

# Prevention of Violence Against Women

*Funded Projects*

**Report of Developments 2012**



Legal Services **BOARD**  
Grants Program

March 2013

## ABOUT THE LEGAL SERVICES BOARD GRANTS PROGRAM

The Legal Services Board is responsible for managing the Public Purpose Fund. The monies for this fund are largely derived from the interest on clients' funds held in trust by solicitors.

Under the *Legal Profession Act 2004*, the Board may grant from the Public Purpose Fund to support a wide range of organisations and activities for law related purposes.

In 2010 the Legal Services Board identified prevention of violence against women as a theme for the Major Grants round through a series of consultations and reports. Projects were funded in 2011.



Participants at the Legal Service Board grants program workshop September 2012

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report focuses on eleven projects funded through the 2011 Major Grants Round, which allocated \$3.7 million across 15 projects. Of the 15 funded projects, nine of these focus specifically on the prevention of violence against women. This report outlines those nine projects, and an additional two that also received funding in a later round which also aim to address issues relating to the prevention of violence against women.



Participants at the Legal Service Board Grants Program Workshop September 2012

This report outlines the aims of the projects and provides a snapshot of some project outcomes and highlights in the first year. Most projects have received multiyear funding.

In keeping with the Legal Services Board Grants Program priorities, all eleven projects were funded in the areas of law reform, legal and judicial education, and legal research and policy. The project activities aimed to create outcomes leading to improved laws and their administration, improved access and equity, improved legal services, and better informed and educated consumers of legal services.

## Overall themes from the implementation of the projects thus far

In September 2012, participants from the projects came together to share their progress. There are some common threads and challenges experienced by the project workers, even though the projects are focussed on different areas, in different locations and working with a range of people. These themes include:

- ▶ The importance of, and challenges of collaboration
- ▶ The need to map relationships and pathways
- ▶ The difficulties in navigating 'road blocks'
- ▶ The challenges and benefits of a multi-disciplinary approach
- ▶ The effort and energy that building and maintaining partnerships requires, and how important this is to the success of a project
- ▶ The need for flexibility and being open to new ways of doing things
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation, and the responsibility associated with this
- ▶ The resistance of women to seek legal options, often due to previous experiences or difficulties in accessing services
- ▶ Cultural change
- ▶ That primary prevention of violence against women is what they are all aiming for.

## Peninsula Health, Community Health Services

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Adolescent violence in the home – the missing link in family violence prevention and response project

### Adolescent Violence Project

The Project is a partnership between Peninsula Health, Community Health Services, Victoria Legal Aid and City of Greater Dandenong across the Victorian Department of Human Services Region. Peninsula Health, Community Health Services provides a broad range of affordable services for people living in Frankston and the Mornington Peninsula. Peninsula Health is undertaking the Adolescent Violence project over two years.



### Project Aims

The project aims to improve the criminal justice response to victims and offenders of adolescent violence in the home with the aim of contributing to breaking the intergenerational cycle of family violence.

Peninsula Health will analyse Victoria Police and justice data for trends and document the experience of victims and adolescent offenders in the legal system with recommendations for improvement.

Approximately 9% of all family violence call-outs relate to young people under 18 with over 4,000 call-outs by police last year in Victoria in relation to this issue.

### 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

Researchers on the project commenced the research interviews with parents in relation to their experiences of the justice system and expect to interview between 10 and 20 people.

In 2012 only 3 young people had been interviewed and it was proving harder to recruit this group but the project is optimistic at least 10 adolescents will be interviewed.

A Family and Youth Worker has engaged with and delivered services to local families, with positive outcomes in relation to increased family safety and cessation of violence.

Two community forums were held, which had good attendance and very positive evaluations.

***Peninsula Health has engaged the police and courts to look at protocol changes to how the police respond in these instances with the ultimate aim of ensuring greater consistency and a standardised response.***

A strategic reference group made up of police, magistrates, Department of Human Services, No To Violence, Women's Legal Service and Victorian Legal Aid is developing a set of principles to underpin the way the service sector responds.

In February 2013 Peninsula Health hosted Australia's first conference on *Adolescent Violence in the Home* with a specialist from the United States and the Victoria Police Assistant Commissioner speaking.

## Women with Disabilities Victoria

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### Voices against violence project

Women with Disabilities Victoria is undertaking the *Voices against Violence* project in conjunction with Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) to investigate the circumstances of women with disabilities of any kind (including physical disabilities, mental illnesses and cognitive impairments)

### Sexual Abuse

A Victorian study found that more than a quarter of people reporting sexual assault were identified as having a disability. Other statistics indicate that 90 per cent of women with intellectual disabilities have been sexually abused.

WDV 2011-12 Annual Report

who have experienced violence. The project is undertaking a two year fact finding mission relating to the nature and incidence of violence against women with disabilities in Victoria. It is the first of its kind in Victoria and will make a much-needed contribution to the evidence. Findings will be used to devise evidence-based strategies for legal, policy and service sector reform.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

Work has commenced on the project activities which includes:

- An audit of OPA files
- Interviews with OPA staff and volunteers
- In-depth interviews with women with disabilities who have experienced violence
- Consultation with women with disabilities

- Engagement with the disability, domestic violence, legal and service sectors
- Discussion with critical friends for advice on research methodology and participation
- A review of the relevant legal, policy and service sector initiatives in Victoria and beyond

## Human Rights Law Centre

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### Promoting equality for a fair and just Victoria project

The Human Rights Law Centre (HRLC) Ltd.'s *Promoting Equality for a Fair and Just Victoria* project will be conducted over two years. The project will build upon the institutional capacity and expertise of the HRLC and Victorian legal and community sector organisations to promote and protect the right to equality in Victoria. It has three areas of focus as outlined in the developments below.

### 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

**Violence against women:** Developing a series of fact sheets that explain, using practical examples, the content of the state's 'due diligence' obligation to protect against and respond to family violence and ensure women's right to non-discrimination.

**Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic vilification and harassment:** Working

with GLBTIQ community organisations, VEOHRC and Victoria Police to develop resources which will support a social marketing campaign on homophobic harassment. A campaign was launched on 28 August and received extensive media coverage and social media traffic. 60,000 people have viewed the TV commercials.

**Women in Victorian prisons:** Working with key stakeholders to identify issues relating to discrimination against women in Victorian prisons. A guide will be produced that considers remedies available under equal opportunity legislation, the Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and relevant international human rights mechanisms.

## Federation of Community Legal Centres

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**Advancing community justice: creating fairer outcomes through law reform and policy work project**

### Project Background

The Federation of Community Legal Centres is undertaking the *Advancing Community Justice* Project. The project is about developing a better and fairer legal system by conducting proactive law reform and policy work. The Federation will develop resources and conduct training to assist community

legal centres and non-government organisations to conduct effective policy and law reform work.

In particular the project aims to improve family violence legal support services by strengthening Community Legal Centres' contribution to Victoria's integrated response to family violence. It also aims to prevent inappropriate fines and prosecutions against family violence victims and improve the operation of after-hours intervention orders. It is envisaged this work will increase access to justice for affected family members and ultimately help prevent family violence homicides.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

A key event in the implementation of this project was a visit to Dandenong Magistrates' Court by project staff to observe the Community Legal Centre family violence applicant duty lawyer at work, to try and understand issues that arise for duty lawyers, and to enhance the capacity of duty lawyers.

The visit reinforced the need to visit a cross-section of Community Legal Centres to ensure that the real needs 'on the ground' are being observed. The visit also gave project staff a new appreciation of the difference between a model of service response and the organic nature of how service response actually works.

***Project staff recognise that relationships between services at court are crucial, as is training and supporting duty lawyers. There is increased appreciation that***

***holistic support for victims of family violence takes time and resources.***

This aspect of the project will assist the Federation to feed 'on the ground' knowledge into policy and law reform work, including communicating with government decision makers, service agencies and the general public about the work of Community Legal Centre lawyers and the changes needed to effectively protect women and children from family violence.

## Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre Bendigo

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### Why didn't you ask?

#### Project Background

Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre (LCCLC) in Bendigo is undertaking the *Why didn't you ask?* project, which aims to improve the safety, social and health outcomes for women at risk of or experiencing family violence. The project is looking to streamline the delivery of legal assistance through a multi-disciplinary model and through the provision of comprehensive legal services in the Central Victorian region.

The project includes:

- Seeking the views of clients regarding the appropriateness and

effectiveness of legal interventions and their preferred outcomes

- Delivering legal assistance through a multidisciplinary model
- Focusing on the health benefits of effective legal interventions
- Building collaborative relationships across legal health and social services
- Engaging effectively with Indigenous communities
- A strong educative component

Swan Hill, Kyneton, Echuca and Maryborough

- Expansion of the delivery of duty lawyer services to two additional courts, Kyneton and Swan Hill
- Engagement of project evaluators Synergistiq

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

### Key Achievements of the project

- The development and implementation of the in-court survey data collection tool and the gathering of data from August 2012
- The recruitment of participants for in-depth interviews regarding the impact of legal intervention
- The development of legal education content and a partnership with the Centre for Non Violence for the delivery of sessions to health service providers as well as allied and community groups
- The establishment of a formal MOU with key project partners and health service providers in Bendigo
- Preliminary engagement with potential project partners in the key service delivery areas including

## Support for family violence victims

THE Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre will receive more than \$400,000 to improve legal services for family violence victims. Loddon Campaspe community legal centre principal solicitor Peter Noble said the \$448,000 would go towards a project which aimed to improve safety, social and health outcomes for women at risk of, or experiencing family violence in central Victoria. Mr Noble said the funding would allow the centre to attend all seven courts.  
**Article in the Bendigo Advertiser**

A cross section of staff from partner agencies and services have been consulted throughout the design and testing of in-court legal surveys for women seeking Intervention Orders entering the court system for family violence related issues.

Educational sessions have been conducted with health professionals, incorporating a 'before-and-after' competence measure. Surveys to assess the family violence knowledge of medical professionals are being drafted.

LCCLC has consulted with stakeholders from Women's Health Loddon Mallee and Bendigo Community Health to collaborate on both the educational and research aspects of the project to ensure that the wording and content is appropriate.

*The project is being piloted in Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca, with some in-court legal surveys completed by women attending the Kyneton court.*



The launch of duty lawyer services at Swan Hill and Kyneton was described as a key turning point in this project. The initial impact of this service was an increased workload, but also an increase in contact with local practitioners and magistrates, which has led to increased assistance for women in areas where this assistance was previously unavailable or unreliable. This has enabled the establishment of relationships with other support services in these areas.

The relationships with other services has created good referral pathways and communication which enables early referrals and has established the presence and provision of community legal education.

The next planned activities for the project include:

- Focus group for Swan Hill Aboriginal women with the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service
- Loddon Mallee Murray Medicare Local showcase of family violence prevention services to GPs and allied health professionals

## North Melbourne Legal Service Inc.

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**Acting on the warning signs: Addressing violence against women through the hospital setting project**

### Project Background

A partnership between North Melbourne Legal Service and the Royal Women's Hospital (the Women's) aims to empower and protect a significant number of Victorian women by providing legal assistance and training within the hospital context. North Melbourne Legal Service has been providing a legal assistance outreach service at the Women's since 2009. The *Acting on the Warning Signs* project came about through recognition that an increasing number of clients accessing the service were seeking advice in relation to matters involving family violence. This health-legal partnership is being established to assist health professionals at the Women's to identify family violence and provide basic information to patients on family violence complemented by a range of health, legal and social welfare assistance available at the hospital site.

The project is aiming to create momentum for other hospitals throughout Victoria, to have a clear understanding of the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to family violence and the importance of 'warm' referrals in supporting women. The *Acting on the Warning Signs* project builds on this approach by implementing a legal assistance outreach post at the Women's Hospital. This outreach post aims to ensure that the hospital site is a safe and accessible hub where women can



obtain a range of coordinated support services to address family violence.

Research shows that people with legal issues often seek advice from people/services with which they are already in contact. This places health professionals in a powerful position to make appropriate referrals and to take steps to protect and empower Victorian women.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

The first stakeholder workshop was held at the Women's in September and over 30 people attended from a range of health and legal backgrounds. The findings from this workshop have helped to inform the project.

A training plan has been developed for providing training to health professionals at the Women's and the first full-day study day entitled "Addressing family violence through a multi-disciplinary approach" was held in December.

A presentation to the Royal Women's Hospital Executive Committee was an important moment for the project. It garnered the support of the hospital and created an opportunity to potentially train a large amount of staff. It is hoped that this will assist in encouraging increased referrals and warm referrals to a large number of women.

The weekly legal assistance outreach service at the Women's has continued

to be provided by North Melbourne Legal Service each Tuesday afternoon. This allows women to obtain free help from a lawyer while visiting the hospital. It is located in the Women's Social Support Services and hospital staff can refer patients to a lawyer by contacting the service.

Generous financial and in-kind support has been received from Herbert Smith Freehills law firm.

A highly experienced evaluation team from Melbourne University is in place to monitor the projects outcomes.

The project was profiled at the inaugural symposium on Advocacy-Health Alliances in November last year.



Photo: Participants in the first stakeholder workshop brainstorming the best approaches to implementing a project (28 September 2012 at Royal Women's Hospital)

## Domestic Violence Victoria

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### Women's voices steering justice reform – Family violence women's advisory group project

#### The Project

Through the establishment of a Family Violence Women's Advisory Group (FVWAG), Domestic Violence Victoria (DV Vic) developed a mechanism by which women in Victoria who have experienced family violence could offer feedback and recommendations. These focused on ways in which the justice sector and the current Magistrate Court's response to family violence could improve service delivery and a more participatory and client-focused system could be developed. The project is being implemented over a twelve month period (March 2012 - 2013) in three distinct phases. The first phase included the design, development and establishment of the Women's Voices Advisory Group and the second in the capture and recording of narrative and written

response to experiences of the justice sector. The third, to be implemented in early 2013, is working with stakeholders to review the project and project model as a means of supporting the justice sector's integrated response to family violence.

#### 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

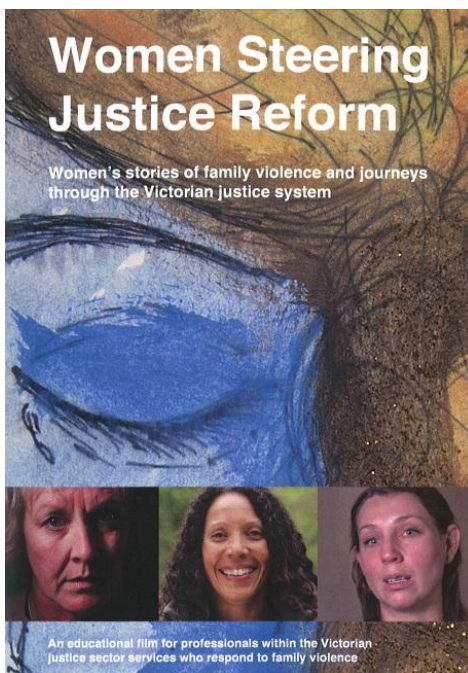
Meeting with Magistrate Kate Hawkins and gaining her support was a key turning point for the project. Through the course of the meeting it was

agreed that the film and adjoining report would highlight the different experiences women, as the main end users of the court could experience across Victoria.

This was a pivotal moment in the project, not only in gaining the support of the Magistrate Courts as a major project stakeholder, but in

determining a focus that was considered timely and relevant to the justice sector response to family violence.

The project completed recruitment and an intense three day workshop, which has resulted in the creation of a short



Educational DVD Cover

documentary film and a report outlining key recommendations for change. The Workshop was held in November 2012.

The Women's Advisory Group committed to the intense three day workshop during which the women were recorded on film at least twice. The first filming delivered their story of family violence and their experience of the current justice system response to family violence. This intense process was usually a two-hour sitting per participant or almost 40 hours of filming over the course of the workshop. On the second day of the workshop, assisted by Magistrate Pauline Spencer, the women learned the difference between the services offered at the five specialised courts in Victoria - of which only half had prior experience. Together the women worked to develop a series of recommendations, in their own words, for a state wide response to improve the justice sector's response to family violence. At the end of the second, and into the third day the participants were again filmed to record their ideas and visions for change based on their individual stories.

***The result of this intense workshop was the production of a short film and booklet which presents the recommendations and reflections of the women of the Advisory Group in their own words, taken from hours of interview transcripts. The film of the participants tells their story and provides some background to the recommendations and their individual meaning.***

The final dimension of this project following the launch of the documentary and this booklet is for key stakeholders to use the film and booklet as a starting point for discussion. A collaborative analysis of the filmed narrative and written vision will generate an action plan via a "Stakeholder Review Workshop".

## St Kilda Legal Service Co-operative Ltd

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### Community action for small Courts – Family violence response project

#### The Project

The St Kilda Legal Service Cooperative Ltd.'s *Community Action for Small Courts - Family Violence Response* project aims to develop a model for the provision of family violence support services at small courts. It uses a community based approach to improve the level of access to and coordination of support for those attending court or requiring legal assistance on family violence related matters.

The Integrated Family Violence Inner Middle Partnership (IFVIMP) of the Southern Metropolitan Region consists of community agencies that provide specialist family violence services. It is intended that the project will strengthen collaboration between agencies and develop a model that is

applicable to other small courts. There are three components to the project:

- **Small Courts Model:** Trialling a model for small courts at the Moorabbin Justice Centre including developing a framework to provide legal assistance related to family violence within the court.
- **Legal Empowerment:** Delivery of legal assistance via an outreach legal service based at a community agency. This will also include training for community workers on family violence and related legal issues.
- **Reaching the Community:** A local community education program to inform local community members of their legal rights, and local support services. This will also include the production of a publication translated in multiple languages.

Community agencies that are a part of IFVIMP include:

- Salvation Army Family Violence Outreach Program
- Connections UnitingCare
- Emerge Women and Children's Support Network
- VincentCare

- Inner South Community Health Service
- Family Life
- Hanover Welfare Services
- St Kilda Legal Service.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

*The project was officially launched on 30 March 2012 at the Moorabbin Justice Centre with strong support from local agencies. CEOs and board representatives from the eight project agencies attended.*

The launch assisted the project greatly by generating further energy and enthusiasm in agencies involved. It brought key players together and ongoing support has been expressed.

The *Policies and Procedure Manual* has been distributed to workers to increase consistency and greater integration of the services.

### Reaching Out to the Community

In cooperation with the City of Bayside Maternal and Health nurses, the project agencies have developed a



Moorabbin Justice Centre launch

"postcard" to promote the local family violence support services that are available.

The Heart Shield was designed in 2012 by a six year old in an art therapy workshop run by Emerge Women and Children's Support Network. Children were invited to create a special tool that would give them strength and protection when faced with bullying or a difficult situation.

The *Heart Shield* postcard will be included in the Bayside Child Health Record booklets that each family receives when their baby is born. In the second year of the project the project agencies plan to produce the Heart Shield postcard in key community languages.

2000 Heart Shield postcards have been printed and will be distributed in Year 2 of the project.

## Legal Outreaches

The family violence lawyer sees clients by appointment at Family Life, Sandringham and at the Highbury Maternal and Child Health Centre, fortnightly. The maternal health nurses in particular are welcoming and very supportive of the project. This link has been key and an unexpected outcome because it put women who are possibly isolated and outside the court system in touch with the project.

Pregnancy is a risk factor for family violence. Maternal health centres are perfectly placed to offer referrals for legal advice to women who otherwise may have no access to reliable information about their rights and responsibilities in the law.

## At Court

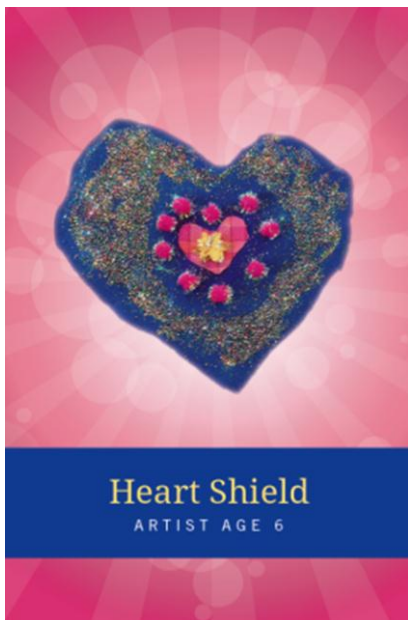
Every Monday the St Kilda Legal Service family violence lawyer and her volunteer administrative assistant provide a duty lawyer service at Moorabbin Justice Centre for applicants in family violence matters. Each Monday's court list contains around 35-45 intervention order matters.

Approximately 25 per cent of applications are made by police officers on behalf of affected family members.

St Kilda Legal Service is asked to provide legal advice (which in most cases leads to court representation) in around ten matters every Monday. The family violence lawyer remains at court until the last client has collected their

paperwork, read it, and left court.

During the morning the Legal Service refer clients to the applicant and respondent workers who attend court as part of the project. Court staff and police officers refer clients to the family violence duty lawyer service and



to the applicant support workers and respondent workers. The clients greatly benefit from the range of support available.

The court experience can be stressful, and always includes considerable time spent waiting. Those who experience family violence may feel isolated and alone. The St Kilda Legal Service family violence lawyer reports that feedback from clients at court has been very positive.

1300 brochures promoting the family violence services available at court each Monday have been printed and will continue to be distributed at Moorabbin Justice Centre in Year 2 of the project.

## Victoria Legal Aid

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### Collaborative change to prevent family violence in newly arrived communities project

#### The Project

Victoria Legal Aid is undertaking the *Settled and Safe - Collaborative change to prevent family violence in newly arrived communities* project.

This project aims to increase the knowledge of family violence laws in newly emerging communities in Victoria.

A network of community liaison educators will be established to work with non-government organisations and community workers delivering services to newly-arrived communities who have been in Australia between 18 months to 5 years.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

A major part of the implementation of the project was the stakeholder engagement. A meeting with Shepparton stakeholders, such as police, service providers, Victorian local area regional officers, community legal centres, and councils discussed proposed models, and also identified need, use and gaps in service provision and delivery. The key questions 'will it work?' and 'do you want it?' were asked. The response was 'Yes!'

This process confirmed the positive aspects of the project, and cleared up some of the questions about the ability of Victoria Legal Aid to usefully provide the training to settlement workers. It gave clear purpose and direction to the project.

The process of stakeholder engagement reinforced the need to be open to other ways of delivering the project and to see opportunities within risks and to be more creative, whilst being realistic about what the project might be able to achieve.

## Women's Health in the North

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Women, lawyers and workers: Piloting a legal advice system that responds holistically to prevent family violence project

### The Project

Women's Health in the North, Women's Health Goulburn North East and Berry Street are undertaking the *Women, lawyers and workers: Piloting a legal advice system that responds holistically to prevent family violence project*.

The three-year project aims to prevent violence against women and their children through the provision of sound legal advice on the complex legal environment which governs family law matters by providing:

- Legal advice via Skype legal advice to individual women supported by their case worker in three metropolitan and three rural sites
- Legal education and development to assist workers
- Education and secondary consultation for workers and a research component.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

In September a reflection workshop was held with project staff and key

stakeholders. Themes from the workshop included collaboration and working with others, improved outcomes for women, and the strengths and challenges of working with technology.



Photo: Building blocks representing the legal system at the Women, Workers and Lawyers project training day

The next two reflection workshops are planned for the middle of each year over the three year evaluation period of the project, to monitor the development of the project, the involvement of stakeholders and the perceptions of those involved in the project over time.

### Training rural and metro family violence workers

*Rolling out the initial training in legal responses to family violence in metropolitan Melbourne and Benalla to family violence workers was a significant turning point for the project.*

The training covered a range of topics, including the different Australian





courts and jurisdictions that are relevant to family law, family violence and sexual assault matters. Of particular interest was education on the Family Law Court system, the key principles of the *Family Law Act* in children's matters and ways to recognise the inconsistencies between Children's, Family and Intervention Orders. The training sessions in Melbourne and Benalla were evaluated, and were a great success.

In a four month period from May to September 2012, 42 women and workers have been assisted with legal matters. Out of the 42, 36 were new clients seeking advice on new legal matters, and six were clients returning to seek further advice on the same matter. Of the 42 sessions, 23 were with women, and 19 were secondary consults held with workers. There appears to be a fairly even breakdown between rural and metro.

The main legal matters addressed through the sessions were Intervention Orders, including Family Violence Intervention Orders, questions regarding property and wider Family Law questions.

The project is structured so that each lawyer is assigned two agencies,

thereby enabling them to build close professional relationships.

Project staff have found that Skype usually works well, and that the added benefit of being able to see the other person and the visual cues from the interaction are preferable to a voice call.

Through *Women, lawyers and workers*, a woman is able to return for more than one consultation when required. Some have returned for follow up advice following their initial session, as the lawyer has given them 'homework' to do prior to the second session.

## inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence

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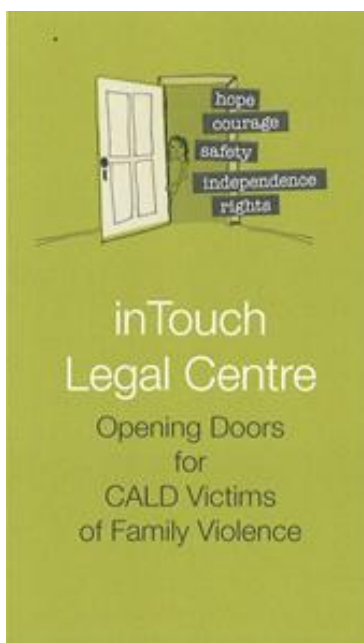
**Legal empowerment toward social justice: A culturally appropriate strategy for prevention and intervention of family violence in CALD communities project**

### The Project

inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence Service is undertaking the *Legal empowerment towards social justice: A culturally appropriate strategy for prevention and intervention of family violence in CALD communities project*, which involves

the establishment of a pilot legal centre within the service (inTouch).

The Legal Centre will provide comprehensive and culturally and linguistically appropriate legal advice, support, representation and referrals to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) victims of family violence. The Centre seeks to empower and encourage victims to access justice by providing appropriate skills, knowledge and support to navigate the system. It is integrated within the broader organisation, which is a family violence service. The Centre is part of the long-term goal of becoming a multidisciplinary service where CALD victims of family violence will be able to access all of their service needs under one roof.



The model prioritises supporting CALD victims of family violence, as this is a group who are known to currently fall through the gaps of the legal system. This group includes:

- CALD victims who are too vulnerable to follow through with referrals to legal practices outside of inTouch
- CALD victims whose cases are not accepted by external services because they do not fulfill the service criteria (this may be due to

means testing or the complexity of the legal matter).

In addition to providing legal support for CALD victims, the Centre seeks to build the skills of the legal sector through providing cultural competency training for legal professionals and implementing a community legal education program for CALD communities.

It is hoped that this project will help in creating something new which fills the gaps and can be replicated by other services, something that allows for a multi-disciplinary approach, which can start advocating for a cross-jurisdictional system.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

The first half of 2012 involved extensive

consultation with key players in the sector to develop a best practice model for the Legal Centre.

Strong relationships have been developed with Sunshine Court, local CLC's, Victoria Police, VLA and mainstream family violence services.

Project staff understand the importance for the service to be flexible in order to respond to legal issues, whilst also respecting culture, and are responding by shaping the service so that it can provide a unique, culturally appropriate, therapeutic

response whilst maintaining a longer-term vision for more complex systemic issues.

Victorian Legal Aid has also recently offered to provide a small grant to the inTouch Legal Centre to cover some costs. Additionally, private law firm Norton Rose has provided pro bono legal advice on how to best establish the Legal Centre and manage any potential risks. Norton Rose has offered to provide commercial legal advice on the management of the Legal Centre into the future.

Recently inTouch has established a partnership with law firm Lander and Rogers whereby lawyers from their Family Law Department will provide pro bono advocacy services for inTouch clients at Sunshine Court.

Officeworks has pledged its support by providing items like stationary, filing cabinet, external hard drive and other necessary items.

***The InTouch Legal Centre, was launched on 21 November 2012 by the Hon. Robert Clark, MP, as the first model of its kind in Australia.***

In the first two weeks 5 clients have visited and two have gained intervention orders through self-representation after mentoring by inTouch staff.

The others are referred to law firm Altavilla Vessali with warm referrals and the cases are being co-managed.

The setting up of this service is influencing others to develop in house legal services.

## Eastern Community Legal Centre

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### Family Violence Integration project

#### The Project

The *Family Violence Integration* project is a partnership project led by Eastern Community Legal Centre.

The project is seeking to improve the response of legal and support services to victim/survivors of family violence in a coordinated and integrated manner, with a focus on partners working at the Ringwood Magistrates' Court.

The project aims to instil trust and confidence in the most vulnerable of victim/survivors that their safety and support needs will be upheld through their interaction with the legal components of the family violence system.

The Intervention Order Support Service at Ringwood Magistrates' Court is provided by a partnership which includes:

- Eastern Community Legal Centre
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court
- Victoria Police

- ▶ Victoria Legal Aid
- ▶ Eastern Domestic Violence Service
- ▶ EACH Eastern Victims Assistance and Counselling Program
- ▶ Eastern Men's Behaviour Change Consortium (led by Anglicare)
- ▶ Eastern Metropolitan Regional Family Violence Partnership and
- ▶ Court Network.

## 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

*The Protected Person's Space at Ringwood Magistrate's Court was launched by the Attorney on 9 November 2012.*

This was a significant moment in the project, securing a separate space at the Court where applicants could be seated away from the main waiting area. This provides a safe space for victims of family violence whilst allowing more integrated support. It also provides the court with options that could be provided to vulnerable applicants and decreases some of the risk and chaos of family violence days at Court.



Launch by Attorney General Clark Protective Persons Space at Ringwood Court November 2012

This has led to improved respect for the safety of victims of family violence in Court, and means the support needs of victims of family violence can be appropriately addressed. Relationships and referrals between services have improved, as have opportunities and strategies to support victims of family violence.

The Family Violence Integration Project Partnership has received funding for Stage 2 of the project by the Legal Services Board, to continue into 2013-14.

This funding will allow the partnership to further develop the collaboration, integration and partnership among agencies in Melbourne's East to assist people (especially victims of family violence) who are presenting at Court seeking Intervention Orders, beyond just the Court day, by expanding its focus to other areas of the justice system.

This project highlights the importance of providing support and safety for victims of family violence going through the court process. It has the potential to increase victim and service provider confidence in the legal system, and it is hoped that it will serve as a model of best practice for all services and the Court.

## Western Region Health Centre

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### Supporting Traditional African Mediators Project

#### The Project

*Supporting Traditional African Mediators Project (STAMP)* is a health promotion project working with the African-Australian community in western suburbs of Melbourne, being undertaken by the Western Region Health Centre.

The project has developed and implemented strategies to build the capacity of African-Australian leaders to undertake family violence prevention work within their communities including a family violence prevention training program. The project has also focussed on developing relationships between members of the justice system and African-Australian community leaders.

### 2012 DEVELOPMENTS

5 week training programs were provided to traditional African mediators.

***80 traditional African mediators have been trained.***

There was realisation at the start of the project about how much work goes into building relationships to get things off the ground. There has been a significant increase in participants' understanding and beliefs about what constitutes family violence as a result of the training.

Regular monthly meetings have been held and speakers from the justice system have attended. A training manual has been developed that can now be rolled out to community leaders from a range of refugee backgrounds.

In 2012 WRHC received further funding for UPSCALE to conduct targeted legal education to enhance newly arrived refugees' understanding of parenting, family law and family violence matters. The education aims to reduce the likelihood of legal problems in the first instance.



Photo: STAMP Forum

## INFORMATION SOURCES

The information in this report was obtained from a number of sources, including the Legal Services Board project descriptions for the 2010 - 2011 Major Grant funded projects, the Legal Services Board grants program workshop facilitated by Synergistiq in September 2012, reflection workshops with agencies, from evaluation reports submitted by agencies and from agencies directly.

Photographs and images in this report were sourced from the Legal Services Board workshop and also provided by agencies. Information was also sourced from project documents for the following projects where Synergistiq is assisting with evaluation:

- Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre for the *Why didn't you ask?* project
- Women's Health in the North for the *Women, lawyers and workers: Piloting a legal advice system that responds holistically to prevent family violence* project
- St Kilda Legal Service Co-operative Ltd for the *Community action for small Courts – family violence response* project.

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