre also runs Outreach Services in Rowville, Lilydale, Yarra Glen and Yarra Junction to serve some of the most disadvantaged communities in the East and last year Boronia staff ran an incredible 33 community legal education sessions to a wide range of groups and services.



Congratulation to all involved for five great years and here's to many more!

Boroondara gets 'Older & Wiser'

Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) is proud to announce the launch of a free guide to common legal issues facing seniors in Boroondara.

'Older and Wiser' includes 16 fact sheets covering key legal issues raised by older clients contacting the Centre and includes simple tips on what to ask yourself when faced with a legal issue. Produced by ECLC and the Balwyn Welfare Association with the support of the City of Boroondara and Rotary Club of Balwyn's Community Grants Program, areas covered include financial, family, neighbourhood and consumer issues.

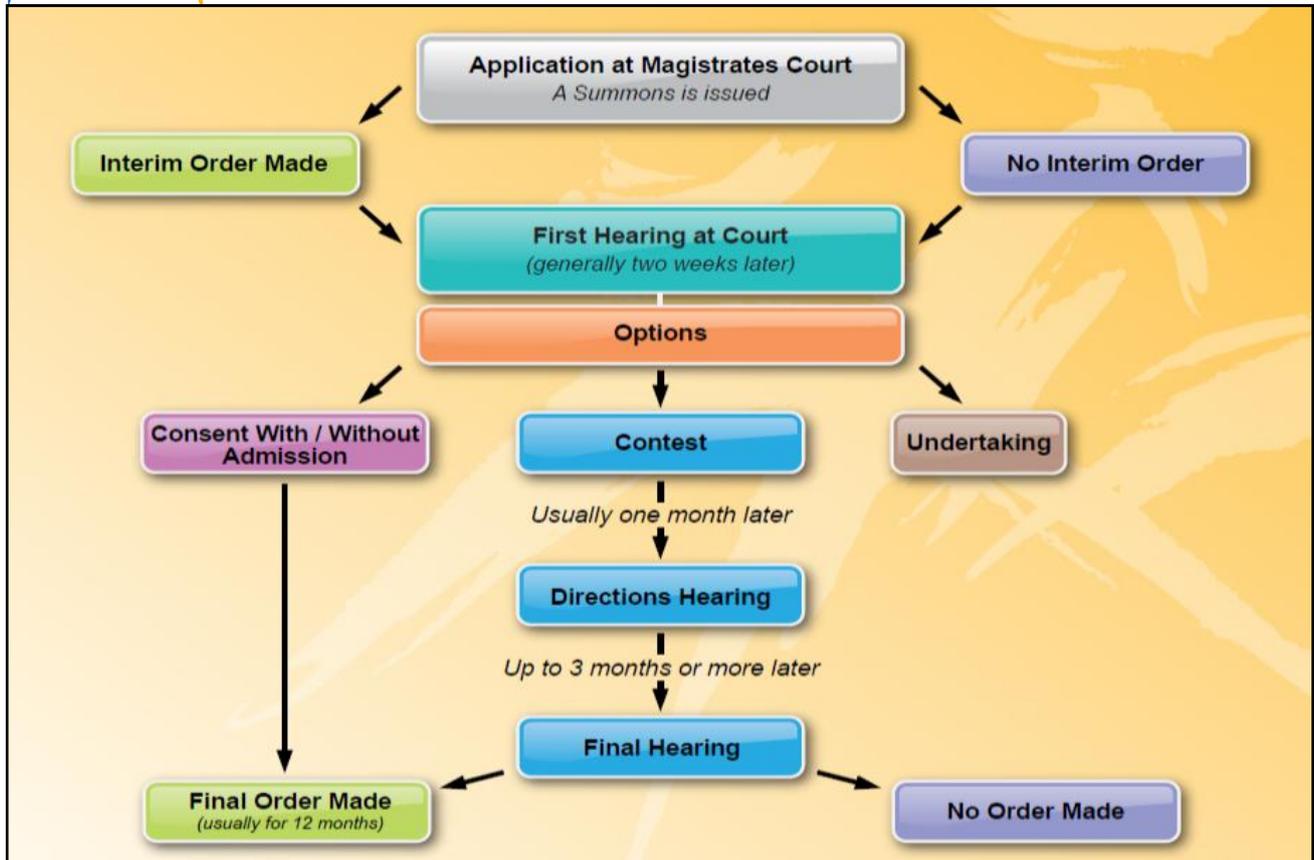
'Eastern Community Legal Centre is delighted to offer this free guide as a resource to seniors in our community,' said Michael Smith, CEO of ECLC. 'Many people in our community need to access legal information and older residents are often facing these issues for the first time.'

'Older and Wiser also links well with our commitment to seniors through our direct legal services and our partnership with Seniors Rights Victoria,' Mr. Smith said. Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) is a free service that has been established to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians. It operates regular services at ECLC in Box Hill.

To celebrate the launch of this resource, ECLC is inviting community groups and agencies to host a free workshop on the topics covered in the guide. To book a workshop for your group, please contact the Community Development Team on 9285 4822. Groups and individuals can also obtain a free copy of Older and Wiser by visiting the Balwyn Welfare Association or contacting ECLC on 9285 4822.



Steps 2 Safety: The Intervention Order Process



The flowchart above is used as a practical resource to assist clients at court to navigate the Family Violence Intervention Order process. For details please see www.eclc.org.au/steps2safety. However, this is not a substitute for legal advice.

Yarra Ranges: still waiting on access to legal help

Support for an additional Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) office in the Yarra Ranges to meet the area's increasing needs continues to grow. Two years ago, after the Black Saturday bushfires, the need for a local community legal centre was clearly shown, highlighting a number of issues around access.

Currently, the Outer East team in Boronia provides monthly outreach services to Healesville, Yarra Junction, Yarra Glen and Lilydale. These services are provided through strong partnerships that have been developed with EACH and the Yarra Valley Community Health Service. Although these outreach services are well attended, they fall well short of the needs of the community.

The number of Yarra Ranges clients accessing ECLC's outer east team has increased dramatically over the past two years from 220 clients in 2008 to 553 clients seen in 2010 - a 130% expansion. Statistics suggest that 55% of these clients are accessing the legal service for assistance with family law and family violence issues, a key concern in the area.

Of even more concern is the number of young people between the ages of 12 and 25 accessing the Boronia office and outreach services, peaking at 56 young people in 2010 with more than 50% of these young people seeking assistance in relation to family or domestic violence issues.

Recently there has been considerable media attention around the proposal of the Yarra Ranges Council to introduce a by-law prohibiting sleeping in cars. With the high level of family violence and the need for families to seek temporary refuge in cars, combined with limited low cost housing options in the area, it is a concern to ECLC that some people with very special needs may be caught in this proposed by-law and disadvantaged even further when in actual fact what they need is more support.

Combined with the lack of affordable housing and the alarming statistics in relation to family violence, it is not surprising that the community is actively supporting the push for an additional ECLC office in the Yarra Ranges.

With a more accessible legal service in the Yarra Ranges, some of these needs could be met by providing more immediate assistance for clients wanting to use the court system to access intervention orders, along with explanations and support around how to feel safe if wanting to remain in their own home.

Lobbying will continue speaking to the new members of parliament for the Yarra Ranges along with key service providers and the funding body for the purpose of establishing an additional ECLC office in the Yarra Ranges.

Denise Budge, Outer East Manager



Neighbour Day

In the lead up to Neighbour Day on Sunday 27th March, Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) is encouraging residents involved in a dispute with their neighbours to have a chat and try to come to a solution.

ECLC CEO Michael Smith said that resolving neighbourhood disputes early can have benefits for everyone involved. "Having a dispute with your neighbour can be stressful, costly and time consuming. We see a lot of clients at ECLC where differences between parties have caused significant conflict."



"If you're having problems with noisy neighbours try talking to them as a first step. Sometimes people won't be aware that there is a problem, especially if it's a dog that barks when they're out. Let them know how it's affecting you and see if there's a way you can work together to remedy the problem."

Residents who can't resolve an issue this way and who are unsure of their rights should obtain legal advice about their particular situation. Free and independent legal advice is available from the Eastern Community Legal Centre or residents can contact the Dispute Settlement Centre to assist in resolving disputes. Last year ECLC assisted over 160 clients with neighbourhood disputes.

"Remember that people have different ways of doing things: different ideas, opinions and interests which inevitably clash at times. A small amount of shared understanding can go a long way to avoiding drawn out conflicts," he said.

Neighbour Day is Australia's annual celebration of community, bringing together the people next door, across the street or on the next farm for a beer, a barbie or just a cuppa. For more info see www.neighbourday.org

New National Convenor

Congratulations are also in order for the new Convenor of the National Association of Community Legal Centres, ECLC's own Michael Smith!



The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) is the association of state community legal centre organisations in Australia. Member organisations represent around 200 community legal centres nationally.

Michael had previously represented Victorian CLC's on the Association. As National Convenor (essentially the National Chairperson) he will play a key role in supporting and assisting community legal centres to provide quality services, providing a national voice for CLCs and their clients, developing and co-ordinating national policy and advancing the interests of CLCs within Australia.

Helen Killmier, ECLC's Chairperson commented, "The Board are excited for Michael in his appointment to this important national leadership role. "This will provide him the opportunity to lead and contribute to national policy and work to strengthen the community legal sector within Australia through forums and service improvements. Congratulations to Michael from the Board and everyone at ECLC."

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
- Balwyn Welfare Association
- Blackburn English Language School
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- 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 Phillips Fox
- EACH
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Service) Family Access Network
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Gateway LLEN
- GordonCare
- 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
- NACLC
- 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
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Yarra Valley Community Health Service
- Volunteers and members of ECLC