



# Eastern Community Law

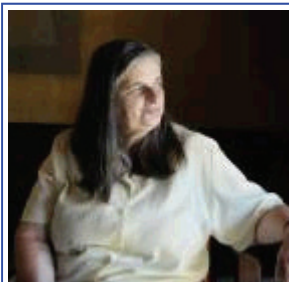
## Newsletter

Winter 2009

### ECLC Community gives generously

ECLC's annual Volunteer Dinner on Thursday May 14 had two goals this year. Not only did the event thank volunteers and recognise their contributions over an extraordinary period, it was also a fundraiser to support bushfire affected communities.

Many residents of our communities, particularly in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, were directly impacted by the bushfires and ECLC has been working hard with many others to provide support and assistance. This support would not have been able to be provided without the generous assistance of the Centre's volunteers local legal practitioners and staff team.



Special guest and 'Cameron House' campaigner Dorothy Barber

The volunteer dinner was hosted by the Centre's patron, Chief Magistrate Ian Gray, with guest speakers Christine Nixon, the Chair of the Victorian Bushfire Reconstruction and Recovery Authority and Yarra Glen resident Dorothy Barber, Chair of the Yarra Glen Medical Precinct Group. Over 130 people attended the evening at Box Hill Town Hall, including volunteers, local councillors, parliamentarians, guests and ECLC supporters.

Dorothy Barber (who lost her home on Black Saturday) spoke of her incredible experience and how it inspired her to work even harder to campaign for a GP doctor to work in the newly refurbished 'Cameron House'.

The evening's second guest Christine Nixon shared her approach to working with the Recovery Authority. "Communities recover best when they are supported to manage their own recovery," she said. Christine spoke of the enormous task facing government, businesses and most of all communities to rebuild homes, regenerate the environment, support local economies and restore community identity.

She highlighted the importance of identifying each community's specific needs and responding in a sensitive and evolving way. She also thanked the ECLC volunteers and community for their outstanding efforts with others in responding to the tragedy.

The evening raised over \$2800 to support Cameron House, a Yarra Glen project to re-establish a local medical clinic. As there are currently no local medical facilities, many bushfire affected people with ongoing health problems are forced to travel to Healesville or Lilydale for medical assistance.



Special guest Christine Nixon

### Stop Press! There's a Doctor in the house!

Since Dorothy spoke at the Volunteer Dinner in May, Cameron House has received some exciting news! A doctor's surgery will be operating out of Cameron House in Yarra Glen from July, two years after the community began a campaign for medical services.

Three GPs will work alternating shifts to staff the centre five days a week. Congratulations to Dorothy and the other members of the Yarra Glen Medical Precinct Group!



### This Edition

- Volunteer dinner
- Staff snapshot
- Family Violence Projects
- Good news from YRIPP
- New factsheets
- Make your voice heard
- Minister for Seniors in Boronia
- Making Human Rights our goal

### ECLC Services

#### Box Hill Office

Suite 3, Town Hall Hub  
27 Bank Street, Box Hill 3128  
Mon – Fri 9:00am – 5:00pm  
Ph: (03) 9285 4822 Fax: (03) 9285 4833  
eclc@eclc.org.au

#### Outreach locations:

Ashburton  
Hawthorn  
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Whitehorse  
Boroondara & Manningham

**For an appointment for these services, call (03) 9285 4822**

#### Boronia Office

Suite B, 6 Floriston Road, Boronia 3155  
(PO Box 747)  
Mon – Thurs 9:00am – 5:00pm  
Ph: (03) 9762 6235 Fax: (03) 9762 9751  
Freecall: 1300 79 70 88  
outereast@eclc.org.au

#### Outreach Locations

Healesville  
Lilydale  
Rowville  
Yarra Glen  
Yarra Junction  
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

Serving the Cities of Knox & Maroondah & the Shire of Yarra Ranges

**For an appointment for these services, call (03) 9762 6235**

[www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au)

### Lauren Hills, Volunteers Project Worker and SRV Admin Support Worker



#### What do you do at ECLC?

I wear two hats! At times I am the volunteers project worker, assisting with the co-ordination of volunteers, particularly with the night service.

The rest of the time I work with staff from Seniors Rights Victoria, providing administrative support.

#### What did you do before working at ECLC?

I worked in retail, selling outdoor furniture, and at a small personal injury law firm in the city. I also volunteered at ECLC!

#### What do you like about ECLC?

I get to work with a lot of wonderful people, both staff and volunteers. I also like working for an organisation that helps so many people.

#### Highlights of the work so far?

Getting to work on Older and Wiser and seeing my work in print, all shiny and glossy.

#### Any funny or embarrassing moments?

Being called "Laura" by a lawyer for several months because I was too shy to correct her.

#### Any legal issue that frustrates you?

I'm sure there are several, but my brain is currently full of corporations law for my upcoming exam and I can't think of anything but that when I try to think about it!

#### Favourite food?

Anything with chocolate in, around or on it.

#### Favourite holiday destination?

Japan! I haven't been yet, but I'm sure it'll be fantastic!

#### Favourite time of the year?

Spring. It's not too hot or cold and I love to sit outside in the sun and read a book.

**DID YOU KNOW ECLC HAS TWO OFFICES AND EIGHT OUTREACH LOCATIONS?**

For a handy map displaying all of our service locations, visit [www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au) and click on 'Legal Services'.

And while you're there you can find out more about the Centre and the work we do!

## Family Violence Projects

For those working in our field it is no shock to know that family violence is still prevalent in our communities. ECLC continues to work with other organisations and support many initiatives as we work towards raising awareness of the many issues faced by those affected by family violence.

#### 'It's not just the language...'

On May 25 ECLC, in conjunction with other local agencies, hosted a forum titled 'It's not just the language,' for service providers supporting families from cultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds experiencing family violence. Supported by the Migrant Settlement Committee the forum was attended by over 50 staff. It encouraged a healthy dialogue and sharing of information about best practice in this area.

#### Boroondara Safety card

ECLC also supports the new "Community safety and rights information card" for residents in the City of Boroondara. This card will be distributed to local residents and is designed to neatly fit in a purse or wallet in a discreet manner. Along with contact details to our centre and other services it clearly states that, "If you feel your rights are being ignored or not being respected it is important to know it is not OK and that you are able to do something about it".

Catherine Jeffries, Inner East Community Lawyer, spoke at the launch about the Family Violence Protection Act along with police, social workers and local service representatives.

#### Knox Accord

The outer east team has been working to raise awareness about family violence through the Knox Accord which is a partnership between Knox Community Health Service, Victoria Police, Knox City Council, ECLC and more recently the Eastern Football League (EFL).

The Knox Accord is a campaign to end violence against women and this phase of the project focused on the football matches that were played in the Knox region on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. All six football clubs agreed to actively participate by encouraging their footballers to wear white arm bands as a mark of respect and support and on the day there were guest speakers to address the various club members such as Jane Ashton (sister of Julie Ramage), Greg Champion (singer and media identity) and Leigh Gassner (anti-violence campaigner). The footballers were addressed on the Thursday night by various members of the Knox Accord. The clear message was – 'not to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women'.

In fact, violence in the home is the biggest preventable cause of death, disability and health problems for women aged 15–45 in Victoria. That's unacceptable, and it's something Rob Sharpe, CEO of the EFL (and Knox Accord Ambassador), isn't going to take sitting on the sideline. 'There's 40,000 people involved in EFL footy every weekend,' said Sharpe. 'We've got a very wide demographic and we're able to get this message out in a very public way.'

The campaign acknowledged that men listen to men and football clubs would be a great place to spread this message drawing the analogy between the football game and life outside the club. Speaking at the Knox Football Club ECLC Co-ordinator Denise Budge highlighted the key messages of the Accord:

- 'Even in your game of footy – violence is not tolerated'
- 'Bullies don't get Brownlows!'
- 'There is a time and place for celebrating kicks and marks. That's on the sports field. But there are no heroes when kicks and marks are happening in the home.'
- 'Only drop-kicks commit family violence.'

The day was a huge success and it is anticipated that an additional 800 signatures were collected on the day in support of the Knox Accord. The Knox Accord partnership will continue to raise awareness about the issues and help women access the support they need. ECLC continues to work with partners and networks to further promote rights and safety for all in our communities.

**Leonie Burnham, & Denise Budge, Inner & Outer East Coordinators**



## Good News from YRIPP

A Volunteer Appreciation Dinner for YRIPP volunteers was held on Saturday May 16<sup>th</sup> at the San Remo Ballroom. Volunteers from around the state attended and from all accounts everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening with one of our eldest volunteers dancing the night away to the sounds of the African band, Soukos Ba Congo! It was an opportunity for YRIPP to thank and show our appreciation to our volunteers for the amazing, selfless work they undertake.

June has been "Good News" month for YRIPP! We recently received the news that the program will be funded for another 12 months and the program was awarded a "Certificate of Excellence" by the Settlement Grant Program and Integrated Humanitarian Settlement Services for "promoting fair and non discriminatory treatment of young people from new emerging communities".

**Susan Hillman Stolz**  
YRIPP Eastern Region Co-ordinator

## New fact sheets available!

ECLC celebrated Law Week 2009 with displays in many local libraries between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of May focusing on legal issues relevant to senior Victorians. The displays featured the first of ECLC's series of 'Older and Wiser' fact sheets on:

- Grandparenting
- Fencing
- Elder Abuse

The fact sheets have been drawn from the content of ECLC's popular publication, 'Older and Wiser' and are available to download from [www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au).

## Make your voice heard

Do you:

- Come from a CALD (Culturally And Linguistically Diverse) background and live, work or study in Melbourne's East?
- Have a broad understanding of the issues facing the migrant community of which you are a part?
- Have the ability to express the perspectives of your community?
- Have the ability to listen to the views of others and operate respectfully in a group setting?

You might be interested in being a part of ECLC's new Diversity Consultancy Panel.

For more information visit [www.eclc.org.au](http://www.eclc.org.au) or contact Amy Johnstone, Community Development Worker on (03) 9285 4822

## Would you like to donate to ECLC?

For more details and how your donation will be used, please visit ECLC's website. Donations over \$2 are tax deductible and can be made on-line.

## Minister for Seniors in Boronia

Minister for Senior Victorians Lisa Neville launched SRV in the Eastern Region and the new website [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au) in May at the Eastern Community Legal Centre in Boronia.

Ms Neville said the SRV service has received more than 1300 calls since it was established in April last year, with the majority of calls coming in relation to financial matters. "Around 43 per cent of calls to Seniors Rights Victoria were in relation to financial abuse, this may be a family member or friend misusing power of attorney for financial gain, pressuring seniors to give them money, forcing seniors to sign things they don't understand, taking control of property, money or other possessions," Ms Neville said. "Shockingly 50 per cent of callers have reported this abuse has been carried out by their own son or daughter."

Eastern Community Legal Centre is one of the partners in Seniors Rights Victoria, along with COTA Victoria, Loddon Campaspe CLC and PILCH. SRV staff outreach to ECLC offices each week with legal, non-legal advocacy and education services being provided.

"Seniors Rights Victoria works closely with experienced professionals who regularly deal with the financial, medical and legal affairs of older people to ensure callers understand the issues and can respond appropriately.", the Minister stated.

"Anyone seeking assistance or information about elder abuse can phone SRV on 1300 368 821."

## World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

June 15, 2009 was the 4th Annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEEAD). It is a day on which communities across the world hold events to raise awareness of elder abuse.

Elder abuse is any act occurring within a relationship of trust, which results in harm to the older person. It includes mistreatment and neglect as well as physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse. Research indicates that 1 in 20 older people in Australia will be subject to elder abuse, usually from a family member.

In Melbourne, Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV) held a major forum for service providers from community, aged, health and legal sectors to share knowledge and experience in dealing with Elder Abuse.

The WEAAD event in Melbourne included a keynote address by Julian Gardner, the former Public Advocate, who has long been an advocate for action on Elder Abuse. Seminars were also held on Capacity, Financial Abuse and Human Rights – matters of concern for those working with older people in the community.

An expert panel involving Victoria Police, the Public Advocate, services, medical and legal practitioners responded to a dynamic hypothetical discussion led by Bill O'Shea, General Council for Alfred Health, and a member of SRV's Advisory Committee.



New material from OSV raises awareness about elder abuse. [www.seniorsrights.org.au](http://www.seniorsrights.org.au)



## Making Human Rights Our Goal

The National Human Rights Consultation (NHRC), the Federal Government's review into human rights protection in Australia, has now finalised its consultation stage with the broader Community. Eastern Community Legal Centre made a spirited and comprehensive contribution to the debate through a written submission on behalf of our community.

*Human Rights - Aussie Rules: Making Fair Play our Goal* uses the metaphor of sport and fair play to recommend better protection of human rights in Australia. The 31-page submission focuses on four case studies in our local community where existing human rights laws are failing vulnerable people - seniors, indigenous communities, young people and new arrivals to Australia. By focusing on our existing rights-based initiatives with Seniors Rights Victoria, YRIPP and outreach to indigenous and culturally diverse communities, we have provided the consultation committee with examples of real problems arising from the lack of human rights laws.

ECLC consulted widely with local community organisations while formulating the submission, including the Aston Forum, Healesville Community Network, Knox Youth Network, Manningham Community Services Planning Group, Manningham Youth Providers Network, Maroondah Youth Network, Melbourne East General Practice Network and Shire of Yarra Ranges Youth Network.

### Recommendations

ECLC's submission makes the following recommendations to the NHRC Committee:

1. Provide formal legal protection of principles of the fair go, encapsulated by rights set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR).
2. Prioritise human rights protection for vulnerable communities in the Eastern Region of Melbourne, particularly seniors, indigenous communities, young people and new arrivals.
3. Enactment a federal Human Rights Act with an individual complaint mechanism.
4. Develop a national human rights education program for children and young people at primary and secondary schools
5. Consult the National Human Rights Education Committee and state counterparts on a national approach to human rights education.
6. Provide funding for community-based human rights education.
7. Explore ways to integrate human rights education for young people with learning about fair play and good sportsmanship.

### The Importance of Human Rights Education

In the absence of a national human rights curriculum, a large part of ECLC's submission focuses on human rights education. ECLC took the opportunity of explaining the Human Rights are Aussie Rules project in detail, including opportunities for supporting our work with children and young people in schools.

### CLC's and Human Rights

ECLC's submission was one of a large number made by Community Legal Centres across the country. Community Legal Centres have been at the forefront of protecting the human rights of disadvantaged people for many years, a point made strongly by Bill Mitchell, the Convener of the Human Rights Network of the National Association of CLC's, during recent public hearings in Canberra.

Bill said,

*"We don't need to put ourselves in the shoes of others to understand (human rights), we have been there for 35 years. 35 years of frontline experience in sharing the struggle of those denied access to their fundamental rights."*

### The Next Steps for Human Rights

The National Human Rights Consultation is due to report to the Federal Government by 30 September 2009. The Committee is chaired by Fr Frank Brennan, lawyer, Jesuit priest and long term advocate of human rights. He is joined by indigenous barrister Tammy Williams, former SBS broadcaster Mary Kostakidis, Mick Palmer, former Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police and Phillip Flood a distinguished diplomat who presided over the inquiries into detention centres in Australia.

With a record number of 40,000 submissions to wade through, the Committee has a considerable amount of work to do within a very short timeline. ECLC has been advocating publicly and behind the scenes with pro-rights groups to place public pressure on the Federal Government to enact a Human Rights Act.

### ECLC's Human Rights are Aussie Rules Project

ECLC is delighted to announce that we have received funding from the **Helen Macpherson Smith Trust** to develop and implement this project in schools. The project builds on ECLC's successful Fred's Fair Play using sport to teach about human rights with children and young people.

Other supporters have joined this project and it will be launched shortly. ECLC is keen to work with others to advance this exciting work.

**Tanja Kovac**

**Project Co-ordinator, Human Rights are Aussie Rules**

## Support

The ongoing support of these financial and other partners is gratefully acknowledged:

- Victoria Legal Aid
- Commonwealth Government
- Department of Planning & Community Development (Vic)
- City of Boroondara
- City of Whitehorse
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Clayton Utz
- Council On The Ageing (Victoria)
- EACH (Eastern Access Community Health)
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Service)
- Family Access Network
- GordonCare
- Inner East Community Health
- JH Legal
- Knox Community Health Service
- Knox Infolink
- Loddon Campaspe CLC
- Louise Multicultural Community Centre
- Mercader
- Migrant Information Centre Eastern
- Moores Legal
- Public Interest Law Clearing House
- Ringwood Magistrates' Court
- Robinson Gill
- Seniors Rights Victoria
- Women's Legal Service Victoria
- Yarra Valley Community Health Service
- Volunteers and members of ECLC