



# All the Latest from Northern Community Legal Centre

December 2023

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## Celebrating 50 years of connecting with our community

At NCLC we were delighted to see so many of our partners come together in support of our work at our Annual General Meeting on November 23rd, 2023. This year our AGM was not only an opportunity to reflect upon our year, but to also celebrate a very important 50th anniversary.

Fifty years ago this year, a group of Broadmeadows residents came together to establish a free legal service for the area, run solely by volunteers and operating in the evenings only. The first funding allocation from the Federal Government arrived in 1979, allowing the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service to employ its first daytime employee and to set up an office.

Since then, we have come so far. In 2016, the Broadmeadows Community Legal Service and Moreland Community Legal Centre (previously known as Coburg Legal Centre) merged to become Northern Community Legal Centre. While we now have over 20 staff, our catchment has also grown considerably, stemming from Brunswick to Seymour and incorporating two of Melbourne's four high-growth population corridors.

What has not changed throughout this time is our connection to our community. We are an organisation that emerged from the commitment of local residents to equal access to justice, and that commitment remains our vision, guiding all our work and our future planning.

As we close in on the end of another challenging year, we express our heartfelt thanks to our staff and partners for all your hard work to support and strengthen our communities. We acknowledge that our work, and your work, is stressful and at times unrelenting. We also acknowledge that only through collaboration and partnerships can we achieve the best possible outcomes for people in our catchments of Hume, Merri-bek, and Mitchell.

We wish our staff, partners and community a joyous festive season and we look forward to working with you in the new year.



Left: Kathleen Matthews-Ward, MP for Broadmeadows; Right: Justice Rita Incerti

## Victorian Multicultural Justice Award



This week at NCLC we were honoured to receive the Justice Award at the Victorian Multicultural Awards for Excellence 2023 for our Safe Landing project. In partnership with South-East Monash Legal Service, the Safe Landing project supports victims/survivors of family violence on temporary visas to recover and thrive, by providing integrated migration, family violence and family law support. Congrats to everyone who has contributed to the positive impact and recognition of this project, which began as a small NCLC pilot project in 2019, and has now grown to become a multi-year program extended across the CLC sector.

## 16 Days of Activism





On 6 December 2023, our Merri-bek Take The First Step Peer Educators gathered together with friends and family for a 16 Days of Activism Event to prevent gender-based violence within our community.

The Take the First Step Project recognises that women who are newly arrived in Australia and experiencing family violence are most likely to gather information about pathways to safety from other women of the same language group. Within the Take the First Step project, NCLC provides family violence education and support to local women of diverse backgrounds who are passionate about leading change in their community, so that they can share their knowledge within their communities as peer educators.

Our event included a presentation on how the law can be used to keep women safe, as well as music and a meal. Participants painted t-shirts with messages against gender-based violence, and these t-shirts were then hung in the Glenroy and Fawkner libraries during the 16 days of activism.

NCLC would like to acknowledge and thank the Merri-bek Council for supporting this important work.

## NCLC Annual Report 2023



year is now available.

The theme of this year's report is 'Connecting with our Community'.

Our communities in Merri-bek, Hume and Mitchell Shire experience some of the greatest structural and systemic disadvantage in Victoria.

The report breaks down the impacts we've had on our communities over the previous financial year, including how we've responded to their complex legal needs through our legal service, and how we've sought to understand their accessibility challenges through new and existing research projects.

It also explores the impacts of projects like Take the First Step and Where Safety Begins, which work to promote the voices of women and young people in our community and equip them with specialised skills. Finally, we look at how we've collaborated with organisations across the sector through integrated projects and community legal education to improve wellbeing and access to justice for our community.

We are grateful to all our funders and partners, and would like to acknowledge the exceptional work of our staff, volunteers, and board this past financial year.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

*Northern Community Legal Centre acknowledges and respects the traditional custodians whose lands we are fortunate to live and work on, and we pay our respects to all Elders past, present, and future.*

### **Northern Community Legal Centre**

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