



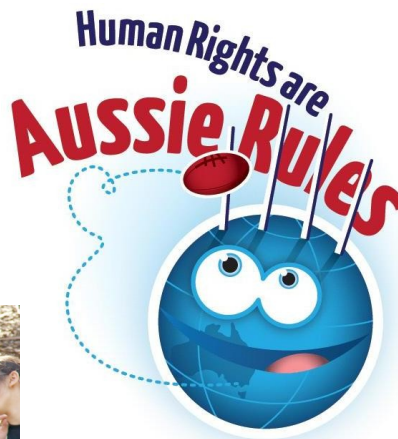
Eastern Community Law

Newsletter

Spring 2009

Kicking Goals for Human Rights!

ECLC has launched its latest human rights education initiative with an exciting event featuring theatre, football and some famous faces. The Human Rights are Aussie Rules project is an innovative program teaching children about human rights through principles of fair play and good sportsmanship. Using theatre and sport, the project coaches kids about the importance of Freedom, Respect, Equality and Dignity.



Deputy Premier & Attorney-General Rob Hulls shows his support for human rights at the launch.



Launched by Deputy Premier & Attorney-General Rob Hulls at Eley Park in Blackburn, the day also featured a live performance of FRED's Fair Play by Carp Productions and involved students from the Blackburn English Language School. The AFL Multicultural Program also supported the day with activities and footballs for all the children.

Deputy Premier and Attorney General Rob Hulls said human rights are about making sure each person feels included, and respected and are treated in the way you want to be treated yourself. "They apply in the classroom, the playground, the street or at home. Respect for yourself, others and the community is fundamental to a safe, healthy and productive society".

"This program explains our basic rights in terms of fair play in sport and helps make rights and responsibilities real and practical and part of our everyday life," Mr Hulls said. "For example, the right to express cultural difference equates to the right to wear your team's colours, the right to freedom of movement, being able to sit where you like at a game and join the cheer squad and the right to a fair trial equates to the right to an independent umpire."

Each year, the east of Melbourne welcomes thousands of kids from different countries. The one language common to young people from all cultures is sport and ECLC believes the key to

cont. p2.



Students from Blackburn English Language School break the Human Rights are Aussie Rules Banner at the launch. Learning and fun go together!

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- Seniors Rights - 1 year on
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- Bushfire Response
- Bill Shorten headlines AGM
- There when you need us: the year in review
- Support

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: 9285 4833
eclc@eclc.org.au

Outreach locations:

Hawthorn
Ashburton
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

Rowville
Lilydale
Yarra Junction
Healesville
Yarra Glen
Ringwood Magistrates' Court

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

Donna Askew, Outer East Community Lawyer

What did you do before working at ECLC?

I worked at Whittlesea Community Legal Centre, the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission and had two kids!



What do you like about ECLC?

Its professionalism.

Highlights of the work so far?

Driving through Victoria's beautiful country side on outreach in Yarra Valley.

Any funny or embarrassing moments in the job?

There are a couple, however they make me cringe still so I cant tell!

Any legal issue that frustrates you?

The infringements system... confusing and frustrating for anyone who has to try to negotiate it, client and lawyer alike.

Favourite food?

Chocolate and donuts, all the better if the two are paired together!!

Favourite holiday destination?

Mansfield in High country and Teal Flat, a tiny dot on the Murray river in SA-great water skiing.

Favourite time of the year?

Spring racing through to January summer holidays.

Diversity Consultancy

Panel

- *Are you looking for an opportunity to contribute to your community?*
- *Want to have your voice heard?*
- *Do you want to gain valuable skills and experience while meeting new people?*

There are still positions available on ECLC's Diversity Consultancy Panel!

Visit www.eclc.org.au for more info or contact Amy Johnstone on 9285 4822

Kicking Goals for Human Rights! (cont from p1)

teaching kids respect for racial and religious difference is through sport. At school, all kids learn the rules of fair play on the sportsfield. But they should also understand the rules for fair play in life. Human rights education is important to the wellbeing and inclusion of young Australians.

After an earlier grant from VEOHRC to develop the play for festivals, ECLC has been delighted to welcome support for Human Rights are Aussie Rules from the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Victorian Multicultural Commission and Sports Without Borders. The Project is also supported by an advisory board drawn from the education, sport, legal and community sectors.

Mr Hulls congratulated the Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC) for developing the project. "The theatre production is followed up by workshops to allow the kids to discuss what they have seen and learnt. The program focuses on diversity, so kids from different racial, religious and cultural backgrounds learn that we all have the same human rights."

The project also launched its new website on the day. For more information about Human Rights are Aussie Rules contact Tanja Kovac at ECLC or visit www.humanrightsareaussierules.org.au

Education Top Priority for National Human Rights Committee

The report is out! In October, the National Human Rights Consultation concluded with the release of the final report. It contains a series of recommendations, most notably that Australia adopt a Federal Human Rights Act. However, the first recommendation was:

Recommendation 1:

The Committee recommends that education be the highest priority for improving and promoting human rights in Australia.

ECLC enthusiastically welcomes the report and its recognition that education must be the starting point for creating a human rights culture in Australia. ECLC looks forward to working with schools, students, its project partners and the broader community to play an active part in this work.

Seniors Rights - 1 year on

Seniors Rights Victoria (SRV), a free service to help prevent elder abuse and safeguard the rights, dignity and independence of older Victorians, began operating in April 2008. SRV is supported by a partnership between ECLC, PILCH, Loddon Campaspe CLC and Council on the Ageing (COTA).

Since its launch, SRV has been busy working to increase awareness of elder abuse within the community and that people affected receive good assistance. A large number of community education sessions have been run by SRV through the year, many with ECLC. SRV has also been busy delivering advocacy and legal services -in the past year, a significant number of clients were provided with legal advice, casework and advocacy services. SRV has also established a range of partnerships.

SRV also held a World Elder Abuse Day workshop in June this year at Victoria University. This workshop was well attended, with over 140 delegates from the government, health and community sectors and the legal profession.

Throughout the past year ECLC has been excited to be involved with SRV, both having the opportunity to watch it develop right from the beginning and assisting in that development. As the second year of SRV begins, we look forward to being part of the further growth and advancement this service.

Lauren Hills and Gary Ferguson, Seniors Rights Victoria



ACLCL for Yarra Ranges?

ECLC has for some time been concerned at the lack of access to legal and related services for residents of the Yarra Ranges. In September, the Centre commenced its Yarra Ranges Project, and is undertaking a legal needs study with the support of local agencies and the community.

The Shire of Yarra Ranges covers 2,467 km² and has a population of over 140,000, making it one of the largest and most diverse municipalities in Melbourne's metro fringe area. ECLC's Boronia office covers the municipalities of Knox, Maroondah and the Yarra Ranges.

Since its inception thanks to state government support in 2005, a number of outreach services have been established to address the needs of the Shire of Yarra Ranges with monthly outreach services to Lilydale, Yarra Junction and more recently Healesville.

However, ECLC continues to struggle to offer the level of service required to respond to the Shire's needs considering both the levels of disadvantage being experienced by a number of communities and access issues for residents in the Yarra Ranges. Combined with the devastation of the Black Saturday bushfires, this has highlighted the need for ECLC to respond to these needs of the Shire more effectively.

In the last financial year we have assisted residents of the Shire in 551 matters, but only a small percentage of these matters have been attended to at one of our existing outreach services. Social work student, Stuart Wilson, is co-ordinating the research to establish an evidence base, consider the issues and make recommendations. His work is a key part of a targeted campaign that will build on ECLC's established links in the Yarra Ranges.

A Yarra Ranges Reference Group has been established including representatives from Yarra Valley Community Health, Anglicare, ECLC, EDVOS EACH and the Council.

ECLC will keep the community informed as the work develops. Residents and agencies keen to participate may contact ECLC's Boronia office.

Denise Budge, Outer East Coordinator

Bushfire Recovery Continues

ECLC continues to provide a response to the bushfires in the Yarra Ranges, providing a weekly outreach at the Yarra Glen Bushfire Recovery Centre, in the Memorial Hall.

With the support of volunteers, pro bono partners and Bushfire Legal Help, ECLC has now assisted over 170 clients affected by the fires, the vast majority at the Yarra Glen Centre. Law firm Clayton Utz has been very generous and continues to support this vital outreach.

As community needs have changed, so has the Recovery Centre, seeing some services cease or wind back their frequency of attendance. Co-ordinated by the Council, it has been a very welcoming place where those affected by the bushfires could find a quiet place to sit and find a friendly ear to listen to them, access various government and Shire services along with the ECLC lawyers and paralegals. In addition, there was a wealth of printed material available for residents.

Across the road from the Recovery Centre was the material aid centre being run totally by a dedicated team of volunteers, also providing a range of support. Like the Recovery Centre, the needs of the community for material aid were changing. Discussions began about merging the two centres and providing services together.

On the 1st September the big move took place and the Shire and government services, along with ECLC moved across the road from the Memorial Hall to the 'Old IGA' as the locals fondly call it, to join with the material aid service and financial counselors from EACH.

Space was found to re-create the quiet lounge area from the Recovery Centre into the newly called 'castle' so locals can still sit comfortably and have a chat and find a friendly ear to listen to them. Spaces have been found for all the other service providers along with some additions to the building to include interview rooms. To ensure good understanding, regular meetings are being held with all the volunteers and service providers.

We will continue to work with these communities in a range of ways to assist the recovery process.

Denise Budge, Outer East Coordinator

ECLC is delighted to welcome the Hon Bill Shorten MP
as guest speaker at our AGM. Please join us!

there when



you need us

Wednesday November 4th 2009

6.00pm - Pre-meeting refreshments

6.30pm - AGM Commences

Whitehorse Room

Box Hill Town Hall

1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill

RSVP: 9285 4822

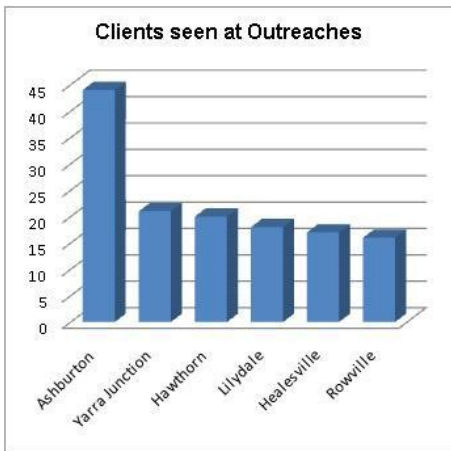


There When You Need Us...

With the season for annual report writing upon us, a review of the recent data activities sheds light on the efforts of the whole team. In the past year, ECLC has consistently responded to community need.

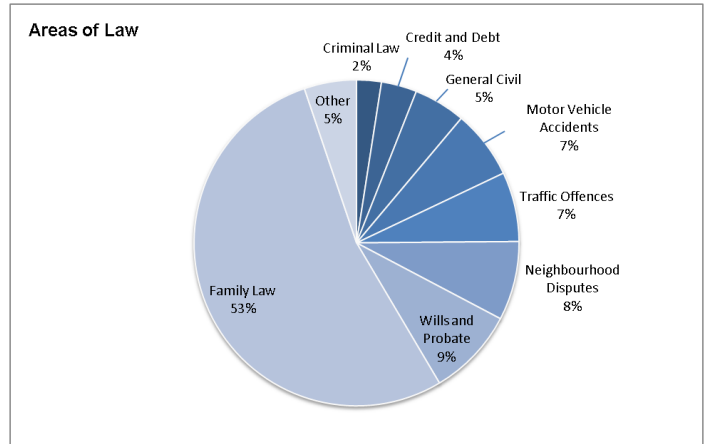
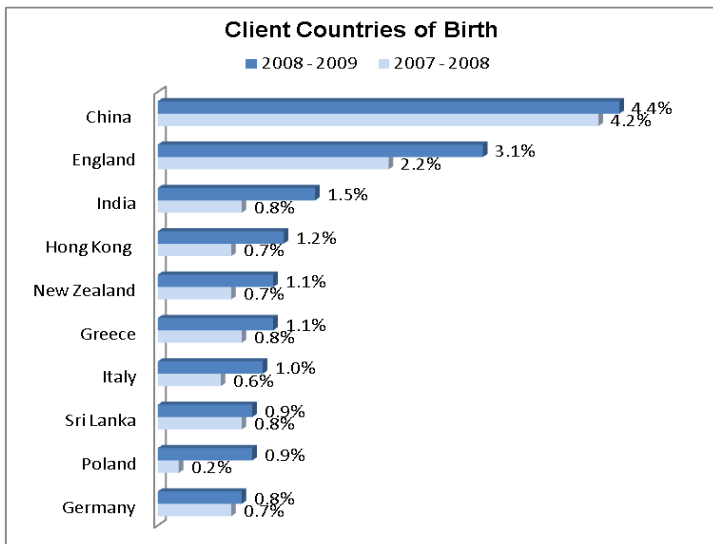
From assisting communities affected by the bushfires and offering outreaches in geographically isolated areas, to delivering community legal education throughout the east of Melbourne, ECLC has been out and about bringing its services to those who need it most. It is this willingness to go out and assist our communities that led us to our theme for this year's annual report - "There when you need us".

One of the most obvious examples of ECLC being "there when you need us" is our outreach program. ECLC offers outreach services in a number of locations, including in several geographically isolated areas in the Shire of Yarra Ranges. Outreaches are offered in townships and suburbs such as Yarra Junction, Healesville and Hawthorn once a month. In Ashburton, an urban community with higher levels of disadvantage, services are offered once a fortnight, which is reflected in the higher number of clients.



ECLC has also been making a concerted effort to reach out to the migrant communities within our catchment area, through activities and projects such as community legal education and the new Diversity Consultancy Panel. This effort has been reflected by an increase in the number of clients from migrant communities being seen at the centre.

In addition to its work out in the community, ECLC also continues to offer its services from the Box Hill and Boronia offices. In the past year the legal service assisted 2,416 clients, which is an increase of 9% from last year's total of 2,225 clients. About 80% of the increase could be said to be bushfire-related, but the startling data is that ECLC's existing legal services still increased through the year!



The main area of law that the centre dealt with this year was family law, including an extensive family violence response. Wills and probate, neighbourhood disputes and traffic offences make up the next most common areas.

These are only a few of the statistics from the past year which show the great work that ECLC has been doing. Further statistics and reports will be contained in the centre's annual report, to be released at the AGM on November 4, which shows in greater detail exactly how ECLC is truly "there when you need us".

Of course, this work is not undertaken alone and ECLC thanks the many volunteers, partners and supporters, as well as dedicated staff who make this possible. A number are listed below.

Lauren Hills, Project Worker

Support

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

- Victoria Legal Aid
- Commonwealth Government
- Department of Planning and Community Development (Vic)
- City of Boroondara
- City of Whitehorse
- Knox City Council
- Maroondah City Council
- Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
- Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Sports Without Borders
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission
- Balwyn Welfare Association
- Box Hill Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Carp Productions
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Clayton Utz
- Council On The Ageing (Victoria)
- Deveish & Co.
- EACH
- EDVOS (Eastern Domestic Violence Service)
- Family Access Network
- GordonCare
- Holding Redlich
- Inner East Community Health Centre
- Inner East PCP
- JH Legal
- Knox Community Health Service
- Knox Infolink
- Loddon Campaspe CLC
- Louise Multicultural Community Centre
- Mercader
- Migrant Information Centre (Eastern)
- Moores Legal
- NACLCL
- 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