



NORTHERN  
COMMUNITY  
LEGAL CENTRE

*annual report*

Northern Community Legal Centre  
ABN 50 570 314 348

16/17

*Equal  
access to  
justice*

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## Introduction

In January 2016 the Northern Community Legal Centre Inc (NCLC) was formed through the amalgamation of Broadmeadows and Moreland Community Legal Centres. The objective of this new Centre was to provide free and accessible legal and related services to vulnerable and disadvantaged members of our community.

Our catchment includes the local government areas of Moreland, Hume and Mitchell Shire which include 53 suburbs and townships. Our office is located in Gladstone Park but we have 12 outreaches across three catchments.



The NCLC is governed by a Management Committee of between seven and 12, comprised of experts with skills relevant to the organisation. They are appointed by the members of the organisation.

*Providing free and accessible legal and related services to vulnerable and disadvantaged people across 12 locations.*



NCLC is headed by CEO, Jenni Smith and a management team comprising a Legal Practice Manager, Community Development Manager and an Administration Manager. This management team is supported by six Lawyers, two Community Engagement Workers, a Family Violence Community Coordinator, two Administration Workers and a large team of dedicated volunteers. Many staff have over 15 years' experience in the Community Legal Sector. Across the NCLC team there is a range of legal specialisation and expertise in education, welfare and social work.

## Thoughts from our CEO and chairperson

This has been an enormously expansive year with the implementation of our first strategic plan, which has transformed our service. Our vision to be more accessible to the most vulnerable has been transformative. We have provided better access to: victims of family violence, newly arrived and refugees, young people, people with mental health issues and older people suffering from abuse. Real access has meant going to where our clients are. We have opened 6 new outreaches – a family violence outreach; two youth law outreaches; outreach in a mental health residential facility; an outreach for newly arrived & refugee people; an outreach in Wallan.

We have been able to do this in partnership with; Community Health and Mental Health Services, Neighbourhood Houses, and other Community organisations. This has stretched our 6 lawyers over 12 outreaches across the three large Local Government Areas of Moreland, Hume and Mitchell

Shire that comprises our catchment. We have seen a massive 1900 clients with over 85% of those clients having little or no income. **We have been out in the community providing more than 60 Community Legal Education sessions reaching almost 1600 community members.**

We have ramped up our night services increasing our service in Moreland from one night a month to once a week, in a newer more accessible location, whilst still providing a night service at our Gladstone Park office. As a result, we have been able to provide legal assistance to those who may not fit into our priority client groups. Increase of our night service capacity has come through increased recruitment of wonderful volunteer lawyers and paralegals.

The Attorney General the Honourable Martin Pakula formally launched our service in February celebrating with us “being on our way”. In reflecting on our work over the last year one staff member commented that we have really turned the ship around, and now have clear direction and the structures to enable us to work efficiently and effectively in response to the legal needs in our community. However even with the extraordinary work by

our staff we are nowhere near meeting the overwhelming legal needs of our communities in the north west.

Our catchment includes areas recognized as the most disadvantaged postcodes in Australia, as well as the most rapidly expanding: Craigieburn in Hume and Wallan in Mitchell Shire are two of the fastest growing areas in Australia, (ABS 2016) with the populations in the North West corridor extending from Broadmeadows through Roxburgh Park, Craigieburn, from Kalkallo to Beveridge and Wallan rated to double in the next five years. An exponential rise in family violence is further predicted as metropolitan housing shortages push the most disadvantaged into areas which currently lack the infrastructure to support them and more significantly the integrated family violence networks to respond to increased demand.

This prediction of increases in family violence comes on top of significant rates of family violence, with Hume having the second highest rate of family violence in the Melbourne metropolitan area. This is only surpassed by Wallan in the Mitchell Shire which has a current rate of family violence that, when measured per head of current population, outpaces Hume.

Our communities are highly diverse; we recently experienced the arrival of the second highest numbers of Iraqi and Syrian refugees in the country. Settlement agencies report current high levels of settlement stress and a high prevalence of family violence. We are working closely with this community to address these issues. We are also working closely with the large South Asian communities as they work to address their high rates of family violence and significant barriers to help seeking. We have recruited multi lingual staff from these local communities to help us spread the message about legal rights and also provide us with the necessary cultural insights to make our service culturally safe.

We are alert to emerging issues in our catchment such as the growing trend of youth as perpetrators of family violence and elder abuse in specific newly arrived communities and have ramped up our work accordingly. We could not have turned the ship around without the many partnerships that have been developed and consolidated over the last year, the committed work of our board, the endless hours of work provided by volunteers, and the hard work of all staff. ●



Northern Community Legal Centre's journey has well and truly begun, carrying with it the rich histories of the Broadmeadows & Moreland CLCs. This document reflects the dedication of our staff to removing the impediments to a happy, healthy and productive life faced by many members of the North West Melbourne community – impediments that are so often invisible to those who don't face them. The journey will not be without its challenges, particularly in the ever-tightening financial environment, but with a clear vision, enthusiasm and a dynamic team, there is much cause for optimism.

*Susanna Locke,  
Chairperson*

### OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

#### our aim

Equal access to justice for all in Melbourne's North West

#### our mission

NCLC provides legal services and community legal education to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in Melbourne's north west, and advocates for equal access to justice for all.

#### our vision

The people of Melbourne's North West have access to justice and their rights are protected

#### our goals

- 1 RESPECT**  
Acting with integrity, inclusiveness and accountability
- 2 INNOVATION**  
Finding creative and flexible solutions for our clients
- 3 CONNECTION**  
Working with our community to achieve shared goals
- 4 PASSION**  
Caring and supportive
- 5 OUTSTANDING**  
Delivering beyond expectations



*“We have seen a massive 1900 clients with over 85% with little or no income.”*

# The People

## Our management committee

<b>SUSANNA LOCKE</b>	Chairperson
<b>NICOLE KING</b>	Vice Chairperson
<b>DAVID DIVINY</b>	Secretary
<b>NICOLE BROOKS</b>	Treasurer
<b>TONY MACAFEE</b>	Committee Member
<b>BROOKE MCKAIL</b>	Committee Member
<b>JOHN RUTHERFORD</b>	Committee Member
<b>NATALIE SHEARD</b>	Committee Member
<b>AJIT SINGH CHAUHAN</b>	Committee Member

*We offer our thanks and best wishes to Committee members who have left us during the 2016-2017 period:*

Stacie Gull, Joseph Burke, Kristina Kothrakis.



## Our staff

<b>JENNI SMITH</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>BILL GRIMSHAW</b>	Legal Practice Manager
<b>JOANNE CARLTON</b>	Senior Lawyer
<b>CRAIG STABLER</b>	Family Violence Lawyer
<b>LILLY JACKSON</b>	Family Violence Lawyer
<b>LAUREN CROME</b>	Youth Lawyer
<b>CAMERON BLOYE</b>	Community Lawyer
<b>ANNICA AKERFELT</b>	Community Lawyer
<b>HEATHER MCLEAN</b>	Community Development Manager
<b>FLORA CULPAN</b>	Family Violence Community Coordinator
<b>SHOVA LAMSAL</b>	Community Development Worker
<b>THAERA YONAN</b>	Community Development Worker
<b>MILKA JANKOVIC</b>	Administration Manager
<b>BELINDA VECCHIO</b>	Administration Officer
<b>CATERINA MEDICI</b>	Administration Officer

*We also offer our best wishes to staff who have left us during the 2016-2017 period:*

Christina Lynch, Mehernaz Sadafi, Marquita Nolan, Lois Erickson, Elizabeth Bitar, Lucas Rutten, Cristina Tine.

Volunteer lawyers, community members and activists were fundamental to the establishment of community legal centres in the 1970s. Volunteers remain vital to the current work of CLCs across the nation including the work of NCLC.

## Our volunteers

This year our volunteers were drawn from interested community members, law students, social work students and lawyers. Volunteers assist in a variety of ways including staffing night service, assisting lawyers with client files, administrative tasks, research, supporting our work in community and our role at the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court. Without these dedicated people, we would be unable to provide an extended service to our clients.

### LAWYERS

Mary Agresta  
Lauren Avery  
Cem Cankat  
Brent Casey  
Helen Chetcuti  
Andre De Almeida  
George Douglas  
Mazen El-Bouch  
Tugba Gocmen  
Stacie Gull  
Jess Hellsten  
Mary Higgins  
Peter Higgins  
Stacey Jack  
Aleksandar Koteski

Joanne Lau  
Rohan Lawrence  
Nicholas Midson  
John Moore  
Grace Mutch  
Marquita Nolan  
Zohra Noorani  
Yasemin Ozer  
Andrew Sarraf  
Rachael Szydlowski  
James Spencer  
Sophie Stafford  
Sevda Tankir

### PARALEGALS

Sandra Abouzeid  
Salv Angelo  
Jasmine Boutsinis  
Oscar Cantieni  
Hayley Chester  
Bridget Coutts  
Evan Dunba  
Marianne Eyars  
Harris Gilders  
Rubina Habib  
Kassandra Hall  
Patrick Hannan  
Jacob Kairouz  
Liz Kefford  
Amanda Lekamge

Angela Liantzakis  
Lauren Lorenzo  
Kimberley McLean  
Stephanie Moncur  
Bridget Morales  
Angela Nguyen  
Christopher Nicholson  
Janice Romell  
Pascal Roth  
Jessica Saidal  
Ben Schier  
Kate Schomburgk  
Anmol Shergill  
Lachlan Smith  
Abigail Stone  
Allison Tassell

Flynne Tytherleigh  
Lachlan Vandeloo  
Thuy Vu  
Madeleine Webb  
Ignatuis Zanetidis

### MASTERS STUDENTS - SOCIAL WORK

Thomas Crawford  
Ayan Farah  
Alison George  
Haydn Jones  
Sabjot Kaur  
Shova Lamsal  
Lok Yee Li  
Munashi Zishir

Flora Culpan and  
Carmel McMennemin  
at NCLC's AGM 2016



NCLC is saddened by the passing of Carmel McMennemin. Carmel's contribution to the development of BCLS, her role as volunteer and committee member and her support during the transition to NCLC has been very highly valued.

## Our organisational 3–5 year strategic priorities

1

Deliver high-quality legal information, advice and casework, and legal education services to our community, particularly to our **priority vulnerable groups**

- Maintain current services by prioritising key client groups and legal needs
- Target and expand services for identified client groups and legal needs
- Review and restructure night services
- Deliver an effective outreach program
- Make strategic use of technology to provide innovative solutions for education, advice, information and referral.

2



Be a bold advocate for legal and related policy reform

- Maintain systemic and public-interest casework as a core function
- Draw upon casework and consultation with stakeholders to identify issues for law and policy change
- Provide submissions to relevant law and policy reviews
- Publish reports on emerging and public-interest issues
- Develop and implement campaigning strategy
- Strengthen and expand key stakeholder relationships across the broad range of community, government and commercial sectors.



3

Consolidate offices and programs in the most effective locations

- Integrate telephone intake with relevant service providers across the north west
- Coordinate clinics and services with relevant service providers across the north west
- Provide accessible services in appropriate locations.

4



Strengthen organisational structure and capacity

- Implement a staffing structure that supports the 5–10-year direction of the organisation
- Establish and implement required policies to enable appropriate governance and management of the organisation.

5



Strengthen workplace environment and culture

- Strengthen workplace flexibility
- Strengthen positive workplace culture
- Support staff development and career path opportunities.

6



Maintain financial stability at a level sufficient to support delivery of these priorities

- Maintain appropriate recurrent/non-recurrent split on our flexible financial base
- Continue to expand the recurrent funding base; retain existing lawyers on non-recurrent funding and retain existing non-recurrent positions
- Develop and maintain relationships with current and potential funders
- Develop strategies to build prudent reserve levels.



*NCLC has prioritised the following groups:*

- Victims/survivors of family violence
- Newly arrived and refugee communities
- Young people
- People experiencing mental health issues
- Older people at risk of abuse

## Victims/survivors of family violence

*Our catchments, and Hume City especially, is recognised as having one of the highest rates of family violence in the Melbourne metro area.*

NCLC seeks to make our services accessible to all the community by providing legal advice education and referrals. However, NCLC recognises that there are members of our community who suffer serious disadvantage.

Through the work of the Royal Commission into Family Violence and the work of the many advocates who went before it, the Victorian community has become increasingly aware of the true extent and impact of family violence on our communities. Our catchment has some of the highest rates of family violence in the Melbourne metropolitan area. NCLC predecessor services, MCLC and BCLS, had a strong history of working with victims/survivors of family violence in a holistic manner. NCLC has built on the significant work of these previous services through the creation of innovative service responses to ensure the safety and wellbeing of women and children.

*family violence statistics*



# 622

Total numbers we have seen

Total number of court supports

# 328



*Sidra\**

## case study

Sidra had been a long term victim of family violence, enduring over 10 years of violence. She had been with a man who had been abused by his own family to the extent that he had changed his own name. Sidra tried many times to leave the relationship with her daughter and eventually she did. With the help of the police, Sidra obtained an unlimited intervention order. She eventually re-partnered and had other children. At the time Sidra came to us her daughter was 14 years old and deeply unhappy that she had the name of a person who had been abusive and that she had nothing to do with. Because of the nature of the father's family

the daughter had also nothing to do with them and her family was exclusively Sidra's immediate and extended family. The distress that the child felt about her name was so elevated that she had been seeing a child psychologist, who had suggested the name change for therapeutic reasons. We had tried to obtain the father's consent without success and so made an application to the Federal Circuit Court and obtained a report from the child's psychologist confirming the negative impact the surname was having on the child's identity. We were successful in obtaining court orders in relation to the name change and the child was ecstatic. \* not real name for confidentiality

### Court support

Our lawyers attend Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court three days a week providing duty lawyer services to applicants in intervention order matters from across our catchment. Uniquely our duty lawyer service has a Family Violence Community Coordinator who provides non-legal support and referrals and who administers the court emergency fund to those experiencing financial hardship. Our court services formally assisted 328 court users throughout the 2016-2017 period and informally supported many more.



## Victims/survivors of family violence

*(continued)*



### Dallas Neighbourhood House colocation

Whilst we see many victims of family violence through our duty lawyer service we know it is an imperative to provide legal advice in the preventative space. By helping women to know what their legal options are in relation to separation and safety we can assist women to break the cycle of family violence. However, we know how difficult it is for women to get that advice in a safe environment and that coming to a legal office may put them in jeopardy. With this understanding we looked around for partners and locations where we could provide this advice in a safe environment – a place where women will go for other reasons. We found the ideal location for this in Hume at the Dallas Neighbourhood House (DNH). The DNH has many co-located programs and services including maternal child health services, English classes and playgroups.



## PROJECTS

### *Family Violence List – Family Relationship Centre*

We were successful in obtaining funding for a project to work in partnership with the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) MacKillop Family Services to look at better pathways for victims of family violence from the family violence lists in the Broadmeadows Magistrates' court to Family Dispute Mediation. The project looks at promoting the early resolution of disputes in relation to children in circumstances where the risk is assessed by both the FRC and the woman as low and where there is potential for family violence court matters to be resolved earlier to the woman's satisfaction.

## Young people

 **224**

Total numbers we have seen

Young people (12–24) make up just under a fifth of our communities and there has been a rapid growth in the number of young people whose countries of birth are other than Australia. They as a group suffer high levels of family violence, homelessness and unemployment, which leads to high levels of young people in the criminal justice system. However, they have been under-represented as users of our service. NCLC has developed a range of programs to ensure that young people have timely and appropriate access to legal education, advice and representation.

Our Youth Lawyer provides legal assistance and community legal education across our three catchments, has developed strong working relationships with key youth stakeholders, and represents NCLC at youth networks. She delivers weekly youth clinics from our central location in Gladstone Park and outreach services from Banksia Gardens Housing Estate. In addition, she provides monthly outreach services to Hope Street Youth Residential Service where she provides community legal education, staff professional development and is available for legal consultations and appointments. Our Youth Lawyer is heavily involved in community legal education across our catchment aimed at helping young

people to avoid legal problems, skilling them to take action before problems escalate and providing them with skills to manage legal problems including knowing when and how to get help. This role in preventative legal work includes significant work in prevention of violence against women (PVAW) work across our catchment. Our Youth Lawyer is a member of the steering committee for the Good People Act Now Project – a youth led

PVAW initiative which empowers young participants to actively challenge gender inequality. They provide regular input into schools-based PVAW initiatives such as Love Bites, Respectful Relationships and Party Safe, where in collaboration with Victoria Police they provide information on laws related to sexting, consent in sexual relationships and an understanding of family violence and the legal protections available to victims.



## Damian\*

# case study

Damian was a young man who came to our service with a significant debt from a previous tenancy. Damian suffered multiple disabilities from a young age and was currently diagnosed with organ failure however he had been keen to live independently. He had moved from the family home and in with his sister who became his carer. However, soon after moving in his sister's boyfriend moved in and it became clear to Damian that his sister's boyfriend was an ice addict and had significant influence on his sister, who stopped caring for Damian. Eventually Damian moved out and notified the landlord. Some months later he was served with notice of a VCAT

hearing for unpaid rent and property damage. When he left the house, the property was in good condition and rent was paid up.

He sought assistance from a housing support agency who he understood were representing him, unfortunately no assistance was provided and a \$21,000 award was made against our client. On behalf of our client our youth lawyer applied to VCAT for a review hearing out of time and appeared on his behalf. After hearing our submissions, the member granted the rehearing and eventually struck out the order that Damian pay the \$21,000.00 in rent arrears and property damage.

### Youth Crime Prevention Project

A consortium of community organisations led by Banksia Gardens Community Services secured funding to establish the *Broadmeadows Community Youth Justice Alliance*. The project's purpose was to tackle recidivist youth offending through the strategic co-location of fundamental support services. NCLC are part of that consortium and have been providing a clinic on a weekly basis since June 2017.



## Newly arrived and refugee communities



Up to 45% of the communities that we work with speak a language other than English at home.

Newly arrived residents, refugees and asylum seekers face unique barriers to the Australian legal system compared to other community members. They are also more vulnerable to exploitation and discrimination in relation to housing, work and services. Around 15 per cent of our community speak a language other than English at home and have difficulty speaking English. NCLC understands that we need to provide better and more flexible service-delivery strategies to ensure that these community members can access their legal rights.

### *Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre colocation*

In February 2017 we commenced an outreach clinic at Spectrum Migrant Resource Centre's Dallas office in the newly developed Hume Community Hub where a number of agencies working with newly arrived people are situated. We had previously undertaken training with Spectrum's case management staff who identified significant legal issues that their clients were experiencing. We knew on this basis that it was an ideal location for us to support newly arrived people whom we identified as having little knowledge of their legal rights or access to legal assistance.



# 368

Total numbers of people not born in Australia seen

## case study

### *Ilam\**

Ilam was a refugee who arrived in 2015 with his family. He managed to secure a rental property for his family but due to his poor English skills he signed the rental agreement without understanding it. During the tenancy, the landlord visited many times and our client was not aware of his rights, such as to have quiet enjoyment of the property. During the tenancy, the landlord told him he had to vacate the premises as his son needed to move into the property. The client moved out, however the landlord would not return his bond stating via a telephone call that the property was left in excellent condition. We negotiated with the landlord who was not prepared to give the bond back. We then issued an application in VCAT seeking the return of the bond. We had also spoken to Ilam's case management worker who had visited the property on the day that Ilam and his family had moved out. We organized for her to give evidence and represented Ilam at the VCAT hearing and the member ordered that the full bond be returned. Ilam was extremely happy as he had borrowed the money and it would have been a debt that would have taken him a long time to pay off.

\* Not real name for confidentiality. Photo is stock photo and not actual client.



### PROJECT

#### Indian Women's Project

In 2015 NCLC were successful in obtaining a two year grant to explore and establish better ways of ensuring that Indian women could access the protections under the family violence system. We identified barriers to help seeking: visa dependence, migration stress, the dowry system and violence perpetrated by extended family members which became constant features of our case work. Throughout the project we worked with Victoria Police, the community and family violence service providers toward improvements in responding to victims of family violence from the South Asian Community.

Internally we continue to work toward the identification of impediments to providing culturally responsive and holistic legal services to this community. In addition, our work has brought to our notice additional legal and social issues impacting the South Asian community, such as elder abuse and the sexual exploitation of international students. We will continue to work with key stakeholders to address these issues.

Over the course of two years NCLC has established strong and enduring relationships throughout the South Asian community. We have developed robust partnerships with those grassroots organisations who are at the forefront of efforts to combat gendered violence. NCLC will sustain these relationships beyond the scope of this project and continue to make working with the South Asian community a priority.

## People experiencing mental health issues



# 129

Clients with mental illness and/or disability

People afflicted with mental health challenges are more susceptible to issues of homelessness and social exclusion and more likely to have unresolved legal issues, particularly infringements. NCLC has taken steps to ensure that services are delivered in such a way that they are comprehensible, flexible and compassionate and are in places that are the most accessible.

### Outreach report

We knew that people with mental health issues are vulnerable to exploitation and are often not well enough to deal with legal issues and their illness is often exacerbated by unmet legal needs. In an effort to respond we did two things: first, we approached the psychiatric facilities in Broadmeadows. These comprise the **Local Community Care Unit (CCU)** – a long term residential facility for people living with

psychiatric illness – and the **Adult Prevention and Recovery Care Service (PARC)** – a shorter term residential facility. Both operate under a partnership between Mind Australia and the North West Mental Health Service. We spent time with the staff and discussed the kinds of cases we could help with and commenced a clinic at the residential facilities in November 2016.

Secondly we set up a clinic at our Gladstone

Park Office for people who are eligible to have their fines revoked on the grounds of special circumstances, usually mental illness. We recruited an army of volunteer students supervised by the lawyer to assist with the clinic and have been able to see significant numbers of clients living with mental illness and have helped them have many thousands of dollars in fines dismissed.



## case study

### Andrina\*

At the beginning of 2016 Andrina was living with her sister in a private rental house. Her sister became unwell and had to move out. Andrina was unable to afford the rent on her own and advertised for a housemate. Yari moved in and it quickly became apparent that he was an ice addict. A few weeks after moving in Yari asked if he could borrow Andrina's car to go to the shops for some cigarettes. Andrina was by this time scared of Yari and agreed. Yari took off in the car and never returned. Yari had also failed to pay rent and had caused property damage at the house. Andrina started to receive many speeding and toll fines in the mail. Feeling overwhelmed and unsupported Andrina's mental health declined significantly and

she admitted herself to North West Mental Health. From there she was transferred to the CCU. By the time we saw Andrina, many of the fines had progressed to the warrant stage. Additionally, a number of excessive speeding fines (more than 25kmph over the limit) had resulted in her having her driver's licence suspended. The case was complex, because different applications needed to be made for the excessive speeding fines and the non-excessive speeding fines. She would have had to make an out-of-time nomination citing Andrina's mental illness and admission to hospital as the reason for the delay. We have been able to help Andrina get her licence back and to deal with all of the fines.

\* not real name for confidentiality



*Older people  
at risk  
of abuse*

It is estimated that 5 per cent of the population suffer from elder abuse, and in addition there is a growing awareness that people born overseas are likely to be more vulnerable because of language difficulties and cultural expectations. NCLC has made a focus on this community a priority, particularly in newly settled communities where we are aware elder abuse is a significant emerging issue.

## case studies

### Anna\*

Anna, a 79 year old woman of non-English speaking background attended our office seeking protection from her son Amad. Anna and her husband owned a family home which Anna had fled several years earlier due to family violence. When Anna's husband suffered a stroke and went into a nursing home she came to an agreement with him that she would return to the family home. Amad and his wife had subsequently moved into the house claiming it as their own and refusing to move out. Due to Amad's intimidation Anna was forced to rent a flat in poor condition while her son and daughter-in-law lived in her home as rent free trespassers. In the absence of a tenancy Anna could not take the matter to VCAT and police had turned her away claiming it was a civil matter. We wrote to Amad and his wife informing them that they were bare licensees whose permission to remain at the address had been withdrawn. After some further advocacy, including pointing out that Anna was entitled to exercise her right to self-help by changing the locks whenever her house was unoccupied, Amad very reluctantly moved out by the deadline date specified in our letter.

 **157**

Total numbers seen – of people over 65

### Lana\*

Lana's widowed mother Marta was in a nursing home with advanced dementia. Before losing capacity, Marta appointed Lana to act as her guardian. To pay Marta's medical and nursing home fees Lana made arrangements to sell Marta's home. Although medical evidence established that Marta was in the final months of her life, Lana's brothers Luka and Franjo opposed the sale as they wanted Marta to live with them and to inherit her home without it being sold. When their VCAT challenge to Lana's guardianship failed, the brothers attempted to remove Marta from the nursing home – causing her great distress. They then occupied Marta's home to frustrate the sale, and harassed and threatened to kill Lana. With our help Lana successfully applied to Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court for an intervention order protecting her mother from Luka and Franjo's elder abuse.

\* Not real names for confidentiality. Photo is stock photo and not actual client.

## Responding to our diverse community

NCLC services an enormously diverse catchment stretching from rural townships in Mitchell Shire through to inner-city suburbs. Whilst Brunswick is highly gentrified other parts of Moreland such as Fawkner suffer significant disadvantage and Broadmeadows in Hume ranks as one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in Australia. Craigieburn was recently noted as the suburb with the largest Punjabi speaking population in the country and high numbers of settling refugees are making Craigieburn home. Notwithstanding our limited resources, we invest significantly in engaging and consulting with our community ensuring the best mix of legal services and preventative educational activities targeting those most in need and capturing the broadest audience possible.

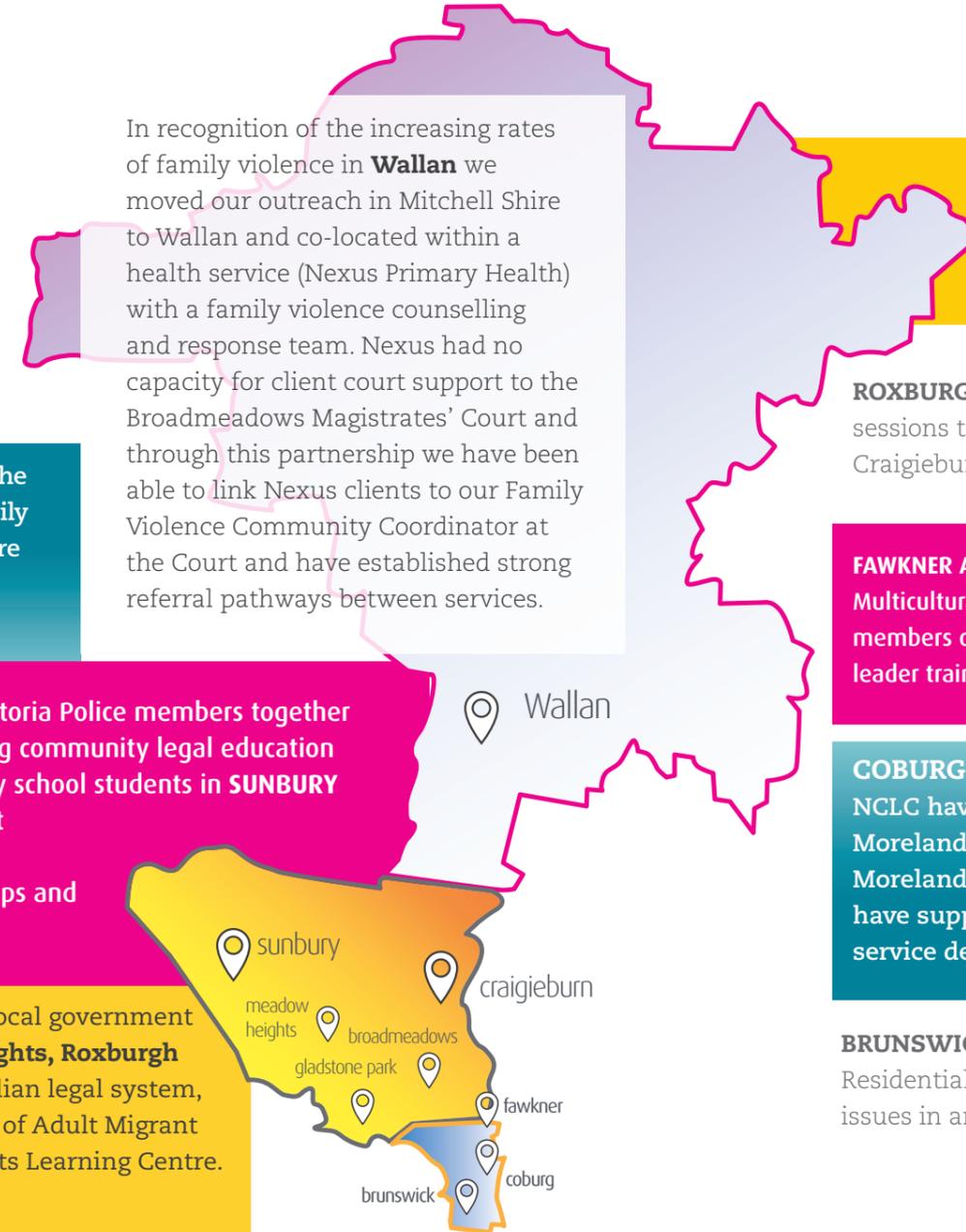
**BROADMEADOWS** – From the Broadmeadows Magistrates Court NCLC convenes monthly meetings of the Hume Domestic and Family Violence Network. The network is dedicated to improving responses to family violence, raising awareness of the issue and promoting gender equality. The network is made up of more than 20 Hume based community groups and service providers dedicated to developing collaborative responses to these issues.

**GLADSTONE PARK** – we have provided monthly do-it-yourself divorce classes from our Gladstone Park office throughout this financial year. Victims/survivors of family violence, people with limited grasp of English and those with legally complex divorce issues are diverted from attending these sessions and linked to our law clinics. Divorce can be particularly important to survivors of family violence but equally fraught with risk and attended with additional legal issues which require one on one legal assistance and appropriate referrals.

In recent years Hume has seen the second highest rate of Syrian and Iraqi refugee settlement of any local government area in Australia with most settling here choosing to settle with established networks in **Meadow Heights, Roxburgh Park and Craigieburn**. In the 2016-2017 period, we provided community legal education on the Australian legal system, families and the law, driving laws and dealing with debts and infringements to well over 300 students of Adult Migrant Education Programs (AMEP) across these suburbs including sessions to students of the Meadow Heights Learning Centre.

In recognition of the increasing rates of family violence in **Wallan** we moved our outreach in Mitchell Shire to Wallan and co-located within a health service (Nexus Primary Health) with a family violence counselling and response team. Nexus had no capacity for client court support to the Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court and through this partnership we have been able to link Nexus clients to our Family Violence Community Coordinator at the Court and have established strong referral pathways between services.

NCLC lawyers and Victoria Police members together participate in ongoing community legal education sessions to secondary school students in **SUNBURY** supporting important messages regarding respectful relationships and partying safely.



**CRAIGIEBURN** – We have worked very closely with community groups operating out of the Newbury Child and Community Centre and Connections @ Craigieburn We have supported their projects and provided legal expertise and access to our legal services on 15 occasions throughout the year.

**ROXBURGH PARK** – NCLC delivered 19 community legal education sessions to schools across our catchment including 7 sessions to newly arrived young people to familiarise them with Australian law which were held at schools in Broadmeadows, Craigieburn and Roxburgh Park.

**FAWKNER AND GLENROY** – Working with Merri Health, Foundation House, Dianella Health, Victoria Police, Arabic Welfare, the Multicultural Centre for Women's Health and the Oorja Foundation we presented sessions on legal responses to family violence to members of 9 multicultural women's groups who were undertaking prevention of violence against women training and emerging leader training including groups in Fawkner and Glenroy.

**COBURG**  
NCLC have worked closely with Moreland Council to ensure that since the closure of the old Moreland office we remain responsive to the needs of the most disadvantage members of the Moreland community. Council helped to facilitate our co-location with Merri Health in Coburg and have supported our efforts to secure funding to move toward a legal & health alliance model of service delivery across our catchment.

**BRUNSWICK** – Our youth lawyer has dinner monthly with residents of the Hope Street Youth Residential Service which provides an opportunity for the young people living there to discuss legal issues in an informal setting, learn about their legal rights and seek any legal help required.



# What an amazing year...



*NCLC was launched in February 2017 by Attorney General Martin Pakula.*



In 2016 NCLC's staff worked to develop the Centres first strategic and to build a cohesive team.



Our CEO being presented with Moreland "Honouring Women" award by Moreland Mayor for outstanding contribution to the Moreland Community



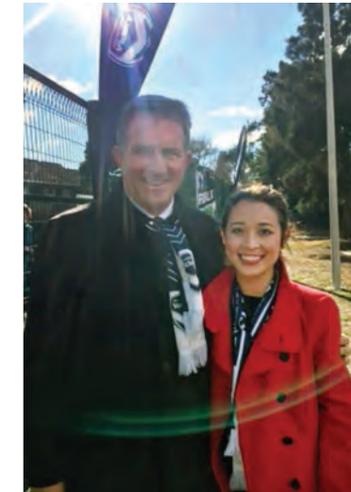
Heather McLean and Mayor of Hume Drew Jessop.

NCLC's Community Development Manager was recognised for her contribution to an innovative prevention of violence against women initiative entitled Poetry Corners. The project brought together members of Craigieburn's multicultural community to tackle gendered violence through poetry.



The Oorja Foundation

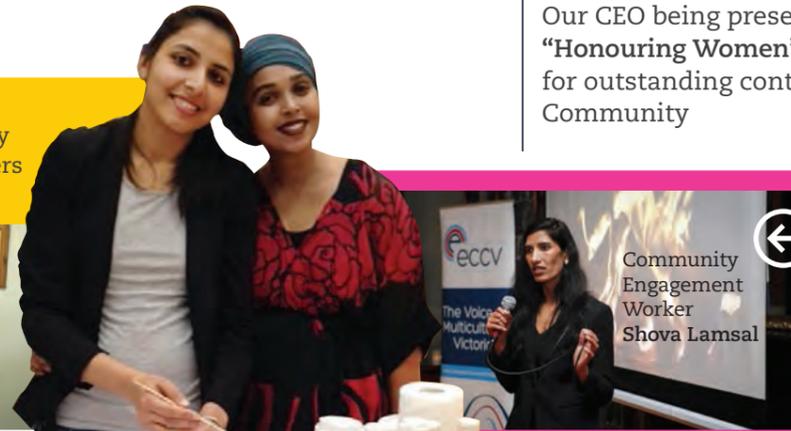
Youth Lawyer Lauren Crome with CEO of Melbourne Victory FC Ian Robson at the launch of the Banksia Gardens led Broadmeadows Youth Justice Alliance.



Thaera Yonan presents a session on family law to students at AMES in Dallas.

Heather McLean and Shova Lamsal at the 3rd anniversary celebrations of the Oorja Foundation

Flora Gulpan, convener of the Hume Domestic and Family Violence Network and NCLC's Family Violence Community Coordinator, with members of the network.



Community Engagement Worker Shova Lamsal

We worked with a focus on raising awareness of family violence and combating gendered violence.

The Hon. Justice Rita Zammit of the Supreme Court of Victoria became an official Champion of our service.



Week without Violence - Masters of Social Work students Sabjot Kaur and Ayan Farah.

In the 2016 – 17 period we targeted our CLE activities to meet the needs of newly arrived community members with a significant proportion being co-delivered by our newly appointed community engagement workers in community languages including Arabic, Assyrian, Hindi, Nepali and Urdu.

# Financial report

## income & expenditure statement for the year ended 2017

	\$ 2017	\$ 2016
<i>Income</i>		
Grants Received - Other Funding (Commonwealth)	32,204	24,372
Grants Received - VLA Commonwealth	392,476	364,995
Grants Received - VLA State	367,576	360,368
Grants Received - Other (State)	97,888	84,466
Grants Received - DOJ	31,522	70,652
Grant Received - Amalgamation	10,135	174,865
Grants Received - Family Violence	192,516	188,740
Grants received - DOJ Other		
- DOJ CLC Family Violence Fund	26,366	-
- DOJ Duty Lawyer Fund	70,812	-
	97,178	-
Service Fees & Grants	24,776	3,856
Donations Received	1,630	8,457
Interest received	3,848	5,721
Loss on scrapping PP & E -	-	(8,061)
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>1,251,749</b>	<b>1,278,431</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

	\$ 2017	\$ 2016		\$ 2017	\$ 2016
<i>Expenses</i>			<i>Expenses</i>		
Accountancy	-	1,112	Rent	53,494	107,431
Audit fees	6,755	4,900	Repairs and maintenance	1,069	5,392
Bank Fees and Charges	40	4	Salaries	685,692	806,260
Bookkeeping	5,201	3,482	Redundancies	-	94,663
Computer support	3,164	5,840	Salary Sacrifice - staff	211,851	12,654
Cleaning	2,742	5,685	Security	1,635	772
Client disbursements	324	-	SMS charges	742	369
Depreciation - other	16,757	15,564	Stationery	216	8,361
Electricity	3,847	5,552	Staff recruitment	1,920	2,501
General supplies	1,451	8,475	Staff on costs	-	1,247
Holiday pay	22,090	(21,669)	Staff training and development	6,458	11,853
Insurance	3,261	6,303	Staff allowances	-	3,084
Internet & Website	12,184	976	Sundry expenses	470	-
Library, Resources Subscriptions	12,960	12,708	Superannuation	89,721	66,039
Long Service Leave	3,833	(48,142)	Telephone	12,702	15,788
Minor Equipment	-	1,500	Travelling expenses	7,080	12,730
Payroll Fees	3,961	1,927	Workcover	2,943	3,087
Postage and couriers	1,816	3,392	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,195,440</b>	<b>1,178,292</b>
Premises - Other outgoings	7,996	7,368	<b>ACTIVITIES BEFORE INCOME TAX</b>	<b>56,309</b>	<b>100,139</b>
Printing, copying and design	6,340	2,667	Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities	-	-
Programming and Planning	4,673	2,082	<b>Net surplus attributable to the association</b>	<b>56,309</b>	<b>100,139</b>
Rates and taxes	51	1,145	<b>Total changes in equity of the association</b>	<b>56,309</b>	<b>100,139</b>
Relocation Expenses	-	5,190	Opening retained surplus	100,139	-
			Net surplus attributable to the association	56,309	100,139
			<b>CLOSING RETAINED SURPLUS</b>	<b>156,448</b>	<b>100,139</b>

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

# Financial report

## - Auditor's letter

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

**ASSUR**  
Audit & Assurance

Chartered Accountants  
Registered Company Auditors

Director:  
A.R. Ager CA, BEC  
Registered Company Auditor

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Authorised Audit Company  
No. 453122

Northern Community Legal Centre Inc  
ABN 50 570 314 348  
Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

### Report on the Audit of the Financial Report

#### Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Northern Community Legal Centre Inc (the association), which comprises the Statement by Members of the Committee, Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2017, a summary of significant accounting policies and the certification by members of the committee on the annual statements giving a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the association as at 30 June 2017 and [of] its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report section of our report. We are independent of the association in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

#### Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist the association to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

#### Responsibilities of the Committee for the Financial Report

The committee is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 and for such internal control as the committee determines is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the committee is responsible for assessing the association's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the committee either intends to liquidate the association or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS | REGISTERED COMPANY AUDITORS  
Liability limited by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Legislation. ABN: 78 167 481 834



Northern Community Legal Centre Inc  
ABN 50 570 314 348  
Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the association's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the committee.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the committee's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the association to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the committee regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

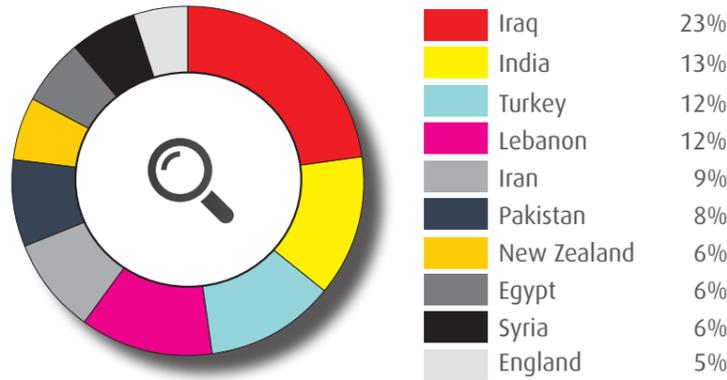
Signed on: 14<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2017

ASSUR PTY LTD  
ASSUR PTY LTD  
Authorised Auditor Company Number: 453122  
Chartered Accountants

*Anthony Ager*  
Anthony Ager  
Director - Audit & Assurance  
Chartered Accountant

# Client Statistics

## Top countries of birth outside Australia



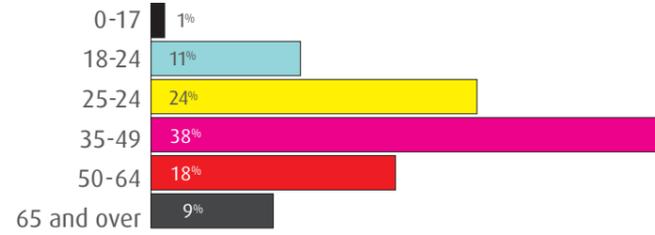
## Gender of clients



## income level

No income	3 %
Low income	80 %
Medium income	16 %
High income	1 %

## Age groups



## Top problem types

FAMILY VIOLENCE AND INTERVENTION ORDERS	28%
OTHER CIVIL LAW	28%
FAMILY LAW	24%
TRAFFIC OFFENCES AND FINES	11%
CONSUMER MATTERS	3%
DEBT MATTERS	3%
CRIMINAL LAW	3%

## Centre Activities

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS	1959
NEW CLIENTS	1300
REPEAT CLIENTS	495
EXISTING CLIENTS	164

# Acknowledgements

Thank you to all our funders, pro bono partners, community partners and supporters



- Alison George, Creative Girl
- AMES Australia
- Arabic Welfare
- Attorney-General's Department
- Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights
- Banksia Gardens Community Services
- Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court
- commUnity Plus
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth
- Craigieburn Education and Community Centre (Selwyn House)
- Dallas Neighbourhood House
- Deakin University
- Department of Justice and Regulation Victoria
- Dianella Health
- Family Relationship Centre (Broadmeadows)

- Foundation House
- Headspace (Craigieburn Central)
- Hope Street (Brunswick)
- Hume City Council
- Lentara UnitingCare Broadmeadows
- Merri Community Health Centre
- Migrant Resource Centre
- Mind Australia
- Monash University
- Moreland City Council
- Nexus Primary Health
- North West Area Mental Health Service
- Oorja Foundation
- Some Kind of Squirrel Productions
- Spectrum
- Sunbury Community Health Centre
- Victoria Legal Aid

**35.5%** Percentage of clients that have reported they are experiencing family violence

**568** Cases opened

*No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted.*  
- Aesop



 Suites 214/215 (Roof top)  
8 - 34 Gladstone Park Drive, Gladstone Park Vic 3043

### *Outreach locations*

**BANKSIA GARDENS** Community Services, 71/81 Pearcedale Pde, Broadmeadows  
**BROADMEADOWS MAGISTRATES' COURT** Dimboola Rd & Pearcedale Parade, Broadmeadows  
**COMMUNITY PLUS** 14 Gaffney Street, Coburg  
**CRAIGIEBURN EDUCATION & COMMUNITY CENTRE** 20 Selwyn Avenue, Craigieburn  
**DALLAS NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE** 180-182 Widford St, Broadmeadows  
**HEADSPACE CRAIGIEBURN CENTRAL** 340 Craigieburn Rd, Craigieburn  
**HOPE STREET OUTREACH** Brunswick Town Hall Level 1, 233 Sydney Road, Brunswick  
**MERRI HEALTH** 21 Victoria Street, Coburg  
**NEXUS PRIMARY HEALTH** 7-11 High Street, Wallan  
**PARC/CCU** 6-10 Talgarno Street, Broadmeadows  
**SPECTRUM** 61 Riggall Street, Dallas  
**SUNBURY COMMUNITY HEALTH** 12-28 Macedon Street, Sunbury

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