



COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

# Annual Report 2018



## VISION

A just society in which all people have equal access to, and status under, the law; and a legal system which is humane, fair and equitable.

## PURPOSE

To contribute to the provision of legal services in order to promote, protect and enhance the rights and interests of individuals and groups within our region who are disadvantaged in their access to justice.

To contribute to the provision of legal education and community development activities to educate and empower individuals and groups within our region who are disadvantaged in their access to knowledge.

To contribute to the reform of laws and structural inequities to achieve humane fair and equitable outcomes for individuals and groups within our region and the wider community.

### BOARD

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Chair: Mark Edmonds  
Treasurer: McFarlane Pattinson  
Secretary: Julie Clarke  
Emma Wagg  
Ian Parsons  
Jacqui Heffernan  
Lauren Watt  
Peter Jacobson\*  
Tom Lynch

### STAFF

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Executive Officer: Nick Hudson  
Principal Lawyer: Mandi Hyland  
Principal Social Worker: Rose Carnes\*  
Karen Holl  
Operations Manager: Bryanna Connell  
Community Lawyers: Carolyn Howe\*  
Elsie Stokie  
Emma Cvitak  
Geordie Stapleton  
Lauren Hutson  
Lee Bolton\*  
Louise Thorsen  
Marijana Graljuk  
Megan Alford  
Mikala McIntyre\*  
Sam Hawkins\*  
Shane Foyster  
Social Worker: Judy Rosson  
Community Legal Education  
& Development Worker: Jillian Chapman\*  
Alexandria Jones  
Administration Officers: Grace Forrest  
Charmaine Floyd  
Liz Flynn  
Casual Reception Workers: Hollie Lyons  
Raphaelle Meikle-Stewart  
Thomas Edwards

\* resigned during year

## CLIENT STORIES

BCLS highly values and protects the confidentiality and privacy of our clients. No real client names are used in this report and some details have been amended to protect privacy.

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**COVER IMAGE:** The Tachyglossus Mosaic at Colac Lake Foreshore, completed by local artists, schools, community organisations and community members of the Colac Otway Region. The Mosaic is based on the footprint of Tachyglossus, an ancient ancestor of the echidna which roamed the western basalt plains approximately 40,000 years ago, and is in the shape of Lake Colac with totems representing Bunjil the wedge tailed eagle and Waa the Crow, flying in the direction of Wathaurong country to the East, Black and White Cockatoos flying in the direction of the Mara nations to the West, and the Eel and Smelt, a small fish, important food sources for the local Gulidjan/Kolakngat people. Also represented is the Boomerang, Manna Gum Leaf and Red Rock Volcano. Mosaic Artist: Libby McKinnon - Designer: Glenn Romanis - Wood Carvers: John McCall and Brad West - Stone Wall Artisan: Simon Witham - Indigenous plantings: Rob Graner. Photo by Shane Foyster



# Chair & Executive Officer

**Mark Edmonds and Nick Hudson**

Over the past few years BCLS has grown considerably and we have recently invested in facilities and equipment to support the growing organisation. Delivering business-as-usual services, implementing new programs and coping with growth and its consequences has been our focus over that period. In contrast, this year has been more one of consolidation and we have focussed on developing a new strategic plan to direct our efforts through to 2021 and improving our organisational foundations to deliver on that plan.

Our community and clients should always be at the centre of our work and their needs guide and inform our decision making. The process of developing the plan rightly included extensive consultation, multiple workshops with staff, Board, volunteers and external stakeholders and took around six months to complete. All of the parties were well engaged with the process and plenty of input and feedback was received. The end result is a useful and ambitious plan which will serve BCLS well for the years ahead.

During the plan's development it became obvious that the BCLS structure, which had remained unchanged through many years of growth, could no longer support current operations let alone further growth. BCLS underwent a minor restructure to expand administration capacity with the introduction of an Operations Manager position and strengthen internal strategic leadership by creating an executive leadership group to oversee progress against the strategic plan. This new structure working well and the leadership group is focussing on practical activities that will improve the organisation and help to further its purposes. An overview of the new plan can be seen on page 39.

Of course our work assisting clients and the community continued throughout the year. Our family violence and social work projects received funding extensions and we also participated in new project with the Consumer Action Law Centre to develop our consumer law expertise. Our professional and dedicated team continues to deliver excellent services locally and contributes positively to the broader justice sector and community. A big thank you to all of our staff and volunteers, your dedication and efforts are incredible and really make a difference for our clients and the broader community. Thank-you as well to our volunteer Directors who bring a great range of skills, experience and enthusiasm to BCLS. With the new plan in place we are confident that BCLS is well-placed to face the future and we look forward to continue working with you all in the year ahead.

# Principal Lawyer

**Mandi Hyland**

2017 – 2018 has been a year of growth for BCLS. We appreciate the need for our services to be community based. We operate legal services from Corio Area Health, Colac Area Health, Norlane Child and Family Services as well as Deakin University and the Family Relationship Centre. Legal advice appointments can be either in person or by telephone, again expanding our services for those unable to travel to a regular appointment venue. We operate legal appointments at night on a Tuesday as well as our usual daytime services.

We continue to grow our services both in the areas of law that we now offer to assist with, and with the number of new programs that we are doing. This in turn has led to new staff that we have welcomed.

We farewelled our lawyers Mikala, Lee, Carolyn and Sam who left us to grow their legal careers in other directions and we wish them well in their new roles. We welcomed new lawyers Shane Foyster and Emma Cvitak who bring with them a variety of work and life experiences and will add new ideas to our ongoing programs. Other lawyers have grown from part time to full time. We also welcomed a new community legal education worker, Alexandria Jones.

Our Family Violence services at court have grown, thanks to funding support. We appointed Lauren Hutson as our new Family Violence Support project worker and this has led to increased client demand and more holistic services for those clients suffering family violence. All our lawyers work as duty lawyers at Colac Magistrates Court and at Geelong Magistrates Court, assisting those people applying for Intervention Orders. This is a huge area of need. Our triage system is growing, our procedures becoming more

streamlined, and the involvement of our social work program into these services means an all-round improvement in court experiences for the clients.

New lawyer Shane took on the role of project worker for our joint project with Jobwatch and Hume Riverina CLC in order to expand our consumer law knowledge and offer more assistance to those clients having consumer issues. All lawyers joined in the training, so a relatively small project has increased lawyer knowledge across the practice and we have expanded our casework guidelines to include this new area of law. This project has now officially finished, but we are continuing on with a partnership approach to the consumer law work, and hope to see more funding for this area in the future.

Louise Thorsen became involved in our Minerva/CASA program and has been attending there weekly to offer legal advice in the areas of family violence and family law, whilst also assisting the caseworkers there by offering community education sessions. The evaluation of this year's work on the project has been very positive and we feel sure that this part of our work will continue in the future. We are hopeful of being able to expand this service to allow a lawyer to be based at Minerva/CASA for more hours each week.

Our services offered to Deakin Students with our Sort-It program now operate at two campuses -Deakin Waterfront and Deakin Waurin Ponds. Our project worker Marijana Hawkins sees students and takes on casework, often for international students. This work varies from employment difficulties to housing problems, car accidents to debts. The number of appointments has varied but we are hopeful this will grow in future years.

Our work includes clinics for criminal law matters and for family law matters, both of which have been run with the assistance of local lawyers who provide clients with free legal advice. We are lucky to have dedicated lawyers who come in on a regular basis, and often at short notice if we are short staffed.

Elsie Stokie, our longest serving employee, was placed at Social Security Rights for a secondment this year, in order to be immersed in client work in that area and to see how a specialist CLC operates. This proved a great success and in 2019 we will endeavor to send more lawyers on short secondments to other specialist organisations in order to improve our in-house knowledge.

We also now run an in-house divorce clinic which is organized by Louise and Emma. A divorce is often important for many reasons, including for family violence victims being able to have closure of a past relationship. This is a popular clinic, being booked often many weeks in advance, and we will look to expand our offering of this service next year if demand increases.

Our plan for future expansion of legal services also includes areas of employment law and in prevention of elder abuse. We are hoping to work on connections with the local indigenous communities in the next year, as this is an area where we do not have much interaction and would like to increase our connectedness.

Within our office, our senior lawyer Geordie Stapleton took over the running of our Deakin Intern program. She has continued to organise our Deakin students who are placed with us for fifteen days to learn the realities of working in a legal practice. This program involves all the staff in the teaching of our law students and it is pleasing to see so many of those students stay on and volunteer for our service long after their internship has finished. This program is now highly regarded by the University who recognize the time and effort that we put into it.

Students continue to come to us for their Practical Legal Training, needed by them in order to be admitted as a lawyer. They are a welcome resource for us, taking part in seeing clients for drop in sessions and doing follow up casework. This greatly expands our capacity to take on matters and assist more clients.

Also within our office we have some innovative new committees – including our Environmental Committee working on ways to reduce our organisation's environmental footprint, and our Fun Committee organising team bonding activities. These initiatives were led by the staff themselves and it is good to see such enthusiasm.

Our new education worker Alex is full of new ideas and has encouraged all our lawyers to participate in community education sessions on a very regular basis. Our topics and geographical areas covered have grown during the year. We are hopeful of some exciting new educational tools in 2019, including working on some videos.

BCLS could not operate without the support from our wonderful volunteers. This year I would particularly like to acknowledge Victor Galaz, a qualified lawyer who offered us a year of full time legal work and Martin Ching, a lawyer volunteer who not only works on our night service on a regular basis, but for the past few years he has opened his home regularly to our volunteers and staff for dinners to thank all of our volunteers for their hard work. We very much appreciate all their efforts. Every one of our volunteers contribute to the BCLS successes.

On a personal level I appreciate the support of the Board and the Leadership Team. Our EO Nick has been supportive of new ideas and growth and BCLS is well placed to grow into a healthy future.

# Principal Social Worker

Karen Holl

*“There is much to be gained from an alliance between social workers and the legal profession”<sup>1</sup>*

This statement by Philip Swain in his contribution to **Social Work in the Shadow of the Law** in part reflects the initial rationale for the inclusion of social workers at BCLS. Research indicating improved outcomes for women when social workers and lawyers collaborate combined with the growing awareness of the prevalence and devastating impacts of family violence on women and their children, prompted the 2016 establishment of in-house specialist family violence social work at BCLS. By providing additional support, it was anticipated that a woman’s experience of the legal process in relation to family violence would be improved and that this in turn would assist them in their recovery from family violence.

Findings from the evaluation of the 1st year of the project conducted by Amanda George, confirm the initial rationale for the project with women reporting positive outcomes such as “it was like someone came and gave me a new life”. In addition, all of the women who participated in the 1st year’s evaluation agreed about the value of having lawyers and social workers working together. Some of the feedback from women included statements such as “I felt listened to...it made me stronger and clearer dealing with my lawyer” and “I was guided through the legal process...even when I was overwhelmed and wanted to give up”.

153 women have been assisted by a social worker, since the inception of the project. The social work team comprises Karen Holl, who joined as the Principal social worker in November 2017 and Judy Rosson an experienced social worker who joined the team in April 2018. Emma Mackie a social work student from Deakin University worked with the program from January to June 2017 and the team eagerly anticipates the addition of 2 social work students from Latrobe University from August 2018. In addition, the project team looks forward to recruiting volunteer social workers to further increase its capacity to respond to women seeking assistance and support as they escape and recover from family violence.

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1 **Social Work in the Shadow of the Law**, (2018), Rice, S, Day, A. and Briskman, L. (Eds), The Federation Press, Aust. p.5



# Law Student Volunteers

BCLS offers a range of volunteering roles for law students at our service including Lawyer Assistance, Court Duty, Night Service, CLE activities and various other office based positions. We aim to provide these students with meaningful and practical experiences within a legal setting that add to their professional growth and learning over the length of their degree. They in turn make our working life easier by improving service delivery and aiding us in helping our clients to the best of our ability.

## THE NUMBERS:

We had 50 law students assist us during the year.

Number of law students who assisted in specific roles (some students occupied multiple roles or changed positions during their time with us):

- Night Service ..... 9
- Community Legal Education ..... 3
- Lawyer / Office Assistant ..... 15
- FV Duty Lawyer Service / Project ..... 32
- Outreach Services ..... 2



# Lawyer Volunteers

We also have volunteer lawyers attend our Night Service every Tuesday evening to provide family and general law advice and also twice a month for our Criminal Law Clinic. As we don't have funding to provide family or criminal law advice, we would not be able to offer these services without the generous contribution of private lawyers. They enhance our service delivery by increasing our capacity to help those most in need within our community.

## THE NUMBERS:

We had 33 lawyers and 1 barrister assist us during the year.

Number of volunteer lawyers per service:

- Criminal Law Clinic ..... 5
- Night Service ..... 30
- BCLS Drop-in services ..... 1



# Community Legal Education and Community Development



**80+**

requests for legal  
information sessions



**51**

family law sessions at the  
Family Relationship Centre



**33+**

consultation sessions



**20+**

service promotion stalls



**Lots**

of networking opportunities

During the year we delivered over 200 community legal education events to hundreds of community members.

We work closely with our community to deliver legal education and community development projects that educate and empower individuals and local service providers. Our program aims to increase community members' understanding of their legal rights and build the capacity of service providers to better support their clients with legal problems.

We aim to find and work with the most at need clients and deliver legal education and projects in new and innovative ways that address emerging trends in case work and the legal need in the Barwon region.

This year Barwon Community Legal Service continued to provide responsive and tailored legal education workshops with a wide range of community groups and local service providers. Alongside our regular legal education outreach to local community groups, we continued our Law for Community Workers training series where we provided training to local community workers on "Identifying Legal Issues and Finding Legal Help for Clients" which has encouraged strong referral pathways and assists local organisations to better support their clients experiencing legal problems. We also provided our regular Introduction to Australian law and court tour legal education program in partnership with Diversitat to a number of newly arrived communities to the Greater Geelong region which aims to provide important legal information to CALD communities.

In addition to our regular CLE program, highlights from this year include:

- Hosting our 2017 Law Week event at the Corio Community Health Centre providing free legal health checks and information to the local Corio community. We engaged with over 70 community members and completed 30 legal health checks with people which helped to identify hidden legal issues and connect people with free legal advice.
- Partnering with our local health, education and government agencies to facilitate the 2017 Barwon Month of Action, a month long community campaign focused on our local region which aims to raise awareness of and prevent men's violence against women and their children through community participation in events and activities. We worked together to launch the program at Deakin University's Institute of Koori Education and hosted a community conversation event at the Geelong Library - 'Beyond Pink and Blue' which sought to address how rigid gender stereotypes lead to family violence.
- Standing alongside 22 local organisations to sign the Statement of Commitment Against Family Violence along with working with the Barwon Area Integrated Family Violence Committee for the 16 days of activism to run the local Pizza Box Campaign which aimed to get the message of violence against women and children into homes in the Geelong region, through placing a sticker with messages about ending violence against women and children on the top of take away pizza boxes.
- Participating in the 2017 Barwon Respect Netball Cup which saw 9 schools from around the Geelong region participate in interactive workshops focused on respectful relationships, how to be an active bystander and local support services for young people, alongside a fun and competitive netball competition.
- Collaborating with Victoria Legal Aid and Djirra (Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service) at the 2017 Sisters Day Out event promoting legal health and wellbeing for young Indigenous women.
- Delivering workshops as part of the Justice Education Program in partnership with CatholicCare which works with local high school students to provide education around the legal system and their legal rights. We ran workshops at our office and at the Geelong Magistrates' Court focusing on family violence and the criminal law process.
- Convening an interactive panel discussion and workshop on trauma informed practice at the 2017 National Association of Community Legal Centres Conference. The entertaining and informative session was facilitated by BCLS and included expert panelists from knowmore, First Step Legal, BCLS and Bridge to Justice. The panel brought together a number of presentations to provide a forum for discussion and sharing of ideas and was well received by the audience.





Students participating in the 2017 Respect Cup netball competition



BCLS Lawyers Shane Foyster and Sam Hawkins presenting Law for Community Workers Session - 18 Feb



Deadly Dancers at 2017 Barwon Month of Action program launch



Deakin O Week



Barwon Month of Action "Beyond Pink and Blue" event at Geelong Library



BCLS standing alongside 22 local organisations for the Statement of Commitment Against Family Violence

## DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

Since 1 July 2015, when the Commonwealth Government made changes to the way in which the Disability Support Pension (DSP) was assessed, it has been increasingly difficult for clients with long-term disabilities to receive this important support. Many people who could be eligible remain on Newstart Allowance with no ability to work or to meet their 'mutual obligation' requirements, leaving them at risk of their payments being cut off completely, because their very disability prevents them from taking the steps they need to apply for a DSP. Two recent cases where BCLS successfully represented clients to obtain the DSP highlight just how difficult the process can be.

### Paul's Story

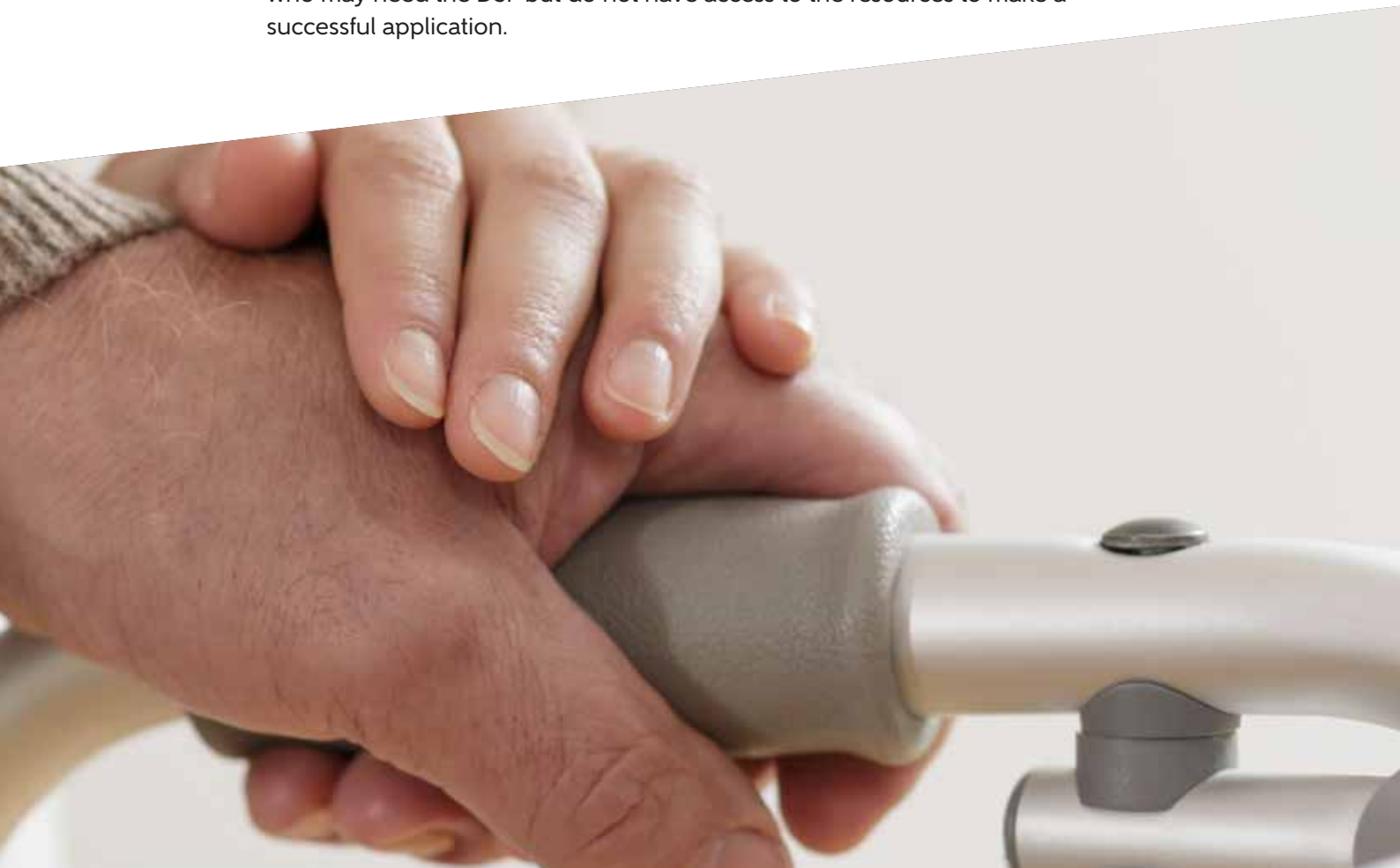
Paul had an intellectual disability and could not read or write. He had previously been on DSP before the changes and didn't understand why he had been put on Newstart over 2 years ago. Paul wasn't able to understand letters he was being sent by Centrelink, or the form to make a new DSP claim. BCLS wrote to Centrelink asking for the records for previous claims, and then arranged for Paul to see specialists in clinical psychology and cognitive impairment. Paul had great difficulty attending appointments and the BCLS Social Work service supported him to do this. After 5 months, he faced a final obstacle: he couldn't afford to see the exact specialist he needed for the conditions he had. Luckily, three weeks later Centrelink decided to schedule an appointment with their own doctor who could make an assessment. BCLS then wrote to Centrelink summarizing all the medical evidence in relation to Paul and how this made him eligible for the DSP. After all this, a total of 8 months, Paul was finally re-instated on the DSP.



## Jack's Story

Jack had degeneration of his hips requiring two Total Hip Replacements as well as serious mental health concerns. He had applied for DSP twice and been rejected each time, on the grounds that until both Total Hip Replacements were completed his medical condition wasn't 'fully treated.' After the first one was done, the fear of another surgery and low quality of life with very little income for necessary medication meant that Jack's mental health quickly degenerated to the point he was unable to function. BCLS assisted Jack to review the rejection of his DSP on the grounds that his mental health condition should have also been considered as this prevented him from having any further surgery. BCLS assisted Jack to obtain reports from specialists who assessed his mental health condition as the highest severe category under the DSP rules. BCLS then advocated for Jack for a further 6 months before a decision to grant the DSP was finally made, more than 14 months after Jack originally applied.

These cases highlight an issue BCLS assists clients with every week – the impracticality of the current DSP rules. Under the current system it is only with the assistance of countless professionals and support workers that clients are meeting the strict requirements. Although BCLS helps those that contact our service, there are no doubt many hundreds of others in the Barwon Region who may need the DSP but do not have access to the resources to make a successful application.



# Clinical Legal Education

BCLS hosted 9 Deakin student interns during the year. There was a total of three intakes and all up they completed 1026 hours with us. Geordie took over as the sole supervisor of the clinical legal education program.

We commence the program with an intensive induction period where students were able to sit in with experienced lawyers and learn from their skills and expertise. Students were then able to learn about legal areas common to CLCs through information sessions run by many of our lawyers on areas such as Wills and POAs, Motor Vehicle Accidents, Neighborhood Disputes, Family Violence Intervention Orders, Centrelink and Civil Debts.

The next phase of the program involved the students starting to see their own clients and develop their skills in file management and client engagement. They also commenced a Community Legal Education project under Alex's tutelage.

Other activities that the interns were involved in included going to the Family Relationship Centre to observe our information session given to recently separated parents on Family Law issues, and attending the Geelong Magistrates' Court to shadow the duty lawyer.

It was great having the interns with us, and some of our alumni have gone on to volunteer with us, and even undertake paid work which is great for the service and the CLC sector.



*Deakin Interns Raj, Danita and Peter with Geordie Stapleton*

*“Thank you for your work with the internship program. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and it has really helped me to determine that I want to practise law.”*

*“I appreciate that we are trusted to run interviews as this has not been the case in my previous volunteer experiences. I have learnt much more this way.”*

*“I particularly liked how supported I felt during the internship and the debrief sessions with my supervisor were really good for my confidence”.*

*“I have found the work really beneficial in terms of dealing with clients and solving legal issues. Having the opportunity to see clients on my own whilst still being supervised has been great for my learning.”*

# Consumer Law Project – Collaboration Works!

BCLS and our clients benefitted from a major project this financial year coordinated by the Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) (FCLC). BCLS was partnered with a specialist CLC, the Consumer Action Law Centre (CALC) to improve services to clients in our catchment area in the areas of consumer, credit, debt and insurance law. Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) also participated in this project at the same time for their catchment area surrounding Albury Wodonga.

From December 2017 until June 2018, CALC provided an exceptional amount of training and support, including:

- Training day at CALC office in Melbourne for BCLS lawyers;
- Online training sessions on consumer and credit law;
- Four onsite visits to BCLS with training sessions and secondary consultations;
- CLE session delivered to local community workers; and,
- Ongoing advice for all casework done by BCLS through a workers advice line.

The Project was monitored by FCLC and independently evaluated by a consultant from the Incus Group. The results were in a Report by the FCLC on the benefits of collaboration, entitled 'Collaboration Works' (accessible at: [https://www.fclc.org.au/generalist\\_specialist\\_clc\\_project](https://www.fclc.org.au/generalist_specialist_clc_project)).

The Consumer Law Project resulted in increased services for clients, with BCLS working on 61 consumer law related cases and providing 56 consumer law related advices during the six months of the Project. There was a marked increase in the confidence of BCLS staff to assist clients in this area of law, and this was reflected by client responses to surveys, with over 90% of clients stating they were very satisfied with BCLS' service and 75% strongly agreeing that BCLS assisted them with advice or casework to improve their situation. The Consumer Law Project has strengthened the relationship with CALC and also HRCLS, and BCLS is now planning Consumer Law services into all areas of its work, including CLE, student training, network meetings and ongoing casework.

*"Very efficient service, the girls in reception were very friendly. It is a very valuable service that you provide."*

*"Most of my participants (ie clients) could greatly benefit from this information. The areas covered were really relevant"*

“

*"We use the services provided by CALC a lot and having a local service that we can approach for assistance is really important. There is a lot of need in Geelong and it is important that clients have local support services they can turn to for assistance. Yes – prior to working with [BCLS lawyer] as part of this project, my knowledge of BCLS was limited to it being a phone number referral. Working with [BCLS lawyer] as part of this project has helped my understanding of the services that BCLS provide, including the opportunity to use their expertise as a secondary consult when working with Financial Counselling clients."*

*Local Financial Counsellor, Diversitat Financial Counselling*

”

*"I learnt so much, it was very informative. Highly recommended. Great presentation overloaded with great information. Will be recommending other (job network) work coaches attend."*



*CALC Senior Lawyer Lachlan Edwards presenting training at BCLS Geelong on 7 March 2018*

*"I'm really surprised.. Little miracles for me... Useful to go to the one place."*

*"The advice I received was very helpful, it has set things in motion. We finally get to have a say after 5 years."*

## Roger's Story

As a Generalist CLC, we provide a lot of advice to clients who have been involved in motor vehicle accidents, many of whom are uninsured. We advise on their options in terms of liability, settlement offers, defending proceedings and enforcing civil debts. We received more in-depth training from Consumer Action Law Centre about insurance law and external dispute resolution schemes (such as the Financial Ombudsman Service) that all insurers must comply with, which provide clients with a cost free effective avenue for disputes with insurance companies.

In one case, we provided advice and casework to Roger who was involved in a car accident and was uninsured. The other driver was insured and Roger alleged she was at fault. However, the insurance company representing her blamed Roger and wrote a letter of demand to him and requested his version of events. He sought the assistance of BCLS. We determined Roger was not liable and wrote to the insurer. We also asked the insurer if they had a description of the accident in writing from their insured – they stated several times over the phone that they did not but would be holding Roger liable anyway. After more than 45 days the insurer had not formally responded to our letter. We sought advice from CALC during secondary consultations and then assisted the client to apply to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Just four days later, the insurer wrote stating they had now conducted a complete review of the file, that their insured was liable for the accident and that they would be paying in full for the damage to Roger's vehicle.

## Suzanne's Story

BCLS runs a duty lawyer service for Family Violence Intervention Orders at the Magistrates Court in Geelong and Colac 4 days per week. Some clients have been subjected to economic abuse and are left with crippling debts after a relationship. However as immediate safety is the first concern, these issues are not always discussed. Due to the training from CALC we were more aware of the scale of this issue and as a result asked clients more questions.

Suzanne sought our assistance at court and we identified a number of debts arising from car loans that were not to her benefit. These debts were caused by irresponsible lending by the credit provider, and included thousands of dollars of additional warranty products that Suzanne did not even know she had purchased. The credit provider had also obtained a judgement against Suzanne in Queensland and listed defaults on her credit report. We worked together with CALC, local Financial Counsellors, and a CLC in Brisbane to advise Suzanne on her options, including legal assistance to have the judgment set aside in Queensland. At the conclusion of the case, Suzanne had obtained safety for herself by getting an Intervention Order against her husband, had the debt for the car loans waived in full, the Court judgments set aside and she walked away debt-free with her credit report history cleared of all defaults.

## Imran's Story

Imran was an international student who contacted our service through the Deakin Student Legal Service. He hired a rental vehicle after seeing an advertisement of the hire car company that they allow extra drivers at no further fee. He collected a car to drive from Melbourne to Sydney, and three of his friends also came to register as drivers. The salesperson said he didn't have time to register all of them or complete the paperwork, so he just took copies of their drivers licenses. On the way to Sydney, one of our client's friends crashed the car. The hire car company then claimed that driver was not covered under the hire car policy, and that our client was liable to costs of more than \$17,000 for breach of contract and damage to the vehicle. We took detailed instructions and consulted with CALC about the case using the workers' advice line. We analysed the contracts supplied and wrote to the hire car company pointing out that the other drivers were covered under the contract. The hire car company reviewed the case and its own internal documents and found copies of all the different drivers licenses. They then determined that the driver who crashed the car was covered under the car hire contract and ceased any claim against our client.

# Examples of our Work

## **DIVORCE CLINIC**

We revamped our divorce clinic in September 2016. Practical Legal Training (PLT) students on placement assist clients to make online applications to the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) supervised by a BCLS lawyer. Although the new FCC process is streamlined and relatively simple, many of our clients do not have access to technology or lack the knowhow, so the clinics continue to be popular.

We have held 23 fortnightly clinics this year and clients attend for an initial appointment to complete the application and return a few weeks later to swear an Affidavit of Service. There have been 79 appointments over the year which have resulted in more than 40 successful divorce applications.

The clinics offer a valuable learning experience for our PLT students, providing opportunities to interview clients and, when circumstances are not straightforward, the students can hone their research and drafting skills with Affidavits and Minutes of Orders. A marriage certificate lost overboard might need to be explained to the Court, or maybe a Respondent cannot be found despite numerous attempts. The Court needs to know all the relevant facts.

Clients who access the clinic are grateful for our assistance. Many just want to close that particular chapter in their lives but for some it is also an important step in protecting their future.

## **NIGHT SERVICE**

Every Tuesday evening we run a Night Service for general and family law issues between 6pm and 8pm. The lawyers running these appointments are volunteers from private firms in the Geelong region who generously donate their time. Appointments are strictly for advice only, with no case work resulting. Due to work and family commitments, after hours appointments are becoming increasingly popular with clients, with the wait time for family law appointments using being approximately 4 weeks. This service has proven vital as it allows clients who are not able to utilise free legal services during normal business hours to have their needs met.

## **CRIMINAL LAW CLINIC**

Utilising the expertise of both volunteer lawyers from private firms and BCLS lawyers, we are able to see clients for advice only criminal law appointments on Tuesday afternoons. As many people in the community are not able to afford a lawyer or get funding, they are required to self-represent at court. Providing legal advice to these clients allows them to identify and exercise options available to them and also to better understand the court process and the possible outcomes. The most common types of matters relate to drink driving, license suspensions, traffic offences and assault.

## **DROP IN**

Law students, graduates and Practical Legal Training students play a crucial role in both the casework and appointments conducted at the BCLS office. Our drop-in service occurs four days a week and offers both face-to-face and telephone appointments. Students will interview the client to gain information and instructions, then discuss the legal advice and options with a supervising lawyer before providing this information to the client. Follow up case-work is allocated on a need and merits basis and often will be undertaken by the same student, under supervision, if appropriate. Legal issues that we commonly see during drop in include; Centrelink, fines, motor vehicle accidents and consumer credit and debt.

## **WILLS**

Whilst doing their legal internship at BCLS, Deakin students participate in a Wills Clinic. This service is designed to provide eligible clients with free advice and drafting of their Wills and medical Powers of

Attorney. This process involves an initial consultation, document drafting, client review and then a final appointment for signing. This service provides a valuable learning experience for the students and importantly peace of mind for our clients that their wishes will be followed and their loved ones taken care of following their death.

## **SOCIAL SECURITY**

The need for reliable income is a most basic need and BCLS assists clients with Social Security matters in Barwon and South Western Victoria. Advice is flexible and can be by telephone, drop-in or appointment. Since Jeanette Connolly left the Service early last year, Elsie Stokie is our Social Security practice lead. Elsie did a secondment to Social Security Rights Vic, a specialist legal service in Melbourne, a day a week for three months. This secondment was a great opportunity for her to receive training and develop skills in this specialised area of law. She and other BCLS lawyers provide advice, assistance, and casework in Social Security matters.

This year, a major number of casework requests were related to rejections or cancellations of Disability Support Pensions (DSP) and with the raising of debts including "Robo-debts". We built on National Welfare Rights and Seniors Rights Victoria resources, and shared this DSP and debt and appeals information with other community workers so that they could resource their clients with the information needed.

Elsie and Grace continue to resource and organise quarterly meetings of the Barwon DHS Centrelink Network which is an opportunity for local community workers and staff at Centrelink regional offices to exchange information and raise issues. BCLS is a member of the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN) which works to identify systemic issues through casework and works with Centrelink to advocate for improvements in the Social Security system.

## DEAKIN STUDENT LEGAL SERVICE

The Deakin Student Legal Service (DSLS) is a partnership between BCLS, Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) and the Deakin University Student Association. During the year this service rebranded from Sort-It! Deakin Legal Service for Students to the DSLS but we continue to provide FREE legal advice, casework and community legal education to Deakin students. BCLS provides services at Waterfront and Waurin Ponds and ECLC at Burwood every week. The service continues to be busy and we are seeing an increased number of clients compared to previous years, largely as a result of our work promoting the service at Deakin events such as O-Week. Students are assisted with a broad range of legal issues with students in Geelong most commonly seeking assistance with tenancy, fines and consumer law matters.

*"We have moved out of the property and it was all because of your help. Thanks a lot for that."*

## COLAC

BCLS continues to offer services to the Colac-Otway Region, providing duty lawyer services in Family Violence cases at the Colac Magistrates' Court on Monday mornings, general law appointments at Colac Area Health on Monday afternoons, and Community Legal Education sessions by request for local services and the general public. This year saw a change of staff as our local lawyer in the region, Carolyn Howe, moved to another role after many years of dedicated service, and a new lawyer, Shane Foyster, took on responsibilities for our Colac Service. The transition went smoothly with many BCLS lawyers contributing to the Colac Service and strong relationships continuing with workers from Colac Area Health, Otway Health, SAFVC, Victoria Police and support services across the Colac Otway region, which will continue to benefit BCLS and our clients in the years to come.

## NORLANE AND CORIO

Our Norlane and Corio services are based on a collaboration between health and legal organisations known as 'health justice partnerships'. At Norlane we see clients at the Norlane Child and Family Centre which is operated by the City of Greater Geelong and hosts a range of other family services including kindergarten, playgroup, Maternal and Child Health Nurse and counselling service amongst others. At Corio we are based at Barwon Health's Corio Community Health Centre which is a hub for a range of health and allied services. We are at Norlane on Monday mornings and Corio on Monday afternoons and early evenings. Health care and community workers play a vital role in being able to identify legal issues and help clients access our service. Our trusted relationships with the workers at these centres means that the legal needs of clients are identified and they are able to access legal services in a familiar and safe environment.

# Rebecca's Story

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIP CENTRE

Our strong partnership with the Geelong Family Relationship Centre (FRC) continued throughout 2017/2018. The FRC facilitates mediation between separating families so that resolutions to parenting disputes can be found without the need for Court intervention. As preparation for mediation, our lawyers give an overview of the Family Law and Court processes to FRC clients at weekly information sessions and offer appointments at the FRC office for any clients who would like personal legal advice about parenting and property matters.

This year in a further development of our relationship, BCLS and FRC collaborated to provide an information session for caseworkers at the Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre about supporting clients through family law mediation. Some common myths were debunked and the session was enthusiastically received by the workers. Both organisations were pleased with this success so we are looking for repeat opportunities and investigating possible new areas for collaboration.

Rebecca had severe mental and physical health conditions and had been receiving the Disability Support Pension (DSP) for many years. She travelled overseas regularly to visit her elderly parents.

After her father's death she asked Centrelink about the indefinite portability of her pension, and was not advised that this would trigger a review of her pension, which as a result was cancelled. She appealed to the Social Security Appeals Tribunal\* (SSAT) which decided that she was not eligible for the pension.

However Centrelink did not act on the decision and kept paying the DSP for a year and a half. During this time, Rebecca contacted Centrelink many times, notifying of changed addresses and overseas travel and believed DHS had decided not to cancel her payment. In June 2017 DHS realising their error, cancelled her DSP, raising a debt of over \$40,000. At this stage Rebecca came to BCLS. The BCLS lawyer appealed the raising of the debt, writing a submission on Rebecca's behalf, which was successful: the debt was waived.

Late in 2017, Rebecca had applied again for DSP and her application was rejected. This time BCLS assisted her to appeal to the Authorised Review Officer, and to obtain reports from doctors, specialists, and counsellors which addressed the DSP criteria. Finally, Centrelink granted her pension and back-paid amounts owing for the previous nine months that had elapsed since she had applied. Rebecca felt great relief that this ordeal was over: it had been a huge stress for her to have to cope with as well as dealing with her illnesses.

\* This appeal would now be made to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal

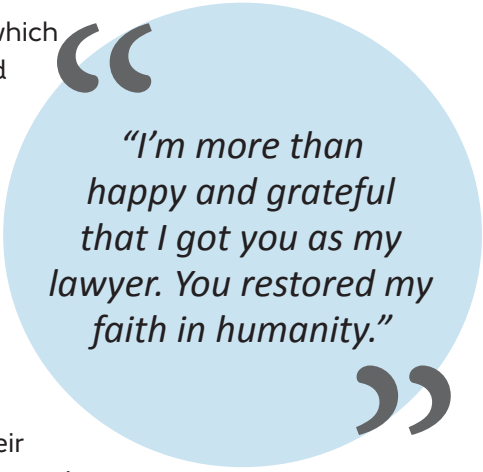
## FAMILY VIOLENCE

BCLS began delivering family violence services in the form of the duty lawyer service at the Geelong and Colac Magistrates Court in 2009. Today, BCLS has a number of different funding streams that we use to deliver more holistic services to our clients who are currently or have previously experienced family violence. This funding has allowed us to expand our role from that of a traditional duty lawyer at Court, co-locate a lawyer at the Sexual Assault and Family Violence Service and embed a social work service within our organisation.

Our Family Violence Project Worker oversees the external delivery and internal process of our family violence services. Through their work we have seen an increase in the amount, reach and quality of the service for clients as well as greater awareness from community workers and other external stakeholders of the assistance we are able to provide for their clients. In the first two years of the project, our lawyers assisted 1,505 client in Intervention Order matters at Court and provided advice to a further 396. In the year prior to receiving this funding we assisted 792 client at Court. The feedback from clients who have utilised our duty lawyer service at Court is overwhelmingly positive.

In addition, our Family Violence Project Worker offers triage appointments and assistance to clients to complete intervention order applications on Monday mornings at the Geelong Magistrates' Court. This work has resulted in a decrease in the time clients have to spend at Court and also reduced the trauma of giving evidence for Interim Orders as applications are drafted with greater specific detail.

We have also strengthened our triage service which helps clients who call for family violence related legal advice. Clients are now able to speak to one of our lawyers the day, which allows us to provide clients advice and information about the process before they attend court rather than waiting until they arrive at court on what is already a stressful and emotional day. Clients are able to consider what they are willing to accept as a resolution to the matter and feel comforted that the lawyer there on the day will have background knowledge of their situation and they won't have to retell their story again.



*"I'm more than happy and grateful that I got you as my lawyer. You restored my faith in humanity."*

This additional funding and the development of the Family Violence Project has worked to reduce the trauma for clients of applying for an Intervention Order and helped ensure that any associated legal issues are appropriately dealt with. This allows clients to begin to take steps towards moving forward with their lives and focusing on what is most important to them: knowing that they are safe from family violence and further abuse.

## THE SEXUAL ASSAULT AND FAMILY VIOLENCE CENTRE PROJECT

BCLS received funding in 2016 from the Department of Justice and Regulation to support the co-location of a lawyer in a specialist family violence service with the aim of providing a holistic service to victim survivors of family violence. The placement of a lawyer inside a specialist family violence service occurs in only one other service in Victoria, so our project and its success is of particular interest to the community legal sector.

The project proposal was to co-locate with Minerva Community Services. At the time we were preparing to commence the project, Minerva was undergoing a lot of organisational change: merging with Barwon Centre Against Sexual Assault to form the Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre (SAFVC); physically moving into the Geelong Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC); and finally recruiting and locating staff to work at The Orange Door support and safety hub. This situation involved staffing changes and also a level of uncertainty as Minerva negotiated their changed operating environment. It was a particularly challenging time to be starting a new project as other imperatives necessarily took a higher priority than establishing our co-location. It even took a while to find somewhere permanent to sit!

“Both lawyers were wonderful and [the child applicant] felt at ease with you and was so relieved. She said you were able to relate to her and were very caring and sensitive. You were both so beautiful to deal with. We are very thankful we found your service.”

Now in its second year, this project provides information and education to caseworkers as well as legal services to clients. The result is client-centric, innovative service delivery in a supportive environment. By focusing on our shared interest in just outcomes for clients, we have overcome caseworkers' initial wariness about dealing with lawyers and we can now provide a wraparound service for victims of family violence. Caseworkers, having been trained to identify legal issues, are now quick to make appropriate referrals. Clients are supported by caseworkers to engage with our lawyer and so feel more empowered

to make decisions and deal with consequential legal issues which otherwise would cloud their future.

This project has undergone external evaluation which has shown that the co-located service provided by BCLS has been very well received with a strong uptake by caseworkers and clients. Our lawyer provides advice, casework and limited representation across a number of areas of law including family violence, family law, fines & infringements, wills & estates, Centrelink and other administrative matters.

During the period covered by the evaluation, our lawyer saw 49 clients for a total of 66 matters. There were appearances at the Magistrates' Court, Federal Circuit Court and VCAT. SAFVC caseworkers are no longer wary of lawyers – there were 89 secondary consultations during the period across many areas of law. Four legal education sessions were delivered to SAFVC caseworkers, some in collaboration with Victoria Legal Aid and the Family Relationship Centre.

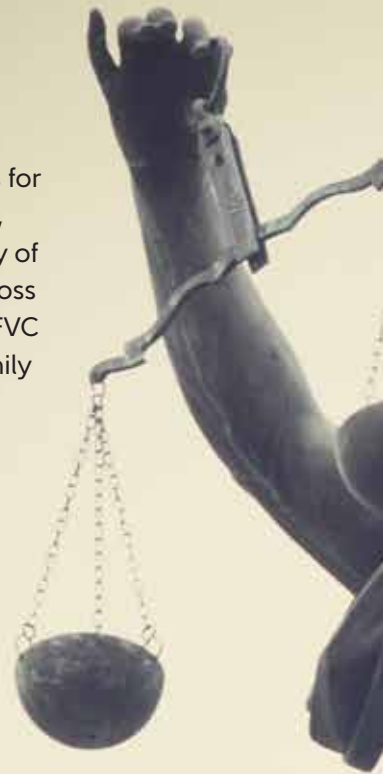
We are delighted with the positive evaluation which provides strong evidence for continued funding of the project.

*“I can't say enough how fabulous they were...they were very patient...I'm not the best at getting back to people but they kept me informed...its been amazing...I have been excluded from other services over the years over this, but this one has been different.’*

*I get nervous, confused and scatty when dealing with all this stuff. Often I can't understand stuff, but they are always very patient with me.”*

*“The main advantage for us are the secondary consults and the fact we know what is happening with clients which reduces a lot of misunderstandings about where things are at and informs how we work with women.”*

*–Caseworker*





## Anne's Story

Anne and Steven were in a de facto relationship for nearly 5 years and lived together with Anne's two children. Steven was abusive to Anne throughout the relationship but when it escalated to even more frightening levels Anne left the home with her two daughters. With nowhere to go she left all her belongings behind and couch surfed until she could find a more permanent place to live.

When she had finally found a new home Steven refused to return her things. The SAFVC caseworker introduced Anne to the co-located BCLS lawyer for legal assistance. The lawyer attended court with Anne to vary the existing Intervention Order to allow for communication through a lawyer or mediator so return of Anne's property could be negotiated. Our lawyer then negotiated with Steven and assisted Anne to arrange for police to attend with her so she could safely retrieve her belongings. The SAFVC provided funds to pay the removalists and Anne successfully got her possessions back.

Anne was listed on the lease as co-tenant with Steven. Since she had left Steven had let the rent go into arrears and Anne did not want to be responsible for the debt. Our lawyer contacted the property manager and negotiated to have Anne removed from the lease and advised her about transfer of her portion of the original bond.

Anne was extremely grateful to BCLS for their support and is looking forward to moving on with her life. Her daughters are thrilled to be sleeping in their own beds again and to have their favourite toys and clothes.

# Our Service Highlights



**3,000+**  
people supported



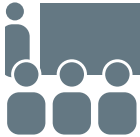
**1,738**  
people provided  
with legal advice and  
representation



**915**  
court appearances



**56**  
people assisted with  
social work support



**175+**  
community legal  
education activities



**65%**  
of clients are women



**11**  
law reform  
activities



**15%**  
of people assisted identify  
as living with a disability



**60%**  
of people assisted  
have low or no income



**50+**  
local, state and national  
networks attended



**9**  
outreach  
partnerships and  
locations



**17**  
social work, legal  
intern and PLT student  
placements



**83**  
volunteers



**75+**  
hours of interpreter usage

# Acknowledgements

BCLS gratefully acknowledges the support of the following organisations and people during the year:

94.7 The Pulse	Job Watch
Amanda George	Justice Connect
Barwon Health	KG Lawyers
Bellarine for Refugees	Leisure Networks
Bethany Community Services	Loddon Campespe Community Legal Centre
Cahill & Rowe Family Law	Martin Ching
Catholic Care	Minerva Community Services
Central Highlands Community Legal Centre	Monash University
Christine Couzens	Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre
City of Greater Geelong	National Association of Community Legal Centres
Colac Area Health	Netgain
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	Norlane Child and Family Centre
Consumer Action Law Centre	Outline Print Design
Deakin University	Peninsula Community Legal Centre
Deakin University Student Association	Perisic Lawyers
Diversitat	Reclaim the Night Collective Geelong
Dr Lee FitzRoy	Refugee Legal
Eastern Community Legal Centre	Regional Information and Advocacy Centre
EMC Group Geelong	Richard Marles
Family Relationship Centre Geelong	Roger O'Halloran & Co
Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria)	SalvoConnect
Fitzroy Community Legal Centre	Sarah Henderson
Foley's List	Senior Rights Victoria
FoRt	Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre
Frank Costa	Social Security Rights Victoria
Geelong Criminal Lawyers	Staff from the fORt
Geelong Family Relationship Centre	Stary Norton Halphen
Geelong Law Association	Surf Coast Shire
Geelong Law Courts	Victoria Legal Aid
Geelong Regional Library Corporation	Victoria Police
Gippsland Community Legal Centre	Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative
Gunditmara Aboriginal Cooperative	Victorian Law Foundation
Hume Riverina Community Legal Centre	West Justice
Inner Melbourne Community Legal	Whyte Just & Moore Lawyers
Jane Den Hollander	WS Lawyers

# Financial Statements

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.  
A.B.N. 75 659 039 490  
CONCISE FINANCIAL REPORT  
FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018**

The financial statements and specific disclosures included in the concise financial report have been derived from the financial report of Barwon Community Legal Service Inc.; the concise financial report cannot be expected to provide as full an understanding of the financial performance, financial position and financing and investing activities of the entity as the financial report of Barwon Community Legal Service Inc.; and further financial information can be obtained from the financial report which is available free of charge from the entity.



## INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.

### Report on the Concise Financial Report

#### Opinion

The concise financial report, which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2018, statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, and related notes, are derived from the audited financial reports of Barwon Community Legal Service Inc. for the year ended 30 June 2018.

In our opinion, the accompanying concise financial report, including the discussion and analysis is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report, in accordance with AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports.

#### Concise Financial Report

The concise financial report does not contain all the disclosures required by Australian Accounting Standards applied in the preparation of the audited financial reports of Barwon Community Legal Service Inc. Reading the concise financial report and the auditor's report thereon, therefore, is not a substitute for reading the audited financial reports and the auditor's reports thereon. The concise financial report and the audited financial reports do not reflect the effects of events that occurred subsequent to the date of our report on the audited financial reports.

#### Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial reports, which describe the basis of accounting. The financial reports have been prepared for the entities for the purpose of fulfilling the directors' financial reporting responsibilities under the *ACNC Act*. As a result, the financial reports may not be suitable for another purpose.

#### The Audited Financial Report and Our Report Thereon

We expressed an unmodified audit opinion on the audited financial reports in our report dated 23 October, 2018.

#### Directors' Responsibility for the Concise Financial Report

The directors are responsible for the preparation of the concise financial report in accordance with AASB 1039: Concise Financial Reports.

#### Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on whether the concise financial report is consistent, in all material respects, with the audited financial report based on our procedures, which were conducted in accordance with Auditing Standard ASA 810: Engagements to Report on Summary Financial Statements.

Stephen Kirtley  
Director

Dated this 13<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2018

Davidsons Assurance Services Pty Ltd  
101 West Fyans Street  
Geelong, Victoria 3220

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.**  
**A.B.N. 75 659 039 490**

**STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME**  
**FOR YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018**

	NOTES	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>REVENUE FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>		1,320,775	1,563,251
<b>EXPENSES FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>			
Employee Benefits Expense		1,104,953	1,192,739
Depreciation		23,614	23,245
Administration Expenses		271,877	375,690
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>		<u>1,400,444</u>	<u>1,591,674</u>
<b>NET RESULT FROM ORDINARY ACTIVITIES</b>		<u>(79,669)</u>	<u>(28,423)</u>
<b>OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME</b>		-	-
<b>TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR</b>		<u><u>(79,669)</u></u>	<u><u>(28,423)</u></u>

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.**  
**A.B.N. 75 659 039 490**

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**  
**AS AT 30 JUNE 2018**

	NOTES	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash		603,756	659,619
Receivables		23,687	20,648
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u><b>627,443</b></u>	<u><b>680,267</b></u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Fixed Assets		133,556	144,172
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<u><b>133,556</b></u>	<u><b>144,172</b></u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u><b>760,999</b></u>	<u><b>824,439</b></u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Payables		256,764	192,546
Provisions		202,838	218,918
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u><b>459,602</b></u>	<u><b>411,464</b></u>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions		7,297	39,206
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<u><b>7,297</b></u>	<u><b>39,206</b></u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<u><b>466,899</b></u>	<u><b>450,670</b></u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<u><b>294,100</b></u>	<u><b>373,769</b></u>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Reserves		9,040	9,040
Retained Profits		285,060	364,729
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<u><b>294,100</b></u>	<u><b>373,769</b></u>

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.**  
**A.B.N. 75 659 039 490**

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018**

	NOTES	2018 \$	2017 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
Payments to Employees		(1,152,942)	(1,135,119)
Other Operating Expenses		(267,168)	(350,833)
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
Government Grants		1,290,507	1,379,899
Interest Received		7,236	9,083
Other Operating Income		79,668	207,685
<b>NET CASH PROVIDED BY OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b><u>(42,699)</u></b>	<b><u>110,715</u></b>
<b>CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payments for purchase of Fixed Assets		(13,164)	(160,724)
<b>NET CASH PROVIDED BY INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b><u>(13,164)</u></b>	<b><u>(160,724)</u></b>
NET INCREASE IN CASH HELD		(55,863)	(50,009)
CASH AT THE BEGINNING OF THE REPORTING PERIOD		659,619	709,628
<b>CASH AT THE END OF THE REPORTING PERIOD</b>		<b><u>603,756</u></b>	<b><u>659,619</u></b>

**FUNDING SUMMARY**

BCLS greatly acknowledges funding from the following sources:

	Amount	Program
Commonwealth Attorney General's Department	\$595,257	CLSP
Victoria Legal Aid	\$551,144	CLSP
Department of Justice & Regulation	\$80,458	Family Violence Projects
Deakin University Student Association	\$58,284	Deakin Student Legal Service
Deakin University	\$8,000	Legal Internship
Federation for Community Legal Centres	\$6,489	Specialist CLC Pilot

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC.**  
**A.B.N. 75 659 039 490**

**STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2018**

	NOTES	RETAINED PROFITS	RESERVES	TOTAL
		\$	\$	\$
<b>BALANCE AT 1 JULY 2016</b>		393,152	9,040	402,192
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		(28,423)	-	(28,423)
<b>BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2017</b>		<u>364,729</u>	<u>9,040</u>	<u>373,769</u>
Total Comprehensive Income for the Year		(79,669)	-	(79,669)
<b>BALANCE AT 30 JUNE 2018</b>		<u><u>285,060</u></u>	<u><u>9,040</u></u>	<u><u>294,100</u></u>

**BARWON COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE INC**  
**A.B.N 75 659 039 490**

## **Discussion and Analysis of the Financial Statements**

The financial statements and disclosures in the concise financial report have been derived from the 2018 Financial Report. The discussion and analysis is provided to assist members in understanding the concise financial report. The discussion and analysis is based on Barwon Community Legal Service's financial statements and the information contained in the concise financial report has been derived from the full 2018 Financial Report of Barwon Community Legal Service.

### **INCOME STATEMENT**

The loss for the year is \$79,669 representing an increase of \$51,246 on the \$28,423 loss for last year. The service was affected by a delayed decision by the Department of Justice to renew Community Legal Centre Assistant Fund, Community Legal Centre Family Violence Fund and Family Violence Duty Lawyer Fund 2017-19 funding. Funding was confirmed in December 2017 commencing from January 8, 2018 resulting in a shortfall of income of \$79,058 for the period July to December 2017. A decision was taken to retain the program during the unfunded period in anticipation of a back dated funding decision, and acknowledging the work accomplished by the projects and the impact that redundancies would have on the service.

With the exception of this funding and the loss of Consumer Affairs Victoria tenancy funding in 2017, the 2018 result was similar to that of 2017.

### **BALANCE SHEET**

Net assets decreased by 21.3% this year as a result of a 7.7% decrease in total assets, and a 3.6% increase in total liabilities. Cash assets decreased by 8.5% due to a 15.5% decrease in total revenue and total expenditure decreased by 12% producing an operating deficit at year end. Property, plant and equipment decreased by 7.4% due to limited new equipment acquisitions and the on-going annual depreciation charges. An increase in payables was due to a timing difference in receipt of funding paid in advance, which makes up 39% of total liabilities. Provision for long-term employee benefits decreased by 81% due to staff turnover and length of service changes impacting on the classification of long service leave entitlements from non-current to current.

### **CASH FLOW STATEMENT**

Net cash flows decreased relative to 2017, reflective of the decrease in income from last year. Payroll increased marginally whilst we saw a reduction in other operating payments. Payments for fixed assets were abnormally high in 2017 due to the office move in that year; the 2018 activity is more reflective of normal operations.

## About Us

Barwon Community Legal Service is an independent community legal centre offering free legal advice, education and support to people who live in the Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula, Surfcoast and Colac Otway regions.

## Our Purpose

To contribute to the provision of legal services in order to promote, protect and enhance the rights and interests of individuals and groups within our region who are disadvantaged in their access to justice.

To contribute to the provision of legal education and community development activities to educate and empower individuals and groups within our region who are disadvantaged in their access to knowledge.

To contribute to the reform of laws and structural inequities to achieve humane fair and equitable outcomes for individuals and groups within our region and the wider community.

## Strategic Priorities & Goals

### Continue work to ensure financial stability

- Diversified funding sources achieved through better focus on business development activities
- Improved security of funding sources

### Move the culture toward one of accountability

- Individual accountability
- Organisational accountability

### Improve staff planning and development

- Clear responsibility for knowledge currency and co-ordination of education and networking activities for identified areas of law practiced
- Robust staffing structures which provide organisational resilience

### Find and work with the most 'at need' clients

- Develop a comprehensive and contemporary understanding of legal need within the local communities
- Match service offering to identified need
- Reach the most 'at need' clients

### Deliver holistic services across client services, education and law reform which are strategic, well-targeted and showcase exemplar CLC practice

- Ensure all service offerings meet a strategic purpose
- BCLS services provide a showcase for exemplar CLC practice

**Free independent legal advice, education and support**







**Barwon Community Legal Service**  
Level 1, 63 Thomson Street, Belmont VIC 3216  
9.00am - 5.00pm Monday to Friday.