



MALLEE MURRAY COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE
2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT

ACCESS ASSISTANCE UNDER- STANDING

Servicing the Murray Mallee since 1996



Cover Image
Mildura Law Court 56 Deakin Avenue

ACCESS
ASSISTANCE
UNDER-
STANDING

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MMCLS acknowledges the many Indigenous peoples as the traditional owners of the lands on which we live and work. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the financial contributions made by the following funding bodies for without their contributions we would not be able to provide the services we do.

\$476,989.00 Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department
\$167,876.00 Victorian State Government (Victoria Legal Aid)
\$644,863.00

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ABOUT US

Objectives

To provide a high quality, free and accessible legal service in the Murray Mallee which will empower and support communities in the resolution of legal problems and stimulate understanding of the legal system.

To use community legal education to provide the people of the Murray Mallee region with a better understanding of the role of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service.

To promote the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service to the isolated and remote areas of the region.

To provide a high quality and accountable legal service to the Murray Mallee region based on the human, administrative and financial resources available within and externally to the Service.

Mission

To render legal assistance to the most vulnerable members of Murray Mallee communities. The assistance will be offered with due regard to the worth, independence and dignity of each individual. Service provision should reflect a continuing awareness of community needs and the value of community support.

Vision

That the Communities of the Murray Mallee Region have a clear understanding of the Legal System and are able to access it to resolve their legal problems.

OUR SERVICES

Our Clients

899 CLIENTS
614 NEW CLIENTS
220 REPEAT CLIENTS
65 EXISTING CLIENTS

Our Generalist Legal Service
402 TOTAL CLIENTS
358 TOTAL ADVICES
110 TOTAL CASE OPENS

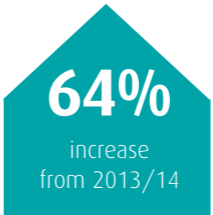
From above figures; Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)clients;
78 TOTAL ATSI CLIENTS
68 FAMILY LAW
80 ADMINISTRATIVE LAW
13 CRIMINAL LAW
*clients can have multiple problem types.

Rural Women's Outreach Program;

 **REMAINED CONSISTENT**
from 2013/14

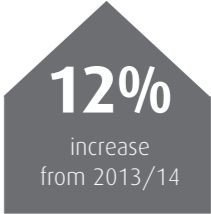
Total Advices 145
Total Case Opens 34
Total Number of Clients 174

Family Relationship Centre/Community Legal Centre Partnership

 **64%**
increase
from 2013/14

Total Advices 232
Total case opens 24
Total Number of Clients 218

Family Violence Victims

 **12%**
increase
from 2013/14

167 Total Supported
47 Advices
152 Case Opens
136 as part of intervention order support service program at local courts.


56 family law
84 administrative law
13 criminal law

Main Language other than English
Problem Type/No of Problem Types

4% OF CLIENTS DO NOT SPEAK ENGLISH WELL OR AT ALL

Main Home Language

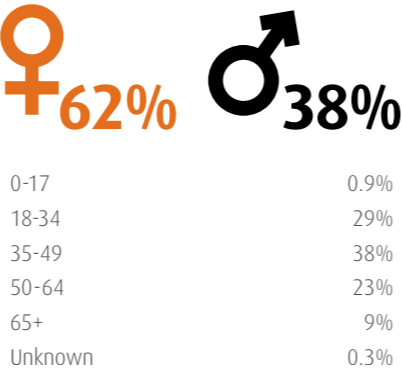


Clients – Main Language other than English

● African (exc North Afirda)	1	● Other Southeast Asian	1
● Arabic (inc Lebanese)	2	● Persian	3
● Chinese (inc Chang Chow, Hunan Kan)	2	● Punjabi	8
● Fijian	1	● Samoan	3
● German	3	● Sign Languages	1
● Greek	1	● Swahili	2
● Hungarian	1	● Tagalog (Filipino)	3
● Italian	2	● Tamil	1
● Khmer	3	● Thai	1
● Kurdish	1	● Tongan	2
● Macedonian	1	● Turkish	3
● Maori (Cook Island)	1	● Turkish and Central Asian	1
● Middle Eastern and North African	7	● Vietnamese	6
● Nepali	1		

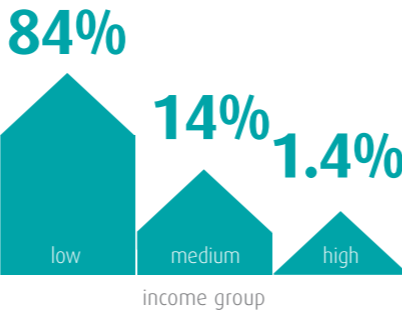
*31% of our clients identified as having a disability
(REMAINED CONSISTENT from 2013/14)

Sex and Age of our Clients



Client Source of Income

68% Pension
29% Earned
0.7% Other
0.9% No Income
1% Not stated



HOURS OF OPERATION

Face to Face and Telephone appointments
122 Ninth Street, Mildura

Monday	9am - 12pm (and some afternoons)
Tuesday	9am - 5pm
Wednesday	After hours only (after 5pm)
Thursday	9am - 12pm (and some afternoons)

OUTREACH SERVICES

Mildura **Weekly**
Family Relationship Centre
105 Lemon Avenue
Victoria
Monday 10am - 12pm
Tuesday 1.30pm - 4pm

Wentworth **Monthly**
Mallee Family Care
59 Darling Street
New South Wales
Tuesday 10.30am - 12.30pm

Dareton **Monthly**
Mallee Family Care
3-5 Devenport Street
New South Wales
Tuesday 2pm - 4pm

Robinvale **Monthly**
Mallee Family Care
33 Herbert Street
Victoria
Tuesday 10.30am - 2.30pm

Swan Hill **Monthly**
Mallee Family Care
229 Beveridge Street
Victoria
Wednesday 2pm - 3.30pm
Thursday 9.30am - 12pm



FACE TO FACE



Local Government Area for 2014/2015
Advice Only phone or face to face

241 TOTAL

49 ALBURY/WODONGA
47 WENTWORTH
32 SWAN HILL
10 ROBINVALE
7 OUYEN

Intervention Order Support Service

Mildura **Weekly**
Magistrates Court
Monday 9.00am – 4.00pm

Wentworth **Monthly**
Local Court (only as needed)
Tuesday 9.00am – 1.00pm

“

I am very thankful for the assistance you provided me and for your help when I was in desperate need. In the future I will take your advice and assistance again, thanks again.

”

Robinvale **Monthly**
Magistrates Court
Tuesday 9.00am – 1.00pm

Swan Hill **Fortnightly**
Magistrates Court
Wednesday 9.00am – 2.00pm

MANAGERS REPORT

Well what a year! The team have worked very hard this year to again provide timely legal information, advice, casework and community legal education to communities who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

All staff have helped to make this year very successful in terms of not only meeting overall targets but with successful projects undertaken to extend our reach. It has been a very challenging year for the service with funding cuts looming and the unknown future of core funding due to the timing of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services.

The service has experienced several staffing changes this year however have been able to remain consistent and deliver all services required. The main change has been in our Principal Solicitor role, with Amanda deciding to reduce her hours and to work in a generalist solicitor role, we are very pleased to still have Amanda on staff.

The service welcomed Steven Bliim to MMCLS as our Principal Solicitor in February this year and have enjoyed his wealth of legal experience, commitment to mentoring staff and court knowledge. We welcomed a new baby to the service and await Katie's return in future, said good bye to Demelza-Rose as well as Kim and Maja who are all off in search of different goals and we wish them all well and hope they will come back one day.

Our staff have travelled over 17,000 kilometres to outreach locations this year!

The Murray Mallee Community Legal Service (MMCLS) commenced operating in 1996 and covers more than 100,000 square kms which includes ten Local Government Areas. MMCLS is an auspiced Community Legal Centre – a co-located service within Mallee Family Care.

Mallee Family Care is the largest welfare not for profit agency covering the Northern and Southern Mallee of Victoria and South West New South Wales. This colocation allows the legal service to work collaboratively with sixty four other community programs on common issues, build and support each other in community development initiatives and also meet the ever increasing needs of residents living in the MMCLS catchment.

While the last 12 months have certainly been met with challenges, there have also been a number of achievements such as our Interim Legal Needs Analysis reported on further below, our media partnerships, our ongoing advocacy and our 'social justice rights' work for our clients.

Law Reform

Due to the excellent history and ongoing casework in regard to consumer law, the service has continued our participation and partnership with University of Melbourne Research into 'Predatory conduct, consumer rental goods and Indigenous consumers'. Due to the past Zaam Rental issues and the 'Make It Mine' Company fined due to misleading conduct (\$20,000) and the most recent VET-fee help scam our service is a key service provider in the legal sector to provide feedback on issues around consumer scams.

These cases are all relevant to vulnerable groups such as indigenous client groups who are often targeted by several kinds of lending approaches. This is a major law reform activity for our service along with many other partners.

As a vast majority of our legal work is within family violence and family law, the service was well placed to provide a submission to the Family Violence Royal Commission – accessible from our website, with contributions also made to the Federation of Community Legal Centre's submission. The service organised meetings for and participated in the Victorian Legal Aid (VLA) – Family Law Legal Aid Services Review and made a submission to VLA on highlighted needs. In October 2014 two VLA staff attended Mildura for meetings with MMCLS staff, the Manager of the legal service and the Family Relationship Centre

Manager. Issues around access to justice were discussed with feedback given to VLA regarding our difficulty locally in regard to family law issues. The service has continued to work closely with the financial counselling staff in an integrated service model, as another program of Mallee Family Care, this has enabled the service to continue its feedback to Government regarding consumer law and debt issues that are affecting our families in both Victoria and New South Wales.

Mildura Family Relationship Centre (FRC) and MMCLS Partnership Program

The partnership between the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service (MMCLS) and the Mildura Family Relationship Centre (FRC) continues to be met positively by both clients and staff. As part of our collaborative partnership the legal service provides regular Your Family Law Options (YFLO) Information Sessions to clients who are engaged in the Family Dispute Resolution (FDR) process. We also provide legal advice to individual clients who are referred directly by the FRC. We provide a regular outreach

In the last year 58 clients have attended YFLO sessions at the FRC.



A good session, informative...
Short, sharp and precise, Thank you.



service to the FRC building for client appointments whether by phone or face to face.

We have also continued to participate in Legally Assisted Family Dispute Resolution (LAFDR) with Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) and Albury-Wodonga Family Relationship Centre as appropriate clients. Our Service has also continued attendance at the Mildura FRC Team Meetings to provide professional development to FDR staff and to participate in process discussions and team building activities. An extension to our family law advice service is the 'Federal Circuit Court Duty Lawyer Service' we have offered this year when the FCC visits, a total of only 3 weeks per year.

A major component of the partnership with HRCLS in this past year was the joint presentation to the NACLC 2014 conference titled; 'FRC/CLC Partnership & Legally Assisted Mediations' by both services Principal Solicitors. The presentation focused on show casing the development of the legal assistance partnership between Murray Mallee CLS and Hume Riverina CLS in order to provide better support to clients at their respective Family Relationship Centres, and in particular, about the delivery of legally assisted mediations.

Our communities face many issues around drugs, and particularly ICE use... the service aims to work in with other providers to ensure clients are supported with timely initial free legal advice with warm referrals for ongoing casework

Well done to Amanda and Sarah, we are very pleased to have had our service/s recognised at a National Conference with our Rural Regional flavour.

As noted in our previous annual report, access to justice is a big issue in rural areas such as ours, particularly as we have no legal aid office in Mildura (the nearest one is Bendigo, some 5 hours away) and our nearest Victorian CLC is also 5 hours away in Bendigo. The service has welcomed the recent news that VLA Management are interested in discussing our area further in the next financial year and await to participate in and hear what this may mean for our local Murray Mallee.



LISA-MAREE STEVENS

Manager Murray Mallee Community Legal Service
Director Community Services, Mallee Family Care Inc.

Our communities face many issues around drugs, and particularly ICE use, as reported on extensively. The service aims to work in with other providers to ensure clients are supported with timely initial free legal advice with warm referrals for ongoing casework. We have a high Indigenous population with many disadvantaged groups who access support when violence occurs in their families.

The MMCLS is committed to supporting victims of violence and to work with our community members to address issues as a broader responsibility for us all.

I would like to thank all staff and volunteers for their hard work over the past year.

It is with pleasure I present the 2014-2015 Murray Mallee Community Legal Service Annual Report.



FAMILY VIOLENCE COMMITMENT AND LOBBYING

It has been a very challenging year for the service with funding cuts looming until April 2015 for our Intervention Order Support Service (IOSS) funding – a major service we provide for victims of family violence at our local Courts. Applying for an intervention order can be confusing, scary and making sense of the legal system can be a difficult road. Thankfully this decision was overturned at the last minute due to many lobbying successes and media coverage and we have had a 2 year reprieve. However due to job insecurity for so long this resulted in our Family Violence solicitor moving on in early 2015. This work was then taken on by our very experienced Principal Solicitor in a ‘whirl wind’ orientation to the Mallee, thank you Steven.

Our Intervention Order Support Service (IOSS) is delivered across our Catchment Courts – Wentworth as needed, Mildura weekly, Robinvale monthly and Swan Hill fortnightly.

There has been an increase in Family Violence applications being made across our Catchment and we know there is a high incidence of family violence amongst our large catchment area. The funding for this Service was to be cut as of July 2015 – after substantial lobbying and media work, with the support of the National Association of CLC’s (NACLCL), the Federation of CLC’s, our own local media support, both print and radio and our local member, the Government did renege on this decision in late March. The service is currently working on

a plan to include the Kerang Court in the next financial year for this service due to the number of family violence incidents and need for court support.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who helped our service make some ‘very loud noise’ and advocated for this service to continue.



Intervention Order Information Session Swan Hill Court 27/3/15



Rosie Batty now knows firsthand that the federal government is deceiving Australians about domestic violence. The Australian of the Year says she has been told repeatedly by both the Prime Minister and the Minister assisting him, Michaelia Cash, that there are no front line domestic violence services being cut. But she has just returned from Mildura and seen with her own eyes that the one full-time lawyer specialising in intervention orders and family violence will finish work on June 30.



Rosie Batty's visit to Mildura for the Northern Mallee Local Learning & Employment Network Inc. (NMLLEN) Annual General Meeting in March was very timely in regard to this lobbying and to bring National attention to the problem facing many CLC's supporting family violence victims and front line services. With Australian of the Year Rosie telling the media, after her visit to Mildura, "the Government was lying" the spotlight was on our town.

We have continued to work closely with family violence police, local Courts and our local domestic violence service to ensure we are aware of all key service providers and continue to work in an integrated way. Our communities experience a very high rate of Family Violence and there are local networks the service is part of that are supporting a broader community responsible approach.

We were very pleased to support our Community Legal Education worker to be trained in the 'Loddon Mallee Takes a Stand' approach through Women's Health Loddon Mallee. This training focuses on talking with many community groups and service providers focusing on gender equality and the bystander approach.

MMCLS is very committed to preventing violence, to provide those primary prevention strategies by continuing to advocate for law and policy changes that directly challenges views on family violence and

by undertaking community education and development work in our large catchment area. Our service also provides family violence appointments at the local domestic violence services, we will attend Court and provide family violence specific appointments within our own buildings that aim to intervene early in a victim's experience of violence. The service speaks to women who are victims of family violence at the local domestic violence services within their group work programs such as SEA (Self Esteem and Assertiveness) Change programs regularly.

This is an early intervention strategy to ensure victims have access to timely legal advice and that other professionals understand the legal system and protections.

INTERIM LEGAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

Staff were able to discuss their future views and wishes for the service along with looking at our known data and supports in our first Interim Legal Needs Analysis report journey – this will help with future planning for our service. The service was supported in this huge task by Alexandra Ridgway, a 'fantastic find' and support of the legal needs of those in our catchment area. Alexa made the trip to Mildura to experience the breadth of our catchment and attended our outreach locations on a 'road trip'.

In the Murray Mallee region, legal need is complex. The isolation of the region along with the particular needs of diverse communities with high levels of disadvantage and, importantly, the lack of legal services, all compound to create a situation where legal need is high and requires a distinct, locally-driven response. The Interim Legal Needs Analysis is the first step in unravelling the

complexity of legal need in the catchment of area of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service. Primarily, it reveals the shortage of legal service provision in the region and the high reliance on MMCLS as the only free, generalist legal service in the area.

Although the Interim LNA reveals MMCLS's increased service distribution across the region, it also highlights some catchment areas which are less likely to access the service and therefore require further exploration. The Interim LNA also demonstrates the excellent ability of MMCLS to reach those clients with the greatest likelihood of legal need as well as to respond to the two primary legal issues in the area, specifically family violence and family law.

Most importantly, the Interim LNA reveals the need for more extensive research into legal needs in the region. It is hoped that this interim version will provide the impetus for a comprehensive Legal Needs Analysis to be fully funded and undertaken so that an evidence-based, true account of legal need across the region is obtained to guide future service delivery.

See website for final report.

OUR COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The service has continued to work in partnership with NSW Legal Aid, who share part of our Catchment in NSW. The MMCLS has continued to provide client advice sessions in NSW on a monthly basis and as needed, and have participated with NSW Legal Aid on their event days such as; Law Checkup education sessions, VET Fee Help scam education sessions and NAIDOC events. This partnership is working well and we are looking forward to future successful events and collaboration.

The MMCLS program works in close proximity and in a strong partnership with the Financial Counselling program at Mallee Family Care. These two programs are in the same Directorate and share professional development sessions together as their work can often overlap. There have been increasing times where the programs have worked jointly to support our vulnerable clients as well as in law reform activities and feedback to authorities.

MMCLS participates in the following local working groups and committees in the region.

[Two Rivers Interagency Group \(TRIG\)](#)

[Balranald Interagency Group \(BIG\)](#)

[Robinvale Early Years Network \(REYN\)](#)

[Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees](#)

[Mildura Court User Group](#)

[Robinvale Service Providers Group](#)

[Receipting Proof of Concept Working Party with Victoria Police and Community Agencies \(RPOC\).](#)

[Mallee Sexual Assault Unit/ Mallee Domestic Violence Service Inc. \(Committee of Management\)](#)

The MMCLS Manager is the President of this Committee.

[Loddon Mallee Takes A Stand](#)

MMCLS Community Legal Education Worker is a facilitator in this primary violence prevention project that is based upon a model developed by Women's Health Victoria.

[Mentor for Access to Justice through Technology Program](#)

This is a family violence project with the Centre for Innovative Justice (RMIT University).

'Law Apps' partnership with The University of Melbourne Law School, the service is assisting with 'Law Apps' - a new subject being taught at Melbourne Law School.

[Continued Link Virtual Outreach partner to the Women's Legal Service Victoria.](#)

OUR TEAM



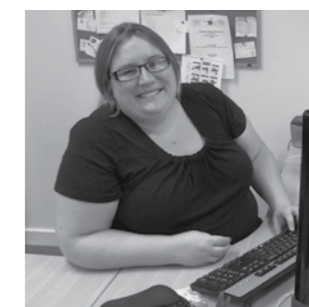
[Lisa-Maree Stevens](#)
Manager



[Nicole Thomas](#)
Administration Officer



[Chenae Sparkes](#)
Solicitor (Generalist)



[Kim Hubbard](#)
FV Solicitor (Generalist)
Ceased 10.4.15



[Amanda Morrison](#)
Principal/Generalist Solicitor



[Steven Bliim](#)
Principal Solicitor
Commenced 2.2.15



[Allie Collyer](#)
Community Legal Education



[Lisa Nguyen](#)
Generalist Solicitor
Commenced 7.4.15



[Maja Doma](#)
Generalist Solicitor
Commenced 20.10.14
Ceased 16.4.15



[Demelza-Rose Gale](#)
Generalist Solicitor
Commenced 9.4.14
Ceased 20.1.15



“

Having grown up in a small town on the North Coast of New South Wales, when I was offered a job in Mildura for 6 months, I thought: ‘I can do this! Easy as! It’ll be like moving to Ballina or Grafton, no worries at all!’ At that point, though, my small town days were far behind me, and I was firmly ensconced in the inner-northern-Melburnian lifestyle – replete with soy lattes, vintage bicycling, and beards, beards, beards, as far as the eye can see. ‘Sure!’ I proffered enthusiastically to my soon-to-be-boss, waxing lyrical about tree changes and the like, but secretly terrified of the unknown.

Later on, when I was asked to write a reflective piece on my time in Mildura working at the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, I felt that I wasn’t really qualified to comment. Others that had spent much more time working regionally - by comparison to my stint of 6 months- would be in a better position to provide meaningful reflection on their experiences and the issues faced by country lawyers. I decided to persist anyway, but, in classic lawyer fashion, start with the caveat that I don’t hold myself out to be an expert on all things regional, and note that this is really a snapshot, a slice, one story among many that can contribute to the dialogue that we should be having about regional legal practice, and more broadly, about life and work outside of metropolitan areas in Australia.

But back to my story. As I drove the 6 or so hours from Melbourne to Mildura, what struck me the most was the sense of isolation? There’s little between Bendigo and Mildura, and once the country changes from green and shrubby to dusky yellow fields, powdery sky and black trees, a sense of eeriness is palpable (well it is if, like me, you are slightly neurotic with an overactive imagination... Abandoned servo? Clearly a front for a zombie meth lab -Keep driving!) And then you get to the ‘Dura. And all of a sudden you’ve ridden the rainbow, passed from yellow, blue and black to sandy red dirt and out of nothing, green leafy grapevines and ... what’s this? Town!

A few life lessons I learned quickly in Mildura. One – don’t shop at the supermarket at the Plaza, unless you’re keen for a date. Yes that’s right. Day one in town and asked out for a date...in Woolworths. Did I accidentally put bananas in my basket when I shouldn’t have? I desperately needed to shirk the ‘fresh meat’ aura I was clearly exuding. Lesson two –cycling to work ain’t gonna happen unless you have extra special inner tube protection to ward off the monster-sized thorns on the roads. And, perhaps most importantly, lesson three – when Lovin Spoonful penned “Summer in the City”, writing about sidewalks being hotter than match-heads and despite the heat, things being alright, they really should have dedicated a verse in homage to the cool kiss of refrigerated air conditioning. Because I’m pretty sure that saved my life last summer in the (rural) city of Mildura.



Maja’s Farewell with our Directorate Staff

Maja’s Farewell

So with all this excitement in discovering this new inland landscape and lifestyle, what was work going to be like? In a word, challenging.

If there was a Lonely Planet style guidebook on how to run a functioning CLC on a shoestring, no doubt the remarkable staff at the MMCLS would be top contributors. It amazed me how much work we all produced with a small team of lawyers, no volunteers in the day practice and with limited technological functionality. In the time I was there, staff had set up a family law duty lawyer service in the thrice yearly Federal Circuit Court sittings, run several divorce workshops and maintained a family violence lawyer duty service in Mildura, Robinvale and Swan Hill, in addition to the routine advice appointments and constant casework. There was intense lobbying and media in the face of cuts to family violence lawyer funding. It was nothing short of inspiring.

Having volunteered at a metropolitan CLC for several years, I had some notion of the issues I would face in practice, however I don’t think anything can fully prepare you for regional CLC work other than actually doing it. In my outreach work into south western New South Wales I encountered complex legal issues, shrouded in a lack of community engagement, socio-economic disadvantage and, I think, a sense of having been forgotten, a detached and different reality to that which is front of mind in Macquarie and Spring Streets.

For me, after 6 months, leaving Mildura and the CLC was a feeling of bittersweet. The sweet is feeling that I had been able to contribute to a sector I truly believe in. Access to justice was my mantra and my purpose, however hard it was to actually achieve in practice. The bitter is feeling like I had in some sense let down the community and the clients, by being just another transient cog in the machine of short-term professional workers in a regional area.

I don’t know how we can attract and retain lawyers to regional and remote areas, particularly in CLCs, where every year seems like a battle to justify their existence to budgeteers and decision-makers. It’s clear though that with targeted lobbying and media engagement across the sector, some successes were had this year. What I would say, though, to anyone considering a move inland, interstate, regional, rural, or remote is: do it, but think carefully about the extent of your contribution and capacity to make a difference over a long term basis. That, and be careful in the supermarket!

”

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

I was told by the recruitment agent who introduced me to MMCLS that if he was going to find me a position: "You might have to go regional!" Later in a telephone interview with our Director I was asked: "Do you know where Mildura is, have you looked at a map?" After three affirmative answers I eventually was offered the position of Principal Solicitor at MMCLS and started work at the beginning of February 2015. To put that into perspective the population of the wider Mildura area is about 5½ times the population of the Central Pacific country where I last worked and about 3½ hours flight closer to a major population centre – not quite so regional or remote as some.

That does not detract from the challenges of operating a community legal centre in an area that could not be further from Melbourne and yet still be in Victoria.

The challenge has been accepted and I believe I have fitted in with the rest of the crew to provide the best community legal support that we can to all needy, vulnerable and disadvantaged residents of the Mallee who seek our assistance.

I have been only one of a number of staffing changes this year. Amanda Morrison who held the Principal position before me

"You might have to go regional! Do you know where Mildura is, have you looked at a map?" Mildura area is about 5½ times the population of the Central Pacific country where I last worked and about 3½ hours flight closer to a major population centre – not quite so regional or remote as some...

remains with the Service but as a part time solicitor. Demelza-Rose Gale and Lisa Archbold had left before I started and Kim Hubbard moved on to other challenges in April this year.

Maja Doma spent approximately six months with us to fill in while Katie Davies was on maternity leave before returning to her previous position. Lisa Nguyen stepped in to the fill in role till Katie returns. Nicole Thomas and Allie Collyer have continued to provide valuable administration and community legal education services respectively throughout the past year. Our Director, Lisa-Maree Stevens, provides

management, lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the Service and its clients in a tightening financial arena.

One of the themes of last year's report continues this year with the Service having co-operated with Legal Aid NSW in early 2015 to assist a significant number of clients in south western New South Wales on an education scam. Members of the communities were preyed upon by unscrupulous recruiters signing up young and old students for online vocational education courses paid for by the Commonwealth Government under the VET FEE-HELP scheme. Offers of free laptops and other less salubrious incentives were made to people who often did not have internet access and a number were signed up to multiple courses in what appeared to be a very cynical and targeted approach.

Our service and Legal Aid each acted for victims of this scam and upon direct approach to the Colleges involved were able universally to extract our client from the courses, allow them to retain their laptops and in some cases obtain some compensation for their trouble.

The NSW Office of Fair Trading also became involved in two functions that we and Legal Aid held with potential clients to give advice on this scheme. Later the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) picked up on these matters and we are currently co-operating with them in their investigation of the recruiters and the education providers involved. This type of scheme was discovered widely

in NSW and we have been having feedback of similar situations on the Victorian side of the border.

At the commencement of this year a planned duty lawyer scheme was implemented by the Service at the first of the three annual sittings of the Federal Circuit Court in Mildura in March. Chenae Sparks and I were able to provide advice and/or representation to five parties in the FCC list of hearings for those sittings. In four of those cases we were able to negotiate either final or interim orders to assist to resolve the matters. The scheme has been well received by the Court, the practitioners and

These problems are exacerbated in our catchment as Swan Hill and Mildura municipalities are listed as numbers 2 and 3 respectively in the State for prevalence of family violence.

the support staff who attend. At this stage we have not provided full representational services but in exceptional circumstances that may be considered.

In the early part of 2015 we were advised by an adjoining CLC that they would be unable to continue to assist us to appear at the alternate fortnightly intervention order service at Swan Hill. This came at about the time that Kim Hubbard resigned as the Family Violence Solicitor. In order to properly cover the service we negotiated with a local practitioner at Swan Hill, Geoff Dunstan, to provide intervention

order representation and some generalist appointments at Swan Hill pending appointment of another solicitor. This has worked well to date but will finish when we recruit a new Family Violence Solicitor.

On 29 May 2015 we provided our submission to the Royal Commission into Family Violence. As we had just lost the observations and expertise of Kim Hubbard only the month before we concentrated on a number of limited issues which had become apparent as significant problems. We highlighted the apparent problem with the rather limited number

of applicants for intervention orders that are represented by Police – only 52.5% of 1,440 applicants in our catchment for the prior 12 months. Further we noted the apparent lack of funding for representation for applicants who went to a contested hearing and were not represented by the Police.

These problems are exacerbated in our catchment as Swan Hill and Mildura municipalities are listed as numbers 2 and 3 respectively in the State for prevalence of family violence.

Our community legal education worker, Allie Collyer, has continued to travel throughout the Mallee providing information sessions to groups ranging from seniors to school groups. As our staffing ratios have changed this year we have been able to increase her time and the need has certainly absorbed this.

We were able to offer a number of information sessions during Law Week in mid-May 2015 utilising Allie, our legal staff and volunteers and a guest speaker from the Arts Law Centre of Australia.

The last five months of the financial year have been a challenge as I have learnt more and more of the systems and operational details of the community legal sector and adapted to the problems of delivering quality legal services in that environment.

MMCLS has done that job for many years now and I am coming to appreciate and understand how that is done.

I have enjoyed the journey so far and would like to thank all of the staff at MMCLS and at Mallee Family Care who have assisted me to date.

STEVEN BLIIM
PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR



“

[The DIY Divorce Workshop] was presented clearly & slow enough to follow, extremely useful to be able to ask and confirm questions.

”

^ PRO BONO v VOLUNTEERS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Volunteers. Without the support of our volunteers, we would not be able to continue to offer late night advice appointments nor deliver our effective Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Divorce Workshops throughout the year:

DIY Divorce Workshop

Robyn Garsed
Millicent Farnsworth
Bernadette Edmanson

The Murray Mallee Community Legal Service wish to thank the following who have assisted us with Pro Bono work for clients:

Women's Legal Service Victoria – Link Project
Dunstan Law - Swan Hill
NSW Legal Aid

Wednesday night Advice Clinics

Robyn Croydon
Tyler Wolff
Ryan Maddox

Law Week Partners

Maloney Anderson Legal,
Ryan Legal and Holcroft Lawyers



Over the past year our volunteers have;

- assisted with 180 clients in 'advice' sessions
- contributed over 5400 hours
- run 6 Do It Yourself Divorce Workshops = 18 hours for 56 clients

The Murray Mallee Community Legal Service would like to thank the following for their continued support: Victoria Legal Aid, Commonwealth Attorney-General Department, Mallee Family Care, Mildura Family Relationship Centre, Hume Riverina Community Legal Centre, Consumer Action Law Centre, Mildura Magistrates Court, Holcroft Lawyers, Martin Irwin Richards Lawyers, Maloney Anderson Legal and Dunstan Law – Swan Hill.

Mum Safe from Violent Sons - Intervention Order

Jo is an elderly woman who had no family support in Mildura other than her 2 adult sons. One of her sons was living with her. Both of her sons became involved in illicit drug use, and as a result, became extremely violent and threatening towards Jo. On many occasions both of her sons threatened to kill Jo. They stole money and medication from her, and damaged

her personal property. Jo finally came to Mildura Magistrates' Court seeking a FVIO against both of her sons. Jo was terrified of attending Court and seeing her sons there. She was also extremely apprehensive about the court process and had no idea what she needed to do.

The service firstly arranged for Jo to be able to wait in the remote witness room so that she did not need to have any contact with her

sons, and did not need to be in the Court room at the same time as them. Both of her sons were extremely aggravated, and extra police had to be called. If Jo was successful in her application then the son that was living with her would need to move out of the residence. Jo was led through her evidence about the violence she was experiencing. As a result, the Court made FVIO's against both of Jo's sons that will never expire unless further orders are made.

Elderly Man Now Safe - Personal Safety Intervention Order

Peter is an elderly man living in one of our outlying communities who suffered from a significant physical disability who had no family support within the community. Peter met a young lady who was significantly younger than him through his employment, and as a result of their relationship, was manipulated into giving her and her mother all of his savings.

Peter was still being approached by the young lady for more money, and she was attempting to use their previous sexual relationship to manipulate him to give her more money. By the time he made an application for an intervention order he had lost all of his savings and was living on a very small government income. The service became aware of Peter on the family violence day of Court and even though Peter had not asked for our assistance we could see that he was very vulnerable, stressed and distressed at court. Our solicitor stepped in to help.

The service assisted Peter in obtaining an interim intervention order during the initial proceedings because the respondent had not been served. Peter had little understanding of the Court process and what the interim order meant, the service ensured that this was explained to him as clearly as possible. On the next occasion in Court the respondent had been served and the service applied for a final intervention order for Peter. Due to the nature of the relationship and the circumstances the service was able to obtain an order for Peter that would not expire for 6 years.

Education providers – 'Free Lap Top' Anyone?

Several clients attended MMCLS describing that they had been approached by door to door marketers offering "free laptops" if they signed up for online courses. The clients signed some paperwork but the particulars of the paperwork were not explained by the marketers. The clients were concerned this might be a scam and sought some advice from MMCLS. The clients were left with some brochures for private educational institutions. It appeared that the clients had been signed up for diploma level courses and VET FEE-HELP loans.

The service liaised with a range of institutions mentioned in the material provided by the clients, sought information about whether the clients were enrolled in a course, and if so, seeking immediate withdrawal for the course and remittance of any VET FEE-HELP loan. After protracted negotiations with several institutions and their legal representatives, the service was able to achieve satisfactory outcomes for all our clients, including those that had passed the census limitation date for withdrawal from their course without any financial penalty.

Family Law Parenting Assistance for a Mum

Melanie required parenting orders to ensure the best interests of her children were met through substantial and significant time being spent with the non-live with parent. Melanie was unable to secure a grant of legal aid and did not have the financial resources to meet the fees for private representation.

As such, our service agreed to assist her through the preparation of court documents, initiation of proceedings in the Federal Circuit Court and representation at the interim stages of the proceedings.

Our service represented Melanie on two occasions in the Federal Circuit Court negotiating with the other party to secure interim substantive and procedural orders including an order for a family report. The service was involved in all stages of the proceedings including negotiating with the other party, providing documentation to the Family Report Writer and providing advice to the client upon release of the report.

Extensive work was done with and on behalf of the client including referring the client to other appropriate courses and services to help Melanie through the family law process. A referral to a private solicitor was made for management of the matter to the final hearing stage with the recognition that the client may now be able to secure a grant of legal aid.

Insurance dispute - Motor vehicle accident - careful on our Roads!

Simon required assistance following a motor vehicle accident involving livestock that had run onto the road. Simon was uninsured. Our service assisted by firstly writing to the owner of the livestock which then resulted in the insurer for the livestock owner becoming involved. Our service collected information about the accident and evidence of purchase from the client providing same to the insurer trying to establish the liability for the accident rested with the livestock owner. This involved assessing the information and researching the law, including case law concerning similar circumstances. Liability was initially denied and the service successfully sought the pro bono assistance of a well-resourced and experienced private firm to further assist Simon.

Family Law- Divorce – How hard is that?

Julie required assistance in the preparation, filing, serving and appearance in relation to an Application for Divorce. Australian English was not the Julie's first language. As such, our service assisted in the preparation and filing of the Application for Divorce. This also required obtaining a translated copy of the Julie's marriage certificate as the marriage had not taken place in Australia and the certificate was not in Australian English. Following filing of the Application, difficulties arose in relation to service

upon the Respondent Spouse. The Respondent Spouse was in another Australian State and the process server reported that the Respondent was not known at the address provided. Julie confirmed the information and provided photographs of the Respondent to assist the process server in identifying the person required to be served. Service was therefore successful and the application was able to proceed as originally listed as a consent to the abridgment of time for service was also provided signed by the Respondent. The service appeared via telephone link on behalf of the client.

Criminal matter- driving offence assistance

Mark required assistance in relation to a driving offence and was a very vulnerable client due to medical issues. The service provided advice as well as assistance with obtaining documents from the prosecution, negotiating with the prosecution and representation at Court. The service assisted Mark by conducting a case conference with the prosecution, requesting copies of or access to further evidence relied on by the prosecution and representation in the early stages of proceedings. The service represented Mark on three occasions in the Magistrates Court. The matter was referred to a skilled private criminal law solicitor for further carriage, including representation at contest mention, after assisting in the early stages and therefore saving the client legal fees.



St Josephs College 'Sexting and the Law' Panel



Elder Abuse Expo in the Mall with DV

94

Community Legal Education Sessions Provided this year.

434

Legal Information and Referrals provided in this year.

“

The Year Ahead - Future Community Legal Education will be informed by our Interim Legal Needs Analysis and planning.

”

LEGAL EDUCATION

In July 2014, our Community Legal Education Worker was seconded to assist in the Financial Counselling Program at Mallee Family Care. To ensure the continuity of the CLE program and to continue to build on the networks fostered in the past 12 months cooperation and assistance from both the Financial Counselling and MMCLS teams was sought. With this collaborative approach we were still able to achieve all our required targets. Due to the reduction in available hours for presentations, we ensured that areas of major disadvantage - youth, Aboriginal, CALD and elderly were a priority and the primary focus of any CLE activities.

With the introduction in November 2014 of new summary offences in relation to the distribution of intimate images and some exceptions to Child Pornography Laws for minors involved in consensual, non-exploitative sexting, there was a high demand from schools for this information to be delivered to staff and students.

A total of 18 sessions were delivered to schools in Mildura, Swan Hill, Manangatang and Sea Lake during this financial year. This information is extremely important for young people and our work in this area is ongoing.

We continued to foster our connections with the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities in both Mildura and Swan Hill. Education sessions on Powers of Attorney and Discrimination were delivered at the Sunraysia Ethnic Communities Council and Legal System Basics to a group of Afghani refugees connected with Mallee Family Care Settlement Services in Swan Hill.

We partnered with the Total Learning Centre (TLC) in Mildura to deliver a series of awareness and general budgeting sessions to playgroups that use the TLC facility. The groups included those specifically for young parents, Aboriginal parents, Pacific Islanders, parents with mental health issues and a general community playgroup. TLC staff

had advised that many of their disadvantaged participants were reluctant to engage with legal and other services so our aim was to deliver information to them in a safe and friendly environment and build a rapport over a period of several weeks. This informal approach was well received and resulted in a number of enquiries to both the MMCLS and MFC Financial Counselling program.

Our work with the Aboriginal community included attending several events in Dareton NSW and delivering an information session to the Koori Education Unit at Sunraysia TAFE on Australia Consumer Law. Due to an unscrupulous training course provider targeting members of the Aboriginal Community in Dareton, several information sessions in Dareton and Wentworth were arranged on an urgent basis to advise the community of their rights and assist consumers who required assistance to withdraw from their courses.

Community Legal Education 2014-2015

Presentation	Details	Client Group	Location	Date
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council	Powers of Attorney	Multicultural	Mildura	2 Jul 2014
NAIDOC Event	General MMCLS, Family Violence, Family Law	Aboriginal	Mildura	7 Jul 2014
Robinvale District Health Services	Wills and Powers of Attorney	Agency staff	Robinvale	9 Jul 2014
FLO Connect Mildura	Sex, Age of Consent and Sexting	Disengaged Youth	Mildura	21 Jul 2014
Mallee Family Care Settlement Services	Legal system basics	Multicultural	Swan Hill	7 Aug 2014
FLO Connect Mildura	Australian Consumer Law and Scams	Disengaged Youth	Mildura	4 Aug 2014
Aust. Muslim Women's Ctr for Human Rights	MMCLS and Marriage in Australia	Multicultural	Mildura	8 Aug 2014
St Joseph's College Mildura 8 sessions	Sexting and the Law	Youth	Mildura	13-14 Aug 2014
St Joseph's College Mildura	Sex & the Law Q & A Panel	Youth	Mildura	14 Aug 2014
Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council	Discrimination	Multicultural	Mildura	15 Aug 2014
TAFE Koori Education Unit	Australian Consumer Law	Aboriginal	Mildura	27 Aug 2014
Seniors in Schools group RDHS	Wills & Powers of Attorney	Seniors	Robinvale	8 Sept 2014
Dareton Aboriginal Land Council	NAIDOC event, MMCLS, Family Violence	Aboriginal	Dareton	18 Sept 2014
Haven Home Safe	General MMCLS, Intervention Orders	Agency staff	Mildura	23 Sept 2014
MADEC Indigenous Community Links	General MMCLS	Aboriginal	Mildura	26 Sept 2014
Mildura Community Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	General community	Mildura	13 Oct 2014
Pacific Islander Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	Multicultural	Mildura	13 Oct 2014
Goanna's Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	Aboriginal	Mildura	22 Oct 2014
TAFE Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	Young parents	Mildura	24 Oct 2014
Beyond the Rainbow Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	Multicultural	Mildura	7 Nov 2014
Dareton Community Kick-off	Gen MMCLS, Family Violence, debt	Aboriginal	Mildura	12 Nov 2014

Presentation	Details	Client Group	Location	Date
Flying Dreams Playgroup/TLC	General MMCLS, budgeting, fin counselling	Mental Health	Mildura	13 Nov 2014
Irymple Secondary College	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	School staff	Mildura	1 Dec 2014
MFC Settlement Services staff - Swan Hill	Gen MMCLS, Family Violence, Intervention orders	Agency staff	Swan Hill	3 Dec 2014
Loddon Mallee School Nurses	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	School nurses	Swan Hill	3 Dec 2014
St Joseph's College Mildura	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	Youth	Mildura	9 Dec 2014
Community Workers Forum	Infringements	Agency staff	Mildura	19 Feb 2014
Swan Hill College staff	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	School staff	Swan Hill	18 Mar 2015
TAFE Swan Hill AMES students	Basics of the Law in Australia	Multicultural	Swan Hill	18 Mar 2015
Multicultural Mums' Playgroup	General MMCLS, Family Violence, Family Law	Multicultural	Swan Hill	19 Mar 2015
FLO Connect Swan Hill staff	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	School staff	Swan Hill	19 Mar 2015
LaTrobe University Market Day	General MMCLS, debt, housing	Youth	Mildura	24 Mar 2015
Manangatang P12 staff meeting	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	School Staff	Manangatang	24 Mar 2015
Law Check-Up	NSW Legal Aid, referrals and MMCLS	Agency staff	Dareton	25 Mar 2015
Community info session	Intervention Orders with Vic Police & Courts	Agency staff & community	Swan Hill	27 Mar 2015
Christie Centre parents	Wills	Disability	Mildura	12 May 2015
Tyrell College Sea Lake	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	Youth	Sea Lake	13 May 2015
Community info session	Intervention Orders with Vic Police & Courts	Agency staff & community	Mildura	14 May 2015
Lifting the Lid on the Law	Event in Langtree Mall, general MMCLS	Gen community	Mildura	15 May 2015
Balranald Services Expo	General MMCLS	General community	Balranald	27 May 2015
SuniTAFE Cert 1 in GA	General MMCLS	Youth/Disability	Mildura	24 Jun 2015
FLO Connect Swan Hill students	Sexting & the Law – new legislation	Disengaged Youth	Swan Hill	2 Jun 2015

LAW WEEK

Our aim for Law Week 2015 was to bring information about everyday law issues to the wider community in our catchment and we certainly achieved that by travelling nearly 500 kilometres in the week.

Law Week was once again a very busy time for the MMCLS staff. This year we had a very diverse range of events and included collaboration with local private law firms, the Department of Justice and Regulation, Mildura Rural City Council and community agencies. We also collaborated with Mildura Rural City Council to arrange an Artist’s Legal Advice Workshop with Arts Law Australia. Arts Law Australia are based in Sydney and their advice was invaluable to the local artists who attended. They also held an advice clinic for artists seeking individual assistance.

We held two information sessions on the important topic of Wills with the assistance of Michael Holcroft from Holcroft Lawyers and Ryan Maddox from Maloney Anderson Legal. One session was for the general public and the other for parents of young adults with disabilities from the Christie Centre.

We worked with Victoria Police and the Mildura Court to deliver a general community information session on Intervention Orders.

This session was well attended and the presenters including our Principal Solicitor Steven Bliim, Selena Pasut, Registrar from the Mildura Law Court and Louise Richards from the Victoria Police Family Violence Unit gave an excellent “whole picture” presentation on what assistance each provides.

Our main event for the week was a community event in the Langtree Mall.

There were displays of information on a range of legal topics, a free sausage sizzle and a mini Legal Needs Analysis for community members to complete. We invited business units from the Department of Justice and Regulation to attend which included Consumer Affairs Victoria, Corrections Victoria, the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria and Sherrifs. The Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service also attended with a display of information. WIN TV attended and covered the event on the local TV news.

We attended a community information evening in Robinvale focusing on mental health and the services available to residents of the area. This event had an attendance of 150 which is a huge turnout for such a small community. We travelled the following day to Sea Lake to deliver an information session on Sexting and the Law to 120 students from Tyrell College. Our road trip continued to the outer reaches of our catchment to attend a meeting with the Hopetoun Neighbourhood House to discuss access to legal services in the area and future legal education opportunities.

Our Community Connections

Referral FROM by Problem Type

How clients heard about us

Referred by	Family Law	Civil & Administrative Law	Criminal Law
Other CLS	58	8	3
Private Legal Practitioner	19	22	5
Legal Aid Commission	9	18	4
Court/Tribunal	82	51	6
Community Support Other	15	14	6
Centrelink	4	9	1
Police	5	10	-
Government Other	4	20	-
Dispute Resolution	99	6	-
Other Referrals	333	323	53
Total	628	481	78

Referral TO by Problem Type

Where we connected our clients to

Referred by	Family Law	Civil & Administrative Law	Criminal Law
Other CLS	48	27	1
Private Legal Practitioner	364	125	54
Legal Aid Commission	170	15	22
Court/Tribunal	68	56	8
Community Support Other	33	54	2
Centrelink	11	7	-
Police	41	13	9
Government Other	29	180	6
Dispute Resolution	231	26	2
Other Referrals	100	95	4
Total	1,099	598	108

President
Mr. Ross Lake

Vice President
Mrs. Marie Schlemme

Treasurer
Mr Larry O'Connor

Members
Mr. Peter Greed
Rev. Michael Hopkins
Mr. Max Noyce,
Mr. Keith Richards
Mrs. Margaret Thomson
Dr. John Cooke
Mrs. Jenny Hilton
Mr Jim Kirkpatrick
Mr. Chris Riordan
Mr. Billy Carroll

^ BOARD MEMBERS ^ PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Steven Bliim
Safer Families Training Generalist
2 days, WLSV

LIVing Ethics, Law Institute
of Victoria

Family Violence, Family Law
& Children, CRRJ

Artists Rights Workshop, Arts Law

Australian Consumer Law
& VCAT, VLA

Conflict of Interest CPD day,
Federation video

How the Legal Profession
Uniform Law Act impacts
on regional legal practice,
Deakin University,

Amanda Morrison
NACLC National Conference,
Alice Springs

Wills and Estates,
Law Week Michael Holcroft

Family Violence, Family
Law & Children, CRRJ
Australian Consumer
Law & VCAT, VLA

Chenae Sparkes
WLSV - Safer families training
program – November 2014

Masters in Law (Monash) and
subjects are called Advanced
Mediation (Skills and Theory)
A & B.

CPD Day – March 2015
Various topics

Kim Hubbard
CPD Day, March 2015
Various topics

Women's Health Loddon Mallee
'Its Everybody's business forum
on Family Violence.

Demelza-Rose Gale
LPE Social Security
& Centrelink session

Maja Doma
CPD Day, March 2015
Various topics

Lisa Nguyen
How the Legal Profession
Uniform Law Act impacts
on regional legal practice,
Deakin University,

Australian Consumer
Law & VCAT, VLA

Panel discussion with Magistrate
Hawkins and Helen Matthews

Protecting Children
Against Family Violence,
Deakin University

New mandatory visa
cancellations – VLA

Recordings, Surveillance and
Domestic Violence, WLS NSW

Lump Sum Child Support, VLA

Source Of Income Received From Other Bodies - Mallee Family Care

Program of Mallee Family Care	Funder	Department
Regional Family Dispute Resolution	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Family & Relationship Services	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Murray Mallee Child Contact Service	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Family Relationship Centre	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Post Separation Cooperative Parenting	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Financial Counselling	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Financial Counselling	Victoria	Consumer Affairs Victoria
Out Of Home Care	New South Wales	Family and Community Services
Early Intervention and Placement Prevention	New South Wales	Family and Community Services
Safe Aboriginal Youth	New South Wales	Attorney General
Safety and Wellbeing	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Children and Schooling	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
Family Preservation	New South Wales	Family and Community Services
Children's Services Pre-School Program	New South Wales	Family and Community Services
Out Of Home Care	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Cradle to Kinder	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Stronger Families	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Family Preservation	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Integrated Family Services	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Supported Playgroup Swan Hill	Victoria	Education and Early Childhood Development
Mildura Early Intervention Service	Victoria	Education and Early Childhood Development

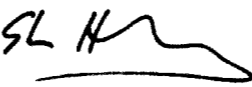
Source Of Income Received From Other Bodies - Mallee Family Care continued

Program of Mallee Family Care	Funder	Department
Kindergarten Inclusion Support Service	Victoria	Education and Early Childhood Development
Pre-School Field Officer	Victoria	Education and Early Childhood Development
CIRCLE Therapeutic Foster Care Program	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Mental Health Community Support Services	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Mental Health Respite Carer Support Program	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Partners in Recovery	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Health and Ageing
Australia Disability Enterprises	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Personal Helpers and Mentors Program	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Disability Respite	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Independent Living Skills	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Dementia Outreach Services	Golden City Support Services Inc.	-
Specialist Homelessness Services	Victoria	Department of Health and Human Services
Refugee Settlement Program	Commonwealth of Australia	Immigration and Citizenship
Humanitarian Support	Victoria	Premier and Cabinet
Chances For Children	Public and Philanthropic donations (wide variety of sources)	-
Reading Discovery	Reading Foundation	-
Total Learning Centre; Mildura, Merbein	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Chances for Children Administration	Multiple Philanthropic and Donations	-
Communities For Children - Robinvale Facilitating Partner	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services
Communities For Children - Robinvale Direct Service	Commonwealth of Australia	Department of Social Services

FINANCIAL REPORT

ORGANISATION’S CERTIFICATION

- I certify that:
- 1 The income and expenditure reports presents fairly, in all material respects, the financial performance of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service for the year ended 30 June 2015 in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 of the income and expenditure statement.
 - 2 The income and expenditure reports are in accordance with the agreement, applicable Australian Accounting standards and based on proper accounts and records.
 - 3 The Organisation has maintained complete and proper accounting records in respect of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service.
 - 4 The funds received by Mallee Family Care Inc. from Victoria Legal Aid under the Agreement have been properly spent in accordance with the Agreement.



GLEN HORNSBY

COMPANY SECRETARY

Signature: 29 October 2015

AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATION

Name of Organisation: Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, Mallee Family Care Inc.

Financial Year Period: 1/7/2014 to 30/6/2015

I hereby certify that:

- a. I am not a principal, member, shareholder, officer, employee or accountant of the Organisation or of a related body corporate as defined in section 9 of the Corporations Act 2001
- b. In my opinion, the attached financial statements which comprise a Statement of Financial Position, a Statement of Comprehensive Income (previously known as Statement of Financial Performance) and Notes to the Financial Statements of the above-mentioned Organisation, and, if general purpose reports are provided, a Statement of Cash Flows, for the stated Financial Year Period are:
 - i. Based on proper accounts and present a true and fair view of the Organisation's financial position and financial performance in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and
 - ii. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia, Victoria Legal Aid and Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, Mallee Family Care Extension of Agreement to 30 June 2015, a copy of which has been made available to me, in relation to the provision of community legal services.
- c. The fourth quarter CLSIS Funds Report, containing details of the Organisations transactions for the financial year, including audit adjustments, and the Organisation's grant position at the beginning and end of the financial year is provided in respect of funds provided in accordance with Terms and Conditions of the Agreement referred to in b.ii. above for all Funding Categories.

This is an unqualified audit report.

Unless written under separate cover, I hereby further certify that in my opinion, there is no conflict of interest between myself and the Organisation or its Management Committee.

AUDITOR DETAILS

Full Name: Kathie Teasdale

Name of the Company: RSD Chartered Accountants

ABN Number: 60 616 244 309

Registered Auditor: Yes

Registration No: 453 006

Signature:



Date: 29th October 2015

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT
2014/15 FINANCIAL YEAR
Consolidated

NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
Surplus/Deficit from previous year	34,146	32,313
Approved Expenditure from Surplus	-	-
Net Surplus Deficit from previous year	34,146	32,313
CLSP INCOME		
Commonwealth	476,989	461,647
State	167,875	155,845
Service Generated Income	1,152	11
Total CLSP Income	646,016	617,503
CLSP General Purpose Income (Total CLSP Income plus Net Surplus/Deficit)	680,162	649,816
CLSP EXPENSES		
Salaries	490,425	445,920
Superannuation	38,770	31,272
On Costs	8,940	8,556
Rent	4,781	5,164
Repairs and Maintenance	1,842	4,423
Other Premises Costs	11,223	12,971
Staff Training	12,369	2,509
Staff Recruitment	22,030	10,324
Communications	7,859	6,763
Office Overheads	43,830	44,776
Insurance	5,986	5,804
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	-	300
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	1,106	1,683
Travel	15,541	26,585
Programming and Planning	14,348	4,207
Client Disbursements	-	-
Leases	152	957
Minor Equipment	1,465	3,456
Depreciation	-	-
Other	-	-
Salary and Related Expenses	538,135	485,748
Total Operating Expenses	142,532	129,922
Total CLSP Expenses	680,667	615,670
Surplus/Deficit for Current Year	(34,651)	1,833
OTHER INCOME (Not to be added to CLSP Funds Surplus/Deficit)		
Total Funds received from Other Bodies	-	-
Total Funds received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	-	-
Less Actual Capital Expenditure in Current Year	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for Next Year	(505)	34,146

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT
2014/15 FINANCIAL YEAR
Generalist

NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
Surplus/Deficit from previous year	15,100	13,499
Approved Expenditure from Surplus	-	-
Net Surplus Deficit from previous year	15,100	13,499
CLSP INCOME		
Commonwealth	330,235	321,428
State	154,700	143,610
Service Generated Income	1,152	11
Total CLSP Income	486,087	465,049
CLSP General Purpose Income (Total CLSP Income plus Net Surplus/Deficit)	501,187	478,548
CLSP EXPENSES		
Salaries	361,282	338,102
Superannuation	27,147	21,299
On Costs	6,125	6,201
Rent	3,601	3,889
Repairs and Maintenance	1,387	3,331
Other Premises Costs	8,452	9,769
Staff Training	9,315	1,890
Staff Recruitment	16,591	7,775
Communications	5,919	5,093
Office Overheads	33,009	33,721
Insurance	4,508	4,371
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	-	226
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	833	1,268
Travel	11,704	20,021
Programming and Planning	10,805	3,168
Client Disbursements	-	-
Leases	115	721
Minor Equipment	1,103	2,603
Depreciation	-	-
Other	-	-
Salary and Related Expenses	394,554	365,602
Total Operating Expenses	107,342	97,846
Total CLSP Expenses	501,896	463,448
Surplus/Deficit for Current Year	(15,809)	1,601
OTHER INCOME (Not to be added to CLSP Funds Surplus/Deficit)		
Total Funds received from Other Bodies	-	-
Total Funds received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	-	-
Less Actual Capital Expenditure in Current Year	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for Next Year	(709)	15,100

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT
2014/15 FINANCIAL YEAR
Rural Womens Outreach Program

NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
Surplus/Deficit from previous year	2,988	6,406
Approved Expenditure from Surplus	-	-
Net Surplus Deficit from previous year	2,988	6,406
CLSP INCOME		
Commonwealth	87,505	82,018
State	5,048	4,687
Service Generated Income	-	-
Total CLSP Income	92,553	86,705
CLSP General Purpose Income (Total CLSP Income plus Net Surplus/Deficit)	95,541	93,111
CLSP EXPENSES		
Salaries	67,902	64,505
Superannuation	6,111	5,967
On Costs	1,480	1,409
Rent	671	725
Repairs and Maintenance	259	621
Other Premises Costs	1,576	1,821
Staff Training	1,737	352
Staff Recruitment	3,093	1,450
Communications	1,103	950
Office Overheads	6,154	6,287
Insurance	841	815
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	-	42
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	155	236
Travel	2,182	3,733
Programming and Planning	2,015	591
Client Disbursements	-	-
Leases	21	134
Minor Equipment	206	485
Depreciation	-	-
Other	-	-
Salary and Related Expenses	75,493	71,881
Total Operating Expenses	20,013	18,242
Total CLSP Expenses	95,506	90,123
Surplus/Deficit for Current Year	(2,953)	(3,418)
OTHER INCOME (Not to be added to CLSP Funds Surplus/Deficit)		
Total Funds received from Other Bodies	-	-
Total Funds received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	-	-
Less Actual Capital Expenditure in Current Year	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for Next Year	35	2,988

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE REPORT
2014/15 FINANCIAL YEAR
Family Relationship Centre Project

NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
Surplus/Deficit from previous year	16,058	12,408
Approved Expenditure from Surplus	-	-
Net Surplus Deficit from previous year	16,058	12,408
CLSP INCOME		
Commonwealth	59,249	58,201
State	8,127	7,548
Service Generated Income	-	-
Total CLSP Income	67,376	65,749
CLSP General Purpose Income (Total CLSP Income plus Net Surplus/Deficit)	83,434	78,157
CLSP EXPENSES		
Salaries	61,241	43,313
Superannuation	5,512	4,006
On Costs	1,335	946
Rent	509	550
Repairs and Maintenance	196	471
Other Premises Costs	1,195	1,381
Staff Training	1,317	267
Staff Recruitment	2,346	1,099
Communications	837	720
Office Overheads	4,667	4,768
Insurance	637	618
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	-	32
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	118	179
Travel	1,655	2,831
Programming and Planning	1,528	448
Client Disbursements	-	-
Leases	16	102
Minor Equipment	156	368
Depreciation	-	-
Other	-	-
Salary and Related Expenses	68,088	48,265
Total Operating Expenses	15,177	13,834
Total CLSP Expenses	83,265	62,099
Surplus/Deficit for Current Year	(15,889)	3,650
OTHER INCOME (Not to be added to CLSP Funds Surplus/Deficit)		
Total Funds received from Other Bodies	-	-
Total Funds received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	-	-
Less Actual Capital Expenditure in Current Year	-	-
Surplus/(deficit) for Next Year	169	16,058

BALANCE SHEET
as at 30 June 2015

CURRENT ASSETS	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
National Australia Bank Operating Account	56,747	64,198
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	56,747	64,198
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Fixed Assets		
Furniture and Equipment	16,866	16,866
Less Provision for Depreciation	16,866	16,866
TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	56,747	64,198
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Creditors		
Accrued Wages	10,273	7,549
Employee Entitlements		
Annual Leave	19,923	14,776
Long Service Leave	5,855	-
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	36,051	22,325
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Employee Entitlements		
Long Service Leave	16,323	12,847
TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES	16,323	12,847
TOTAL LIABILITIES	52,374	35,172
NET ASSETS	4,373	29,026
ACCUMULATED FUNDS		
Retained Surplus/(deficit) at Begining of Year	39,024	37,191
Surplus/(deficit) for Year	(34,651)	1,833
	4,373	39,024

CASHFLOW STATEMENT
Year Ended 30 June 2015

CASH INFLOWS (OUTFLOWS) FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	2014/15 \$	2013/14 \$
Receipts		
Operating grants from Government	709,350	679,241
Other income	1,267	12
	710,618	679,253
Payments		
Payments to employees	(520,933)	(497,579)
Payments to suppliers and providers	(156,785)	(142,914)
GST paid	(50,348)	(48,758)
	(728,067)	(689,251)
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	(a) (17,449)	(9,998)
Cash flows from investing activities		
Payments for fixed assets	-	-
Net cash used in investing activities	-	-
Net cash from financing activities	-	-
Net increase(decrease) in cash for year	(17,449)	(9,998)
Cash at beginning of financial year	74,196	84,194
Cash at end of financial year	56,747	74,196
(a) Reconciliation of net cash from operating activities to surplus from operating activities:-		
Net (deficit) surplus for the year	(34,651)	1,833
ADD (LESS):		
Depreciation	-	-
Increase (Decrease) in employee provisions	14,478	(16,789)
Increase (Decrease) in creditors	2,724	4,958
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	(17,449)	(9,998)

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
2014/15 Financial Year

Note 1
[Basis of Accounting](#)

Income in these Income and Expenditure Reports is recognised on a cash basis, while expenses are recognised on an accrual basis.

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