



## All the Latest from Northern Community Legal Centre

March/April 2023

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### From the Team at NCLC

2023 has been off to a busy start. These past months we've welcomed three new staff members to the NCLC team: Girija Meetina, Family Violence Lawyer; Luke McLean, Senior Lawyer; and Cristina Tambasco, Research Officer.

We are currently looking for a new Board Member with experience in communications, fundraising, and/or advocacy. In today's competitive funding environment, we want to ensure NCLC can not only continue to provide our current services but expand our capacity to reach those most in need in a rapidly growing catchment area.

NCLC regularly develops factsheets in response to legal issues we see emerging at our service as part of our community legal education approach. This month we have two new factsheets, one exploring the legal issues around the online trend of 'drop shipping' and the other explaining how pets are dealt with legally when partners separate.

This newsletter also contains a fundraising update on our Take the First Step Merri-bek project, and offers information about new paid family violence leave entitlements.



*NCLC CEO Jenni Smith with the Member for Broadmeadows Ms Kathleen Matthews-Ward MP and the Member for Yan Yean Ms Lauren Kathage MP at a Didi Bahini Samaj Victoria International Women's Day event in March.*

## Drop Shipping

Have you ever seen an advertisement promising you can make a lot of money working from home?

### **What is drop shipping?**

Drop shipping is an online retail business model where a business sells products that it doesn't own or hold in stock. Instead, the business takes orders from a customer and arranges for a supplier or manufacturer to ship the product to the customer directly. Drop shipping doesn't require a physical store and businesses often set up websites quickly and cheaply to advertise the products.



### **Is drop shipping legal?**

While drop shipping is not illegal in Australia, all businesses selling products to consumers in Australia must comply with the Australian Consumer Law. This law provides basic rights to consumers called consumer guarantees. When consumer guarantees are breached, consumers can be entitled to a repair, replacement or refund.

Before people sign up to become Sellers they should be aware of the pitfalls and requirements.

*For more information about the rights and regulations of both buyers and sellers, have a look at the **[drop shipping factsheet](#)** on our website.*

# Pets and Separation



A decision made in 2022 over the ownership of a dog by the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia makes it clear that in family law proceedings, pets will be treated as property. The Court stated that, “As much as it will pain pet lovers, animals are property and are to be treated as such.” Emotional

attachment to a pet will not be considered in deciding who keeps a pet after separation. This means that pets will be included in the Court’s usual assessment of property division.

For more information, see our [factsheet here](#).

If you need advice on family-law related issues such as property and spousal maintenance, divorce or parenting arrangements, contact NCLC on [\(03\) 9310 4376](tel:(03)93104376) to make an appointment to see a lawyer.

## Help end family violence in Merri-bek



NCLC's Take the First Step project trains local women to be family violence peer educators and leaders within their community.

The project recognises that reaching isolated victims/survivors in the places they feel safest with accurate information regarding support

options is often the first step towards safety for themselves and their children.

### We need your help

Take the First Step is already yielding successful results in Hume and Mitchell Shire, and NCLC is now working to extend the program into Merri-bek, as well as to extend the opportunities for the roles of the peer educators. To date, we have raised approximately \$12,000 but will need a further \$33,000 to make this possible.

If you would like to contribute to this project, please [donate today](#).

## Universal Paid Family Violence Leave

On 1 February 2023, employees of 'non-small business employers' (employers who had 15 or more employees on 1 February 2023) became eligible for ten days of paid family violence leave per year. This includes part-time and casual employees.

To be eligible for this leave, employees must be experiencing family violence. The ten days of paid leave replaces their previous entitlement to five days of unpaid family violence leave. It is available in full immediately and resets each year on an employee's start date. The entitlement comes from the National Employment Standards (NES). It's a minimum leave entitlement, like paid annual leave or paid sick and carer's leave.

Employees of 'small businesses' (employers who had less than 15 employees on 1 February 2023) will be able to access the same leave from 1 August 2023. Until then, they are eligible to continue taking unpaid family and domestic violence leave.

For more information, visit [the Fair Work Ombudsman website](#). If you or someone you know is experiencing family violence, contact NCLC on [\(03\) 9310 4376](#) or [visit this link on our website](#).

*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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