



All the Latest from Northern Community Legal Centre

May/June 2023

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From the Team at NCLC

With the end of the financial year upon us, we reflect on what's been a busy few months. On 5 June, NCLC hosted our Annual Planning Day to review our strategic plan and gather ideas from staff as to how to strengthen the impact of our work in the community. It was an invigorating day for all – providing our busy team with the opportunity to come together and share knowledge and experiences while identifying enhanced ways of working.

The week before, NCLC held a day-long workshop to share our learnings from the Where Safety Begins project. Twelve teachers and youth workers came together to build their capacity to run group activities designed to build resilience and protective strategies in young people who have been exposed to trauma. As funding for this work draws to a close, NCLC would like to thank Youth Community Development Worker, Audrey Dalton-Power, for her commitment and energy in supporting groups of young people and strengthening NCLC's relationships across the youth and education sector.

Finally, funding for NCLC's Take the First Step projects in Hume and Mitchell Shire comes to an end on 30 June 2023. These programs have been integral in identifying and empowering diverse women who are passionate about leading change in their communities. We hope to stay connected to our Hume and Mitchell Peer Educators so we can continue to stay attuned to the needs of our community, and to continue providing support for their efforts to lead change locally. In the 2023/2024 financial year, we are delighted to announce that we will be extending the Take the First Step project into Merri-bek.



NCLC staff at our Annual Planning Day in June.

Registering a Birth

Our North West Enhanced Pathways (NWEPP) Maternal Child Health Partnership team has recently been assisting a number of young mothers who are victims/survivors of family violence in matters relating to birth certificates. Accordingly, we have developed a new [factsheet](#) on this issue, available on our website. It is important that new parents understand the birth registration process in Victoria as it can impact child support and social security entitlements. You can rely upon birth certificates as evidence to support a 'presumption of parentage' if you have parenting proceedings in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.



Registering a birth in Victoria

Births must be registered in Victoria by lodging a Birth Registration Statement (BRS) with the Registrar of Births, Deaths, and Marriages within 60 days. You may be fined if you do not register. Both parents must sign the BRS unless the registrar is satisfied that they are not able to obtain the signatures of both parents.

Naming the father on the birth certificate

You are not legally required to provide the name of the father on your child's birth certificate. If you name the father, this can be used as evidence to support the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility, which means you must check with the father regarding long-term decisions for the child. If there are disagreements, an application can be filed in the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia.

Birth certificates and child support

Both parents are responsible for financially supporting their children. This applies to all parents whether separation has occurred or not. If the father is not listed on the birth certificate, you may need to take additional steps to apply for child support.

Check out other NCLC Factsheets [here](#).

Assisting young people with criminal matters



NCLC's youth lawyers are available to take referrals for young people under 25 with criminal matters. We can assist with summary offences such as road or traffic incidents, minor assaults, or offensive behaviour. Early support and intervention is especially important for first-time offenders who risk being funneled into the criminal

justice system.

Case Study

Fatima*, late teens, moved to Australia from Iran in 2019. She has no criminal history and is currently completing high school. One night, Fatima and some friends let off small fire-crackers in a public place. Police were alerted and Fatima was charged with the unauthorised use of an illegal firework/explosive. At the time, she was not aware of her rights or responsibilities. When she received a Court date, Fatima contacted our service for advice.

NCLC advised Fatima of her options as to the criminal charge and agreed to assist her with Court representation and negotiating with Police via summary case conferencing. We successfully referred Fatima for diversion as she had no criminal priors, was of good character and was still a young adult. Our Lawyer appeared for Fatima at her diversion hearing and made submissions to ensure her circumstances were understood by the Magistrate. The Magistrate granted the diversion with no conviction and only one condition: good behaviour for three months.

Fatima was overwhelmed with relief, stating she could not have navigated the legal process without NCLC's assistance. She can now focus on her studies, knowing she'll be free to enter the workforce without criminal charges impacting upon future opportunities.

*Details changed.

If you have a client who's been charged with a crime, speak to a lawyer as soon as possible. Call us on [\(03\) 9310 4376](tel:(03) 9310 4376) or email admin@northernclc.org.au.

Mitchell Family Violence Forum



On Friday 9 June NCLC held a community forum called 'Keeping Families Safe in our Diverse and Growing Community' at the Greater Beveridge Community Centre. More than 50 people attended the event, which provided an opportunity for service providers to connect with the community and participate in an

important conversation regarding addressing family violence in the rapidly growing population of Mitchell Shire.

We were delighted to hear from our special guest, the Hon. Ros Spence MP, Minister for Prevention of Family Violence, as well as the Mitchell Shire Mayor, Fiona Stevens. In addition, NCLC's CEO Jenni Smith and Peer Educators from our Take the First Step Project participated in a panel to discuss gaps, challenges and opportunities when responding to family violence. Also joining the panel were service representatives from Nexus Primary Health, the Orange Door, Victoria Police, Family Care and Maternal Child Health Services. Questions from the audience led to an important discussion regarding how services can be more responsive to community need, how agencies can learn from the voices of women in the community, and the importance of recruiting bi-cultural staff who reflect community demographics.

NCLC would like to thank our Peer Educators Rem and Shanti, the community, and the services who participated to make this event such a success.

Thank you to Legal Practice Manager Marquita Nolan



After nearly five years with NCLC, Legal Practice Manager Marquita Nolan is leaving NCLC to explore an exciting new career opportunity. Marquita has made an enormous contribution to the growth and vitality of NCLC over the past five years and will be greatly missed.

Over this time she not only adeptly helped transition the legal team in and out of numerous lockdowns, but led the implementation of significant quality improvement processes to ensure that NCLC could be trusted to deliver accurate and effective legal advice while targeting our limited

resources at those community members most in need of assistance. On behalf of all NCLC staff, we would like to thank Marquita for her support, passion and commitment and wish her well into the future.

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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