

Your Rights and Responsibilities Fact Sheet

Free independent legal advice, education and support for the legal needs of the Greater Geelong, Bellarine Peninsula, Surf Coast and Colac Otway communities.

Your rights

When you seek assistance from our service you have the right to:

- Privacy and confidentiality
- Be treated with courtesy, respect and consideration
- Have your matter dealt with promptly and appropriately
- Receive clear and accurate information and/or advice
- Ask questions, make your own decisions and to make informed choices about the conduct of your matter
- Receive a copy of your file, or for the file to be transferred to another legal service provider
- Request an interpreter if you need one

How we can help you

We will provide free legal information, advice and referral across areas of law that we are appropriately experienced and funded to practise. Ongoing casework assistance will be offered in some circumstances subject to our practice guidelines and capacity.

When you seek assistance from us, we will:

1. Make an initial assessment of the nature of your situation
2. Provide information and/or advice to the best of our abilities
3. Provide a referral to a service that is best able to assist you
4. Where your situation warrants and our practice guidelines and capacity permit, we can provide ongoing casework assistance

Professional standards

Our service is governed by the same regulations and professional standards as all legal practices, including private legal firms that charge for services.

Legal advice at BCLS is provided by qualified lawyers. Any law students working in our service are under the supervision of our Principal Lawyer.

Information collection and privacy

When you attend our service, our staff will begin by asking you for information about yourself. It is necessary for us to collect this information for our records and so that we may best assist you. No identifying information is ever provided to any third parties.

All information collected is strictly confidential and staff are bound by law not to divulge any information provided by you without your express permission.

Your documents

Our service is legally obligated to retain your file for a period of seven years after we have seen you. To allow us to appropriately manage our storage requirements, we ask permission to destroy files after this time. We retain on file all will and power of attorney instructions beyond this seven year period. All destroyed files are completely shredded and the paper recycled.

Fees

We do not charge fees for the work that we do. Sometimes we need to pay money to other people in order to assist in carrying out our work for you. You will always be asked first whether you want to spend this money and will be responsible for its payment.

Your responsibilities

When you seek assistance from our service we expect you to:

- Treat our staff and volunteers with courtesy, respect and consideration
- Give us honest, accurate and complete information
- Be proactive, to the best of your ability, in assisting us to help you
- Bring relevant documents and written information with you
- Let us know if you cannot keep an appointment
- Let us know if you change your contact details
- Let us know if you have any particular problems or needs

Feedback

If you wish to provide us with some feedback about your experience of our service please do not hesitate to contact us.

If you have a concern about your lawyer or another member of staff, then you should:

- Speak with the staff member concerned
- If you are unable to do that, or are not satisfied with the outcome, ask to speak with the Principal Lawyer.

If, following this process, you still have concerns that have not been resolved, you can contact:

The Legal Services Commissioner
Level 5, 555 Bourke Street
Melbourne VIC 3000
1300 796 344
www.lsb.vic.gov.au

To make an appointment complete our online form

<https://www.barwoncommunitylegal.org.au/contact-us/request-an-appointment/>

or call 1300 430 599

Free Interpreter Service phone 131 450 and ask them to call 1300 430 599

