



All the Latest from Northern Community Legal Centre

May/June 2022

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From the team at NCLC

NCLC would like to congratulate the new government members in our catchments, including Maria Vamvankinou, member for Caldwell; Peter Khalil, member for Wills; and Rob Mitchell, member for McKewan. We look forward to contributing to policy dialogue and working with them to better understand the legal needs in each of their electorates.

In the lead up to the State election (November 2022), NCLC will be strongly advocating for accountability at all levels of government – with a particular focus upon the way in which funding is distributed to Community Legal Centres – to ensure that funding allocation is responsive to the particular legal needs of our communities and the size of our catchments.

At NCLC, we are continuing to find innovative solutions to address access to justice issues. We would like to acknowledge and thank the Victoria Law Foundation for supporting NCLC to deliver a peer education program in the Mitchell Shire aimed at reaching isolated women impacted by family violence. We would also like to acknowledge Hume City Council for providing funding that will enable NCLC to develop and deliver an early intervention program for young people in Hume aged 10 – 14 who have been impacted by family trauma, including family violence.

Law Week 2022

Law Week provides an opportunity for Community Legal Centres to connect to their community through events that are designed to enhance awareness of individual rights and access to justice. Supported by the Victorian Law Foundation, Law Week ran from 16th – 20th May 2022.

This year NCLC partnered with Arabic Welfare to run an event for our Arabic-speaking community. The event included a presentation on what to expect when you see a lawyer, common legal issues and how the law can assist, and legal health checks. Guests also enjoyed a catered lunch, music by local musician Yousif Takian, and prizes. We thank everyone who participated in this highly successful event and extend our thanks to Banksia Gardens who provided the venue.



NCLC Community Lawyer Oscar Cantieni and Community Development Worker Thaera Yonan present at the Law Week event.

Updates on NCLC Legal Clinics



NCLC is now offering clients a choice of appointment types: an in-person appointment at our Broadmeadows Office, a telephone appointment, or an appointment via video conference. We hope to commence appointments at outreach locations across our catchments in July 2022. Stay tuned for further information!

Elder Abuse

The 15th of June is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD). The World Health Organisation describes elder abuse as a violation of human rights which can result in a loss of dignity, respect and self-determination. Elder abuse is any act (or failure to act) which causes harm or distress to an older person, carried out by someone they know or trust such as an adult child, partner, friend or guardian. The abuse can be social, financial, physical, sexual or psychological, and may include mistreatment and neglect. In most cases, legal assistance is required.

Sometimes a victim is reluctant to speak out for fear of repercussions. Changes in behaviour to look out for include a reluctance to talk openly, avoidance of eye contact or a continuous darting of the eyes, social withdrawal, and changes in sleep patterns or eating habits.

NCLC is committed to raising awareness about the issues affecting older people in our community. We recognise that elder abuse is under-reported,

particularly as a form of family violence, and are working with a range of stakeholders – including the Elder Abuse Prevention Network – to change the legal, policy and social narrative around ageism and inequality. We also provide community legal education to aged care facilities and seniors' community groups in Hume, Moreland and Mitchell Shire to help older people understand their rights.

If you suspect elder abuse is happening to someone you know, or you're unsure if changes in their behaviour are a result of abuse, then you can refer them to NCLC on [\(03\) 9310 4376](tel:(03)93104376) for free, confidential advice and a referral to the relevant support services.

If you witness violence or are worried an older person is at immediate risk, dial the police on 000. Do not confront the abuser, as this may escalate the risk of harm.

VicRoads assistance for victims/survivors of family violence

VicRoads now has a dedicated Customer Resolution Team that provides support for people experiencing registration and licencing issues that have arisen as a result of fleeing a family violence situation. The team may be able to assist with problems such as transfer of car registration, change of number plates, change of licence numbers, having correspondence re-directed, and urgent appointments or license replacements.



An 'Assistance for Family Violence Impacted Person Application' can be completed to nominate a Specialist Family Violence Practitioner to make enquiries on behalf of the affected person.

For further information, click [here](#).

Mitchell Shire Peer Education Program



NCLC is commencing a new program for women in Mitchell Shire to help address the very high rates of family violence in the community. The new program will draw on the support of local women and train them to become leaders who can help prevent family violence in the community.

The peer education training will allow the women to learn more about the causes of family violence and how to respond to and support someone experiencing family violence, including where they can go for help.

"We have found peer education to be the best way to reach isolated women, with educators who are able to engage with women at the places they frequent and where they feel safe," says NCLC CEO Jenni Smith. "For many women, having a trusted source of accurate information and support is the first step towards safety for themselves and their children."

For further information, please contact Tania McKenna at tmckenna@northernclc.org.au.

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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