

Legal services in Victoria that can help your client can be placed into five categories:

- **Community Legal Centres**, provide free legal education, advice and representation.

There are specialist Centres who are experts in different areas of law – for example Tenants Victoria. There are also generalist services that cover a geographic area and assist with many areas of law – for example Barwon Community Legal Service.

Generally, Community Legal Centres are more likely to assist people who do not have the funds to hire a private lawyer.

- **State-based Legal Aid Commissions**, such as Victoria Legal Aid, provide legal advice and representation especially in the areas of Criminal Law and Family Law.

They also may pay for private lawyers to do work for a client – this is called a Grant of Aid.

- **Private Lawyers**, provide legal advice and representation for a fee. They are usually arranged into Law Firms that may work in many different areas of law, or may specialise in just a few like Family Law or WorkCover Claims. Some private lawyers, especially in Criminal Law and Family Law, help clients who are financially disadvantaged when their fees are paid for by a Grant of Aid from Victoria Legal Aid.

- **Government Departments or Ombudsmans**, provide free dispute resolution which help people and businesses come to a fair agreement to resolve a legal issue.

These services will operate for a particular type of dispute – like the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman, or the Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria. Others, like the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria, specialise in mediation for issues like neighbourhood disputes.

Some government departments, for example Consumer Affairs Victoria, will help with both resolving a dispute and investigating if a business has broken the law.

- **Courts or Tribunals**, provide a legal process that can lead to a temporary ('interim') or a final decision being made by a 'judicial officer' – for example a Magistrate in the Magistrates' Court of Victoria.

The staff of a Court or Tribunal cannot give a person legal advice about whether they will be successful or not in their claim – instead they might give information about their own Court processes. Still, this is enough information for some people to advocate for themselves.



Specialist Legal Services in the Barwon Region

The Barwon Region also has a number of other speciality services that can help with specific legal issues or specific clients. We particularly want to emphasise these services that operate in the Barwon Region:

The Deakin Student Legal Service (DSLS) provides additional legal help for students of Deakin University. This service is provided by Barwon Community Legal Service.

☎ 1300 430 599

📄 [DUSA | DUSA | Deakin Student Legal Service](#)

Rights Information & Advocacy Centre, provide individual advocacy to people with a disability, their family or their carer, which is a one-on-one approach, undertaken by an advocate to prevent or address instances of unfair treatment or abuse. ☎ (03) 5222 5499
✉ referrals@riac.org.au.

The **Tenancy Assistance and Advocacy Program**, provided by **Cultura**, can provide advice and assistance in relation to private residential tenancy matters and can also provide advocacy at VCAT for low income earners and victims of family violence.

☎ (03) 5221 6044

✉ taapbarwon@diversitat.org.au

The **Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)** provides free legal advice and representation for the Koori community, including information, duty lawyer services, and casework in Criminal, Civil and Family Law matters, as well as an “On-Call” after-hours service.

☎ 1800 064 865

📄 www.vals.org.au

Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative has a Local Justice and Koori Youth Justice program that improves outcomes for community members who are already or at risk of coming into contact with the justice system. The program aims to increase community knowledge of the justice system and community rights so negative contact is reduced.

☎ (03) 5277 0044 |

📄 www.wathaurong.org.au

✉ admin@wathaurong.org.au

📍 62 Morgan Street, North Geelong VIC 3215

Victoria Legal Aid

📍 Level 2, 199 Moorabool St, Geelong

☎ Geelong Office - 1800 196 200

☎ Victoria Legal Aid Help Line - 1300 792 387 |

📄 www.legalaid.vic.gov.au

The Magistrates' Court of Victoria

☎ Geelong - General Enquiries: (03) 4249 4800 📄 www.mcv.vic.gov.au

✉ gmc@courts.vic.gov.au

📍 Railway Terrace, Geelong

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) –

☎ Geelong – (03) 5215 8591

📄 www.disputes.vic.gov.au

✉ doj-dscv-bsw@justice.vic.gov.au

📍 DSCV Geelong – Lift A, Level 5, 30A Little Malop Street, Geelong

Consumer Affairs Victoria

☎ Geelong – 1300 558 181

📄 www.consumer.vic.gov.au

📍 Geelong Justice Service Centre, Level 5, 30A Little Malop Street, Geelong VIC 3220

