

Networks of centres regularly come together through the Western Region CLC Forum, the Northern CLC Alliance and the Rural Regional Remote (RRR) Network to share ideas and knowledge, and build skills.

## SNAPSHOT!

### CLC networking in action: The RRR Network Staff Day

Rural Regional and Remote CLCs came together in Melbourne in April, 2005 to share experiences, knowledge and skills. The theme "Walkabout - Talkabout" included open forum discussion and individual CLC displays. The displays offered an insight into diversity of CLCs and were an important opportunity for staff to share ideas and get inspired. Many useful and positive connections were made. Discussions took place and solutions brainstormed on a variety of topics including co-location, volunteering, employment conditions, professional standards, community legal education and outreach in RRR settings, family violence, and partnership and collaboration opportunities.

## FEDERATION CAPACITY BUILDING AND TRAINING 2005

2005 saw the roll out of a comprehensive capacity building and training schedule for CLCs. The schedule was informed by a training audit and was enthusiastically embraced by the sector.

Topics covered:

- Anti-Terrorism Laws
- CLSIS data system
- Employment Law
- Engaging with the Media
- Family Violence and Intervention Orders
- Financial Management
- Governance & Management
- Human Rights
- Planning & Accountability
- Strategic Campaigning
- Using Victoria's Discrimination Laws
- Working with Newly Arrived Communities

"Great, very  
thought provoking"

"I look  
forward  
to future  
sessions"

### Federation training stats at a glance!

- Training commenced February, 2005
- 24 sessions held
- Close to 300 participants
- 41 out of 49 member centres took part
- Average evaluation score 8.25 out of 10
- Highest evaluation "Strategic Campaigning" (9.5/10) followed by Governance & Management (9.11/10)

"Very well organised session,  
plenty of info, EXCELLENT!"

## CLC FELLOWSHIP AWARDED!

Congratulations to Helen McGowan of Albury Wodonga Community Legal Service who was awarded the inaugural Victoria Law Foundation CLC Fellowship. Helen is undertaking an innovative project to assist law students to gain work experience in summer holiday clerkships in regional Victoria, and in doing so provide pathways into rural and regional practice. The project is in partnership with the Law Institute of Victoria and Latrobe University, Bendigo Campus. Thanks to the Victoria Law Foundation for their vision in providing this Fellowship.



Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc.

Working together to make a difference



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# COMMUNITY LAW IN ACTION



Federation of Community  
Legal Centres (Vic) Inc.

CLCs bring experience from casework and community engagement to the justice policy table. This first-hand knowledge makes Federation justice policy and program work vital and relevant.

Federation Working Groups and Task Groups provide the infrastructure for cross-sector collaboration and sharing of knowledge and skills.

## Justice Initiatives Standing Group

The Justice Initiative Standing Group oversees justice initiatives in line with the Federation's strategic priorities. The Group coordinates current work and scans the justice policy environment to identify new opportunities. Thank you to the Standing Group members: (Karen Milgrom (Convenor, Coburg/Brunswick), Emma Hunt (PILCH), Richard Duffy (Eastern/Whittlesea), John Rouw (Gippsland), Simone Elias (Fitzroy).

## Access to Interpreters Working Group

The availability of interpreting services can make or break access to justice for many Victorians. During 2004-05 this crucial working group was responsible for:

- managing the \$66,000 provided to Victorian centres for interpreting and translating services;
- establishing an 'Improving Access to CLCs Project' to fund interpreting and translating of material that is of broad benefit to centres and communities across Victoria; and
- disseminating information, building skills and providing support for CLCs working with CALD and newly arrived/emerging communities.

## Anti-Terrorism Laws Task Group

Informed by the experiences of targeted communities, the key achievements included:

- working collaboratively with communities, community agencies and academics to analyse new laws and monitor the impact on the ground;
- Organising training for Community Legal Centre and other workers on anti-terrorism laws;
- providing community legal education on the laws to community groups;
- making a number of submissions to inquiries by the Joint Parliamentary Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD, including appearing at public hearings in Melbourne on the ASIO powers;
- collaborating with other community groups to awareness and conduct community legal education including through the holding of a well attended joint media conference critiquing ASIO powers.

## Child Protection Task Group

Fundamental State Government reform in this area provided a strategic opportunity for CLCs to improve child protection law and processes for the benefit of our communities. Work in this area included:

- preparing the Federation of CLCs submission to the Technical Options Paper in relation to the Child Protection review;
- developing "13 steps for reform" a statement of the positive change required in this area;
- raising awareness among decision makers of avenues for positive reform; and
- working collaboratively with VCOSS to inform community service agencies.

## Child Support Working Group

This group provided support to the National Child Support Network and focused on skills development over 04-05 including:

- organising a one-day seminar on 12/8/04 about child support for community workers and solicitors; and
- producing a Community Legal Education kit.

Here is a snapshot of the key achievements over 2004-05.

Get involved! There are many ways you can get involved - big and small, short or long-term. CLC workers, volunteers and partners from the broader community sector are welcome. Contact the Federation to find out more!

## Children and Youth Issues Working Group

Children and Youth Issues Working Group continued its long standing contribution to children and youth legal and social policy through:

- making a submission to the "A Good Night For All" process of review of safety in the Melbourne entertainment precinct, including fighting off draconian 'move on' police powers and raising awareness among decision-makers about positive ways to ensure safety for all on the streets;
- preparing an extensive and valuable submission on the "Working with Children Check" and raising awareness about the potential pitfalls;
- collaborating across the sector to participate in the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council "Suspended Sentences" discussion; and
- contributing to the implementation of the Youth Referral & Independent Persons Project (YRIPP), a partnership project between the Federation, Centre for Multicultural Youth Affairs, Youth Affairs Council of Victoria, Crime Prevention Victoria, DIMIA and Victoria Police.

## Community Legal Education Workers'(CLEWs) Group

Community legal education strategies continue to be the key in preventative, early intervention work of CLCs. The CLEWs Group supported this important work through:

- gaining project funding for the development of an important resource - the "CLE Made Easy" kit;
- providing peer support for CLE workers in and outside CLCs; and
- supporting the CLE work of other working groups. Examples included a human rights training session for CLC staff, and assisting the Anti-Terrorism Law Task Group with CLE strategies.

## Corrections Working Group

The Federation remains ever vigilant in relation to the protection of human rights of imprisoned people. This year the Correction Working Group and an alliance of Aboriginal, disability, housing and mental health groups prepared and presented a comprehensive submission to the Equal Opportunity Commission of Victoria (EOCV), detailing systemic discrimination against women in Victoria's prisons and seeking an investigation into the conditions of women's imprisonment. This work is part of a national campaign being run simultaneously in almost all Australian States and in Canada.

The Corrections Working Group also:

- conducted advocacy training;
- presented regular advocacy and information sessions at Port Phillip Prison;
- raised community awareness of correction issues through a extremely well attended Law Week presentation "Doubly Damned: Women, Prison and Society".

## Disability Working Group

The Disability Working Group continued to focus on improving access to CLCs for people with disabilities. This year the Group focused on the analysis of recommendations contained in the previous Federation report "Inclusion and Disability - Removing the Barriers in CLCs." The Working Group developed a project plan for implementing the recommendations of the report and is now actively seeking funding for this next phase.

Bringing our communities' knowledge and experience to justice policy

## Human Rights Working Group

CLCs, as centres for human rights in our communities, were supported by the Human Rights Working Group through:

- developing community education and campaign resources, including a media and campaign kit on three key human rights areas - anti-terror laws; rights of asylum seekers and refugees and the tendering out of Indigenous legal services;
- building skills and knowledge through human rights training of CLC and other community sector workers;
- coordinating and preparing a comprehensive submission to the State Government's Human Rights Consultation Committee looking at a proposed Victorian Charter of Human Rights;
- working with VCOSS and other community partners to engage with the community about the Victorian Charter of Human Rights consultation.

## PERIN Working Group

The enforcement of fines continue to cause problems for many who seek the support of community legal centres. The PERIN Working Group carried on the fight for reform through:

- representing the Federation at a PERIN forum conducted by the Parliamentary Law Reform Committee;
- collaborating with peak bodies to seek consultation on reform to the PERIN system; and
- working with the Department of Justice regarding proposed changes to the PERIN system.

## Police Issues Working Group

The Police Issues Working Group continued to draw together the policing experiences of the communities with which CLCs work. The Working Group identified and analysed current (and recurrent) trends and spoke out for increased police accountability. The Working Group participated in Victoria Police's Service Delivery Model Project which is reviewing a range of services that Victoria Police delivers to the community.

## Professional Standards Committee

This Committee supported community lawyers across Victoria through:

- participating in the development of the new Legal Profession Act;
- participating in the review of the National Risk Management Guide;
- successfully completing a state-wide cross-check in which each participating centre conducted a professional standards audit of another centre. An overall report and individual feedback were provided; and
- providing a forum for Principal Solicitors to come together to discuss issues of common interest and concern.

## Refugee & Immigration Working Group

The needs of refugees, newly arrived and emerging communities were the focus of this Working Group which:

- convened the National Refugee Network Meeting at the National Association of Community Legal Centres Conference in September 2004;
- developed links between generalist CLCs and the specialist Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre;
- initiated and participated in two outreach legal services targeting refugees and people on Temporary Protection Visas (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre Outreach Legal Service - a joint initiative of the Working Group and the Western Region CLCs Forum - and the Coburg-Brunswick Temporary Protection Visa Clinic) to provide access to justice for refugees and Temporary Protection Visa holders; and
- had an On-going involvement in law reform projects on gender-based persecution and domestic violence through involvement in Women's Law Reform Group.

## Social Security Working Group

The main focus for the Working Group was the development and distribution of 20,000 postcards (10,000 through commercial venues and 10,000 through the community sector) encouraging young people (in particular) to appeal Centrelink decisions that they were unhappy with. The card was launched by Rod Quantock at the Youth Affairs Council Victoria Conference in October 2004 and has met with an enthusiastic community response.

## Violence Against Women and Children Working Group

2004-05 was an important year for reform of family violence laws and systems. The Working Group has played a vital role in shaping policy through:

- Participating actively in a range of State Government Committees.
- Being involved in the development of the new Family Violence Court Divisions (Heidelberg and Ballarat). The Federation has now been engaged by the Department of Justice to develop policies for the Divisions.
- Participating in the Victorian Law Commission (VLRC) review of family violence laws, including organising a forum for CLCs to compile the 'on the ground experiences' of our clients in dealing with the courts and police, and feed this into the review.
- Building knowledge through collaborating with Women's Legal Service to hold an extremely well-attended Intervention Orders training session.
- Obtaining funding (from the Reichstein Foundation and the Victorian Women's Trust) for the "Women's Voices for Justice and Human Rights Project" to support crucial future work in this area, in collaboration with Central Highlands Community Legal Centre.

## The Federation plays an important role in informing government policy development.

Submissions made during 2004-05 include:

"Protecting children: ten priorities for children's wellbeing and safety in Victoria", Proposed Amendments to the Children and Young Persons Act 1989, Visions for Victoria - Justice and Human Rights Recommendations, Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD Review, A New Approach to the Family Law System, Proposal to amend Equal Opportunity Legislation to prohibit discrimination against the homeless and unemployed, Discrimination on the basis of criminal record, Proposed Working with Children Bill, Review of Family Violence Laws, National Security Information Legislation Amendment Bill, 'A good night for all - options for improving safety and amenity in inner city entertainment precincts', Systemic Review of Discrimination Against Women in Victorian Prisons, Justice Policy Positions 2005, Improving the Criminal Justice System Response to Sexual Assault and Submission to the Sentencing Advisory Council Inquiry into Suspended Sentences.

**Almost 100 Submissions are available in a searchable database on [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au) (simply click on "Federation" and "Law Reform")**

## Federation representatives contribute a community perspective to a range of organisations and policy bodies. Thank you to all reps for your tireless commitment!

NALCLC State Representative - Robin Inglis  
Family Violence Court Reference Committee - Flora Culpin  
State-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Family Violence - Joanna Fletcher  
State-wide Steering Committee to Reduce Sexual Assault - Diva Guasch  
VCOSS Nominee - Sam Biondo  
VLA Community Consultative Committee - Helen Constatas  
VLRC Homicide Reference Advisory Panel  
Young People's Commission Coalition - Youthlaw  
Volatile Substance Abuse Protocols Advisory Committee - Youthlaw  
CAV Working Together Forum - Karen Milgrom  
Women's Correctional Services Advisory Committee (Corrections Victoria) - Arati Vidyasagar  
Electronic Home Detention/ Family Violence Working Party (Corrections Victoria) - Arati Vidyasagar  
Corrections Stakeholders Meeting - Corrections WG members  
Youth Referral and Independent Persons Program (YRIPP) - Sarah Nicholson  
Combined MRT and RRT Community Liaison Committee Meeting - Martin Clutterbuck  
**A range of representative reports for 2004-05 can be found at [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au) (simply click on "Federation" and "Annual Report")**

Get involved! [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)



## letter from the Chair

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) have expertise in working with excluded and disadvantaged communities and people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Operating in a community development framework, we provide a bridge between communities and the justice system and stand up for the communities of which we are part.

2004-05 saw a welcome investment in CLCs from the State Government and Victoria Legal Aid. This investment was a great step in the right direction. Stronger CLCs equal stronger communities! We look forward to a continuing investment in the strengthening of CLC infrastructure as well as support for new, innovative service delivery and capacity building initiatives that will expand access to justice for disadvantaged Victorians.

As a dynamic peak body the Federation of Community Legal Centres has shown leadership in a multitude of areas over 2004-05.

The Federation facilitated collaboration across our diverse membership. CLC workers and volunteers throughout Victoria came together through working groups and other formal and informal networks to exchange ideas, share knowledge and strategise for change.

The Federation was able to harness the lessons from CLC casework and other activities and bring this community knowledge and expertise to the justice policy table. The breadth of justice issues worked on over 2004-05 highlights the diversity of the communities with which we are engaged.

The Federation has been committed to delivering quality management support and capacity building initiatives for the CLC sector. The first six months of our training program met the needs of nearly 300 workers.

We have worked in alliances - locally, interstate, nationally and internationally, and we welcome partnerships for the development of justice policy and CLC programs and infrastructure.

All that we have achieved would not be possible without the boundless energy and stabilising influence of our strategic management groups (our Management Committee and Justice Initiatives and Sector Development Standing Groups) and wonderful staff. A big congratulations goes to the many member centre workers and volunteers who have collaborated on a multitude of important projects. And thank you to our many partners and funders who have supported our valuable work.



Helen Yandell  
Chair, Management Committee

## THE FEDERATION TOOL KIT

online resources for community legal centres

A one-stop shop for resources and links across a wide range of topics for staff, management committees and volunteers.

Links and resources will be available on a range of topics including governance, management, finances, funding program reporting, fundraising, volunteer management, casework, campaigning, media, community development, community legal education and many many more!

**TO ACCESS THE TOOL KIT** ...Go to [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au), click on "Federation" and click on "Federation Tool Kit"

**Share your resources!** The Tool Kit is a great way to share resources with other CLCs.

If you have resources or links you would like to add to the Tool Kit please email [Liz\\_McKeag@fcl.fl.asn.au](mailto:Liz_McKeag@fcl.fl.asn.au)

### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Jen Anderson** (Flemington Kensington Legal Centre)  
**Greg Leeson** (Villamanta Legal Service)  
**Karen Milgrom** (Coburg/Brunswick Community Legal and Financial Counselling Service)  
**Rachna Muddagouni** (Fitzroy Legal Service)  
**Mishelle Predika** (Treasurer) (North Melbourne Legal Service)  
**Su Robertson** (Environment Defenders Office)  
**Vivienne Topp** (Mental Health Legal Service)  
**Helen Yandell** (Chairperson) (Western Suburbs Legal Service)

### STAFF

**Pauline Spencer**, Executive Officer  
**James McDougall**, Acting Executive Officer  
**Sarah Nicholson**, Policy Officer  
**Liz McKeag**, Administrator  
**Marie Collard**, Financial Administrator  
**Steve Womersley**, Community Law Website Worker

### PROJECT WORKERS

**Nick Batten** (PII Insurance Cross Check)  
**Dan Nicholson** (Family Violence Policy)  
**Wendy Sengotta** (Family Violence Policy)  
**Gillian Wilks** (CLE Made Easy)

### VOLUNTEERS

The Federation runs a vibrant volunteer and internship program for students in a variety of disciplines. Thank you to Robin Chan, Susan Clement, Adam Craig, Lara Crocker, Julia Dehm, Lisa Fowler, Diva Guasch, Camilla Pandolfini, Vicki Sentas, Mary Sheargold, Anita Siassios, Sameera Singh, Nive Srikantha, Vanessa Stevens, Nicole Tuck and Ben Zika.

### LATROBE UNIVERSITY STUDENT PLACEMENTS

Linda Roberts  
Katerina Poulakis

## STRONG CLCS, Strong Communities

The Federation plays an important role in supporting community legal centres.

Strong Community Legal Centres are a much needed resource that enable local communities, or communities of interest or identity, to engage with the justice system. This engagement plays a vital role in community strengthening.

The Federation builds strong CLCs through:

- One-on-one management support and advice to staff and management committees
- Information and knowledge exchange
- Promoting collaboration and partnership opportunities
- Training and skills development opportunities
- Promoting CLC investment by local, state and federal governments as well as philanthropic and pro bono sectors.

## THE FEDERATION'S SECTOR DEVELOPMENT STANDING GROUP

is focused on identifying and strategising around new program trends and issues and developing a strategic vision for the CLC sector.

Thank you to the members of this important Standing Group: Rachna Muddagouni (Convenor, Fitzroy), Michael Smith (Eastern), Hugh DeKrester (Brimbank/Melton), Elsje Van Moorst (Geelong), Suzy Fox (St Kilda), Belinda Lo (Whittlesea).

## THANKS TO THE SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS OF COMMUNITY LAW!

The Federation Secretariat is funded through the Victorian Community Legal Centre Funding Program with State Government/Victoria Legal Aid funds. The program is administered by Victoria Legal Aid.

In addition, we wish to thank the following organisations for their invaluable support for our many initiatives through funding, pro bono and in-kind support and partnerships:

- Our wonderful Member Centres, sister State CLC peak bodies and the National Association of Community Legal Centres
- Allens Arthur Robinson, Blake Dawson Waldron, Freehills, Holding Redlich, Ryan Maloney Anderson (Human Rights Community Engagement Project)
- Blake Dawson Waldron (Family Violence Law Consultation project)
- Centre for Multicultural Youth Affairs
- Department of Justice (Human Rights Community Engagement Project)
- Department of Justice (Family Violence Court Division Policy & Partnerships Project)
- Ethnic Communities Council Victoria
- Financial and Consumer Rights Council
- Law Institute of Victoria
- Leadership Victoria (Mentoring and Financial Strategy)
- Reichstein Foundation (Sexual Offences Project)
- Victoria Legal Aid (Website Project)
- Victoria Law Foundation (Website Project)
- Victoria Law Foundation (History/Archiving Project)
- Victoria Law Foundation (CLE Made Easy Project)
- Victoria Women's Trust (Women's Justice and Human Rights Project)
- Victorian Council of Social Services
- Victorian Trades Hall Council
- Youth Affairs Council Victoria

## FEDERATION MEMBERS

### GENERALIST CENTRES

Albury Wodonga Community Legal Service; Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre; Broadmeadows Community Legal Service; Casey Cardinia Community Legal Service; Central Highlands Community Legal Centre; Coburg/Brunswick Community Legal & Financial Counselling Centre; Darebin Community Legal Centre; Eastern Community Legal Centre; Essendon Community Legal Centre; Fitzroy Legal Service; Flemington/Kensington Community Legal Centre; Footscray Community Legal Centre; Geelong Community Legal Service; Gippsland Community Legal Service; Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre; Monash Oakleigh Legal Service; Murray Mallee Community Legal Service; North Melbourne Legal Service; Peninsula Community Legal Centre; South Port Community Legal Service; South West Community Legal Centre-Warrnambool; Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc; St Kilda Legal Service Co-Op Ltd; Werribee Legal Service; Western Suburbs Legal Service; West Heidelberg Community Legal Service; Whittlesea Community Legal Service.

### SPECIALIST CENTRES

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention & Legal Service; Communications Law Centre; Consumer Credit Legal Service; Consumer Law Centre Victoria; Disability Discrimination Legal Service; Domestic Violence & Incest Resource Centre; Environment Defenders Office; Family Mediation Centre; Job Watch; Melbourne Uni Student Union Legal Service; Mental Health Legal Centre; Mildura Aboriginal Corporation Indigenous Family Violence Prevention Legal Service; Public Interest Law Clearing House; Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre; RMIT Union Legal Service; SRC Legal Service; Tenants Union of Victoria; Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service; Villamanta Legal Service; Welfare Rights Unit; Women's Legal Service (Vic); Youthlaw

## COMMUNITY LAW ONLINE!

Check it out!

Thank you to the Victoria Law Foundation and Victoria Legal Aid for their financial support for this innovative web resource.

[www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)