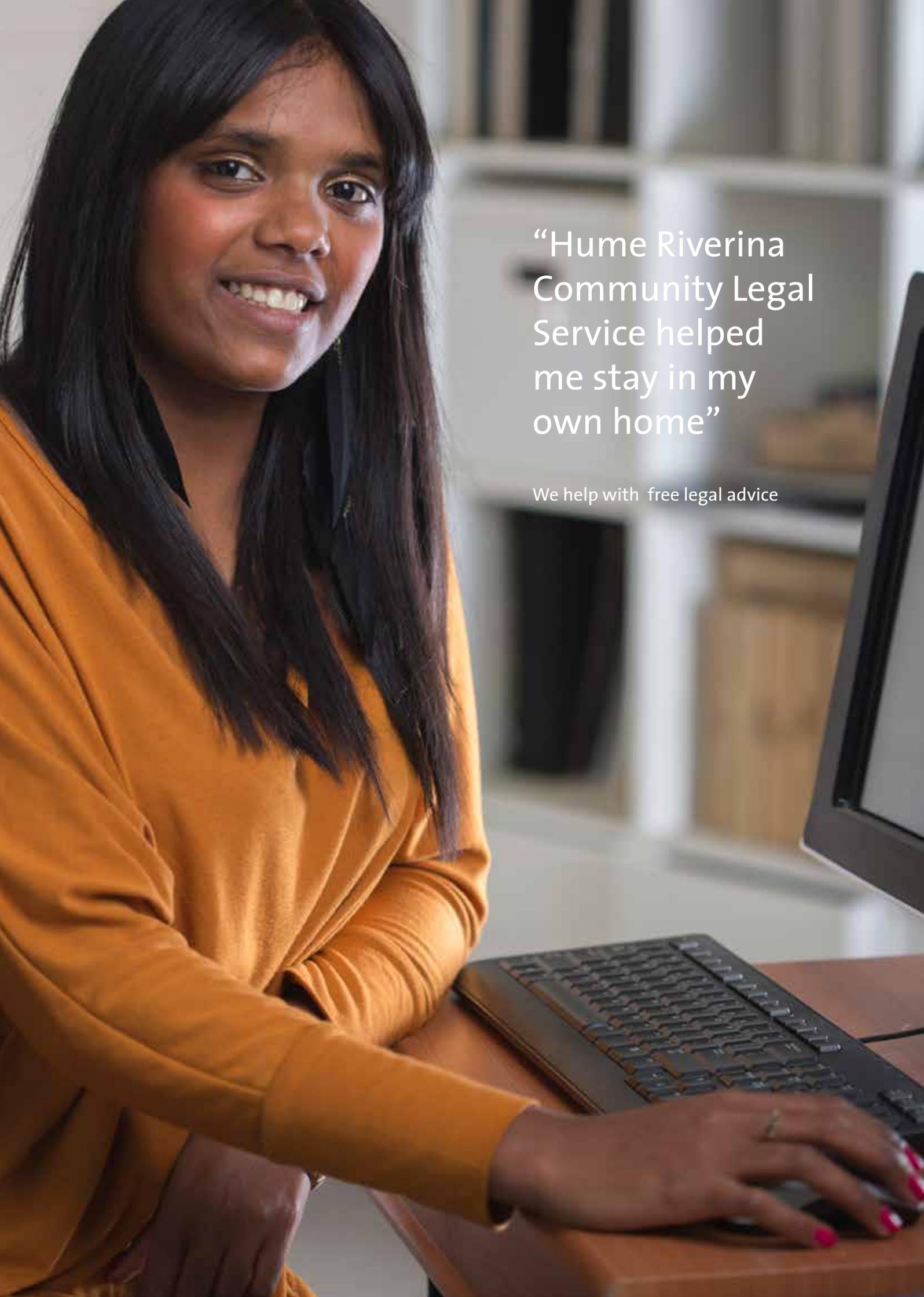


HUME RIVERINA  
COMMUNITY  
LEGAL SERVICE  
ANNUAL REPORT

2014-15



**hume riverina**  
community legal service



“Hume Riverina  
Community Legal  
Service helped  
me stay in my  
own home”

We help with free legal advice

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## Who we are

HRCLS has been the principal provider of free legal services in North East Victoria and the Southern Riverina of NSW for over 15 years. We deliver legal services from multiple locations over a catchment of 21 local government areas, including Wodonga, Wangaratta and Benalla in Victoria, and Albury, Corowa and Deniliquin in NSW.

HRCLS is a vital part of a broader service network providing integrated support to regional and remote communities. HRCLS works alongside social service partners and private legal practitioners to enhance community access to legal, social, financial and health support. We recognise the strengths and expertise of our numerous partners, and we inform and are informed by the work that they do.

HRCLS is one of only a few cross-border community legal services in Australia. People in our region often work, have children in school, or visit family and friends on one side of the border, whilst residing on the other. This can make legal issues even more complicated. We have a unique understanding of and experience in navigating diverse areas of law and legal practice within and across Victorian, NSW and Federal jurisdictions.

HRCLS is auspiced by Upper Murray Family Care (UMFC). From 2016 we will be co-located with UMFC, facilitating easier access to a range of services for communities in Wodonga and the surrounding region.

## Why we exist

We value a culture that embraces equality of opportunity - where people are enabled to make positive contributions to their own and the broader community, wherever they live in Australia. We champion this culture by working with regional and remote communities to build individual and collective capacity for managing and resolving conflict.

Some of the long-term benefits we want to see for the communities we serve include:

- Equitable resourcing of support services across regional areas
- Legal problems managed before they reach crisis point
- People experiencing greater agency over their lives.

## Our funding

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service is funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General, Victoria Legal Aid, Legal Aid NSW and by donations.

*We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we work and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.*

# Our team

## Staff

Sarah Rodgers (Principal Lawyer/Manager)  
Ashlie Barclay (Operations Manager)  
Julie Garner (Reception)  
Tracey Walker (Legal Assistant)  
Sarah Caplice (VLA Lawyer)  
Alison Maher (Lawyer)

Beth Kennedy (Lawyer/Community Development Worker)  
Karen Bowley (NSW Outreach Lawyer/CLSD Coordinator)  
Andrea Georgiou (Victorian Outreach Lawyer)  
Deborah Fisher (Communications Officer April-June 2015)  
Hannah Gostelow (Projects Officer April – June 2015)  
Tessa Mead (Projects Officer March – June 2015)

## Volunteers:

### Volunteer lawyers (daytime)

Janet Osborne  
Sharyn Gist  
Beth Kennedy  
Sushama Johnson

### Practical Legal Training students:

Jessica Sinclair  
Rose Storey  
Hannah Salisbury-Carter  
Daniel Bakhsh  
Joanne Watson  
Debora Wallace  
Michael Vailas  
Sharyn Gist

### Law students:

Kathryn Henderson  
Tessa Mead  
Sarah Pearce  
Kasey Holyman  
Ben Goodman  
Jason Disher  
Ashleigh Craig  
Ben Buckingham

### Charles Darwin University students:

Nadia Lim  
Eric Withnall  
Tracey Hamilton  
Anne Jarvis  
Glenn Moody  
Narelle Sherwill  
Diana Thomas  
Suzie Zakis  
Cheryl Fitzsimmons

### Wodonga Evening Clinic:

Allison Bruce  
Eugene Butkowski  
Jonathan Craig  
Tristan Ferris  
Dione Garwell  
Hannah Gostelow  
Lauren Howlett  
Dusan Jovetic  
Michele Kampen  
Ross Kearney  
Karen Keegan  
Adam Koster  
Sascha McCorriston  
Derek Norquay  
Judy Paterson  
Paige Rolfe  
Beth Simpson  
Peter Uniacke

### Wangaratta Evening Clinic:

Melanie Barton  
Philip Borrell  
Vic Campagna  
Wendy Couzens  
Jye Cunneen  
Tom de Zwart  
Danny Frigerio  
Jonathan Green  
Tim Jackson  
David Joseph  
Sarah Noble  
Edwina Arms

“I’m now able to see my kids again, after our marriage breakdown”

We help with free legal advice



## Message from Chairperson & CEO Upper Murray Family Care

Upper Murray Family Care (UMFC) has been established since 1979 and is proud to have auspiced the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service for the past 15 years. Our services for vulnerable children, young people and families in North East Victoria and the Southern Riverina of NSW, including disability and aged care support, post separation parenting and mediation, foster care, kinship care, early childhood support for children with special needs, financial counselling and family services for children at risk are complemented by the legal services provided by HRCLS.

The collaboration and mutual enhancement of knowledge and expertise that this relationship continues to bring to our agency benefits all those involved, from management to staff and to our clients. The Hume Riverina Community Legal Service provides a much needed link to legal services for many in the community that may otherwise find it difficult to engage. Intervention and legal assistance at an early stage helps to prevent an escalation of the problem and empower people to seek the assistance they need in a timely way.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service has a track record of flexibility and innovation in its service delivery and is always looking for opportunities to support the more vulnerable members of our rural communities. The team are professional and passionate about the work they do and have a strong leadership team. We thank staff and volunteers for their dedication in serving the community, by ensuring that disadvantaged people are able to get the legal help that they need and once again congratulate them all on what they have achieved in the past 15 years.

**Greg Pearl, Chairperson  
and Dr Luke Rumbold, CEO  
Upper Murray Family Care**

## Message from Principal Lawyer/Manager

In my first full year as the principal lawyer and manager of the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, I have had the opportunity to reflect upon the value of the services that we provide to the community.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service is the only free legal service provider with an office located within North East Victoria or the Southern Riverina of NSW. There are no other community legal centres covering the majority of this area, and the nearest offices of Legal Aid are more than 130 kilometres away.

Access to free legal assistance is crucial for those who are disadvantaged and vulnerable, who are more likely to experience legal problems than the average Australian, yet less likely to seek help when it is needed. This is compounded in regional and rural areas where there is often a shortage of legal and non-legal services. Other factors such as lack of anonymity, distance and cross-border complexities can also further increase disadvantage.

This year, we have been working hard to ensure that our resources are directed towards helping those most in need, and that our services are targeted to the right locations. Some of the highlights for Hume Riverina Community Legal Service this year include:

- The celebration of our 15th birthday, with an address from Helen McGowan, the first principal lawyer.
- The establishment of new services, including an outreach clinic in Benalla, a new health justice partnership with Gateway Health, Wodonga, and new coordinated outreach clinics to Finley and Corowa through the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Network (NSW).
- Securing a major grant with the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner to deliver family violence services to young people.
- The launch of our website and social media profiles on Facebook and Twitter.
- The completion of our report, "Piecing together the Puzzle", the result of consultations with stakeholders in our major outreach locations to further inform our Service about unmet legal need.

A particular focus of our work has been to assist people with legal problems involving family violence, as detailed later in this report. We are heartened to see this issue receiving increased attention by the media, politicians and within the general community.

This year we also embarked upon an extensive strategic planning process, and we are excited about the opportunities for the future that this will bring. In the years ahead, we will:

- Continue to prioritise family violence services (particularly advocating for better cross-border coordination).
- Increase our services for young people, including community legal education.
- Explore the use of technology to increase our reach to rural locations.
- Implement our communications strategy.
- Review our triage process and eligibility framework, to ensure that those who are most in need are able to access our service in a timely manner.
- Continue to collaborate with other service providers to increase our reach to vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

It has been a rollercoaster year for everyone involved in the legal assistance sector, with Commonwealth Government funding cuts expected to fall in July 2015, a reversal of those cuts announced, and then further cuts revealed during the federal budget which are now expected in 2017-2018.

Fantastic work has been done by our peak bodies including National Association of Community Legal Centres, Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria and Community Legal Centres NSW to lobby and promote the work that community legal centres do. We've joined in these efforts, along with our fellow community legal centres around Australia, by holding meetings and writing to many of the Members of Parliament within our catchment area (Commonwealth, Victoria and New South Wales), including Sussan Ley, Cathy McGowan, Bill Tilley, Greg Aplin, Tim McCurdy, Adrian Piccoli, Steph Ryan, and Daryl William and have been an active part of the #FundCLCs campaign on Twitter.

The passion and commitment of our staff and volunteers is the reason we are able to make a difference in the lives of our clients. We are extremely thankful for our staff, who have continued with us despite the funding uncertainty for much of the year. We are continually amazed by the generosity of our volunteers (including private solicitors and law students) who give of their time to ensure that our clients receive quality legal assistance, where they might otherwise miss out on getting help.

We also say thankyou to the numerous community organisations throughout North East Victoria and Southern Riverina of New South Wales, who continue to champion our work and partner with us to ensure that people are informed and linked to our Service.

We are also proud to be a part of Upper Murray Family Care. In the year ahead, we will be moving offices so that we will be co-located with other UMFC programs. We look forward to the new opportunities for further collaboration that this will bring.

**Sarah Rodgers,**  
**Principal Lawyer/Manager**  
**Hume Riverina Community Legal Service**

## CASE STUDY - Family Violence

Heather, our client, separated from her husband Danny after a 5 year marriage. Upon separation, Heather took out a family violence order for her protection against Danny. She continued to have the care of Danny's child and was supported by a Centrelink disability pension.

Heather approached HRCLS in 2013 for assistance with getting a divorce from Danny. Unfortunately, from 1 January 2013, there was an increase in the Court filing fee for divorce applications for Centrelink card holders, from \$60 to \$265. Heather was unable to afford the \$265 filing fee.

When Heather came to HRCLS for help, she was undergoing chemotherapy and radiation treatment at significant expense, and her health difficulties prevented her from working. She had previously taken out a Centrelink loan, so she was unable to obtain further financial assistance to pay for the divorce. Legal aid is also unavailable for divorce matters.

In 2015, Heather had finally saved up the \$265 filing fee. The husband was uncooperative and would not accept service of the divorce papers, which left Heather feeling overwhelmed and unable to pursue the divorce herself. HRCLS prepared her divorce application and sought orders from the court allowing service to be effected via substituted service upon a family member. The divorce was granted in 2015, 4 years after the parties had separated.

*HRCLS has previously made submissions opposing the increase in court filing fees. This case study illustrates the impact on low income Australians who cannot afford to pay the fees and are therefore excluded from access to justice. There are no other options for getting a divorce (such as dispute resolution), and in this instance, Heather was unable to sever the ties with her violent husband for an additional 3 years, due to the court fees being out of her reach. Fortunately, HRCLS was able to assist her with the divorce application paperwork due to the volunteer assistance provided by law students.*

# 2014/15 At A Glance

## What did we do?



387 cases closed      425 open cases

29 Community Legal Education Sessions

Over 2000 information activities

## Who helped?



59 Volunteers including students

355 advices given by volunteer lawyers at the evening clinics

4000 volunteer hours

## Where did we go?

33% of total advices provided by outreach

38% of outreach to New South Wales

62% of outreach to Victoria

Over 10,000kms travelled to provide advice

## Who did we help?

Almost 60% had either nil income or only government pension

24% had disabilities

5% ATSI

10% over 65 years

17% younger than 25 years

## Areas of Law

### Advice

Children's issues	748 (39%)
FV/AVO	297 (15%)
Pty marriage/de facto	287 (14%)
Credit/debt & Fines	216 (11%)
Divorce & separation	211 (11%)
Elder law (inc wills/POA)	200 (10%)
Roads & Traffic Offences	89 (5%)
Employment	68 (4%)
Consumer Disputes	78 (4%)
Neighbourhood disputes	56 (3%)

### Case Work

Children's Issues	129 (26%)
Family Violence	118 (24%)
Personal Safety	56 (11%)
Elder law/Subsidised Wills & POA	42 (8.5%)
Family (other)	25 (5%)
Property settlement	22 (4%)
Credit & Debt	17 (3%)
Child Protection	15 (3%)

## CASE STUDY

Annie separated from her husband after a 3 year relationship. The husband had been physically violent on a weekly basis, made threats to kill, withdrew money from her bank account, was emotionally abusive (such as accusing her of cheating on him), destroyed some of her property and withheld her car keys on numerous occasions so she could not leave the home. Annie went to the police who applied for an intervention order, and an exclusion order was granted, so that the husband was required to leave the home. Unfortunately, as the home was a rental property obtained by the husband through Defence Housing, DHA subsequently gave Annie notice to vacate the home so the husband could move back in.

Annie felt she had no option other than to apply to the Court for the intervention order to be varied, removing the condition that prevented her and the husband living in the same home. The husband was then able to resume living in the premises with her. Annie also withdrew her complaint against the husband, which meant that the Police were unable to proceed with criminal charges.

During the following year, there was further violence and threatening behaviour, and the husband caused significant property damage to Annie's personal property. A further intervention order was then taken out by the police, and at that time Annie was referred to appropriate services, including the women's refuge and HRCLS.

*HRCLS provided Annie with assistance in seeking a divorce and property settlement. In relation to the divorce, it was difficult for Annie to do the divorce application herself, as her husband subsequently moved interstate to an unknown location and avoided proceedings, not disclosing his address. The divorce was able to proceed as HRCLS made contact with the husband via email and whilst refusing to disclose an address, his comments in an email to HRCLS indicated he was aware of the proceedings, so the Court dispensed with service. This process would have been far more difficult had Annie been required to self-represent.*

*HRCLS also assisted Annie with her application to the Federal Circuit Court for a property settlement. Annie successfully obtained a small super split in her favour, as the husband failed to attend court on numerous occasions. If HRCLS had not provided this assistance, Annie would not have pursued her property rights, despite having incurred significant loss through the property damage caused by the husband's violence*



Current and past staff of HRCLS with our guest Mr Greg Aplin, MP. Left to Right: Natalie Greenham, Allison Bruce, Helen McGowan, Greg Aplin MP, Sarah Rodgers, Ashlie Barclay and Karen Bowley

## 15th Birthday Celebrations

This year the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service celebrated 15 years of operation.

On 28 July 1999, the Albury Wodonga Community Legal Service (as it was then known) was launched. The opening was officially presided over by the Federal Attorney-General the Honourable Mr. Darryl Williams AM QC MP. The launch was the culmination of three months' project work by lawyers Helen McGowan and Trish Devlin, which saw extensive consultation with community groups, local police, courts, councils and service providers.

The impetus for a community legal service in the Upper Murray region grew from individual and community recognition that the area had no effective resource to address legal needs experienced by disadvantaged individuals. From a steering committee determined to have a free legal service established within the Albury Wodonga area, and to ensure the provision of cross border services so that those on both sides of the river would have access to social justice, the Community Legal Service was established. Funding was made available through the Federal Attorney General's Department, and Upper Murray Family Care Inc. was successful in tendering for the program after being significantly involved in the establishment of the service.

This year the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service held an event at the Cube to celebrate its 15th birthday. We heard from Dr Luke Rumbold, CEO of Upper Murray Family Care, and Helen McGowan, one of the founding principal lawyers, both of whom were instrumental in establishing the service.

The event was attended by over 40 people, representing services such as Upper Murray Family Care, Disability Advocacy Information Service (DAIS), Gateway Health, Wodonga City Council, Volunteer Resource Bureau, South West Tenants Advice Service, Court staff from Federal Circuit Court and Wodonga Magistrates Court and local private lawyers. There were also a number of past staff and volunteers in attendance.

We were pleased to have Mr Greg Aplin MP attend to present awards of appreciation for past and current volunteers of the service, in recognition of their contribution to the community, and also to service providers who have partnered with us over the years.



# WHAT WE DO – “Connecting the Community with the Law”

## 1) Advice/Representation – We advise, we refer, we empower & we help

*The Hume Riverina Community Legal Service provides free legal advice, information, casework and referrals, targeting those who are on low incomes or otherwise disadvantaged in their access to justice. We empower people to resolve their legal problems and avoid court where possible.*

### How do we do it?

Our core programs include face-to-face appointments, phone advice “Law by Telephone”, in-house clinics and court duty lawyer services. Our “Law By Telephone” is particularly significant in that it allows clients across our large region to still get help when they need it, even if they are unable to travel to one of our locations. In this past year 765 or 40% of all our advices were conducted over the phone.

We also provide ongoing assistance to clients through casework when this is needed, particularly in the areas of family law, family violence, elder law problems, credit and debt issues and fines. The assistance we provide is matched to the ability of each client. Where possible, we empower and support clients to resolve their issue themselves. However, if more advocacy is needed (for example, where clients have literacy issues or complex needs that impact on their ability to advocate for themselves), then we actively assist with negotiation and sometimes court representation.

### Where do we do it?

As a cross-border service we provide legal advice to 21 Local Government Areas in Victoria and NSW. We aim to be accessible to clients, no matter where they live in our catchment area. During the last financial year, we provided outreach in Victoria by holding advice clinics at Wangaratta, Mount Beauty and Benalla (from February 2015). In New South Wales we travelled to Albury, Deniliquin, Thurgoona, Lavington, Corowa and Finley to provide free legal advice by appointment. We also provided services on-site at the Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (Glenroy, NSW), Family Relationship Centre (Wodonga, Vic) and at Gateway Health (Wodonga, VIC). 33% of all our advices were provided via outreach.

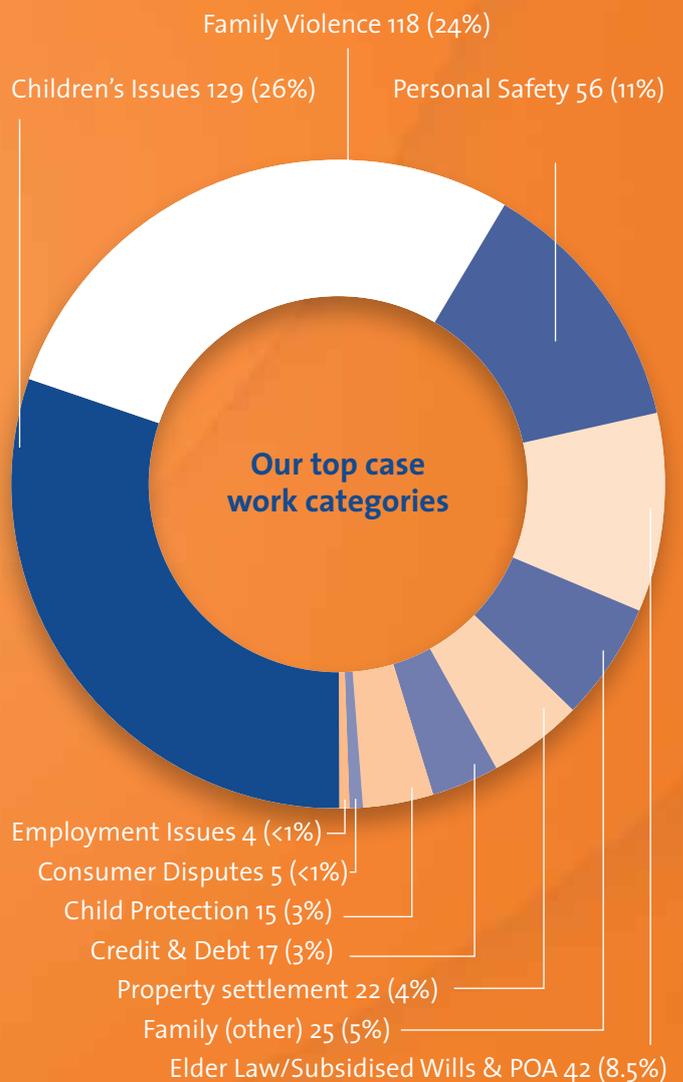
Advice appointments at Wangaratta, Finley, Corowa and Lavington all significantly exceeded our targets.

**In 2014-2015, our lawyers travelled more than 10,000 kms to provide legal advice to clients at our outreach locations.**



### What? Areas of the law

In this past year we opened 420 files and closed 387. The biggest growth area was in the area of Family Violence, with nearly a quarter of our cases directly relating to this area of the law (detailed further below). The casework coming out of the Family Relationship Centre partnership exceeded our target by 105% and the Family Law Service (VLA lawyer) and the Clinical Legal Education Project, both also exceeded their targets.



## Focus on family violence services

Providing family violence assistance has always been a high priority for Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. The health and safety implications for those at risk of family violence, who fail to get legal assistance, are significant. It is now known that intimate partner violence is the leading preventable contributor to death, disability and illness for women in Australia aged between 15-44.

There is evidence that in regional areas there are higher rates of family violence reported in comparison with metropolitan areas. In NSW, Albury, Deniliquin and Wagga all had higher recorded domestic assaults than the state average during the last year. North East Victoria also had particularly high instances of family violence. Notably, there has been an increase in the locations of Wodonga, Wangaratta and Benalla for reported family violence incidents between 2009 to 2014, according to Victoria Police statistics. There are also additional barriers that women experience in getting legal help in rural and regional areas, such as geographic and social isolation, and lack of services.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service is firmly committed to providing holistic assistance to clients where family violence is a factor, by:

- Seeking to address all of the interconnected legal problems surrounding the family violence issue in our casework, such as housing, debt and family law problems;
- Partnering with non-legal service providers to ensure that victims of family violence are referred to HRCLS for legal advice as early as possible, and to link clients with other support services that they need;
- Providing a duty lawyer service at the Wodonga Magistrates Court on family violence days;
- Actively participating in local interagency groups committed to strategic work to address family violence within our catchment area;
- Engaging in community legal education initiatives to raise awareness of family violence;
- Advocating in relation to local regional issues, such as cross-border complexities, conflict of interest issues, and lack of services;
- Targeting future assistance to young people aged 25 and under, who are less likely to seek legal help when they need it.

## Advice and casework

Matters involving family violence comprise a significant percentage of our work. This year we gave 215 advices and provided casework assistance in 118 matters specifically relating to family violence protection orders.

- Nearly 1 in every 4 cases opened this year involved family violence
- 600 (31%) of the clients we gave advice to this year had family violence indicators
- 195 (50.4%) of the clients we provided casework assistance to this year had family violence indicators.

## Case Study

*We recently assisted an Aboriginal lady, Sue, who had a house in joint names with her violent ex-partner. The property had little equity, but it was imperative the home be transferred into her sole name so she could escape the violence. She was living in the home and paying the mortgage, as her ex-partner owned two properties of his own and had left the home. However he was continuing to harass Sue from time to time, coming onto the property without notice, and sending her threatening text messages. HRCLS gave Sue extensive advice to support her to negotiate a property settlement, and she attempted to file a court application herself, but due to deficiencies with the documents, the court would not accept it for filing. Sue returned to HRCLS for further assistance, unfortunately the time limitation period had expired and the ex-partner had moved to an unknown location, so the matter was becoming more complex. HRCLS assisted by drafting the court application and assisting Sue in relation to service of the application upon her ex-partner, as he did not have a solicitor and was avoiding service. HRCLS also assisted Sue to apply for a grant of legal aid in NSW on the basis of exceptional circumstances, so that she would have representation in Court. Fortunately this was successful and a private lawyer assisted her to get final orders in the Federal Circuit Court for the property to be transferred into Sue's sole name. She is now free to move on with her life without further harassment by her ex-partner.*

## Royal Commission into Family Violence

In early 2015, HRCLS prepared a submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence. Regional barriers to assistance for victims were highlighted, including particular issues in North East Victoria regarding cross-border and cross jurisdictional issues. We also contributed to submissions by the Federation of Community Legal Centres and the Goulburn Ovens Murray Family Violence Integrated Family Violence Services. A copy of our submission is available at <https://humeriverinacommunitylegalservice.files.wordpress.com/2015/06/hrcls-submission-to-royal-commission-on-family-violence-29-may-2015.pdf>

## Duty lawyer service at Wodonga Magistrates Court

HRCLS delivers Family Violence Duty Lawyer services at the Wodonga Magistrates Court on a weekly basis. Nearly 10% of our advices for the year were provided at the Court. This service extends to assisting and representing applicants and respondents in both family violence and personal safety intervention order matters, mainly on an interim or uncontested basis. Assistance for contested matters is limited to those matters where a grant of legal aid is available.

There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of family violence and personal safety intervention order applications being dealt with by Wodonga Magistrates Court, as well as the number of unrepresented persons appearing before the Court.

We are thankful for the support and expertise of the court staff, the police and the other duty lawyers.

## Court Support Project

The Centre Against Violence has recently initiated an integrated court response project in Wodonga, which HRCLS has participated in. The project was developed to provide a coordinated and consistent response for family violence clients between local agencies, including Victoria Police, Hume Riverina Legal Service, Centre Against Violence, Court Network, Gateway Health, Upper Murray Family Care, Department of Human Service workers and the Court.

Aims of the project include:

- Engaging more women and children impacted by family violence in support services;
- Reducing the risk and increasing safety for women and children impacted by family violence;
- Streamlining current service system response to family violence;
- Increasing accountability of perpetrators of violence.

The participating service providers have committed to attending court on Wednesdays in Wodonga when family violence matters are listed, to ensure that a range of support services are available for people at court in family violence matters, and have noticed an increase in referrals between services and improved client engagement with some of those services, as a result of all services being present during the court day.

The members of the integrated court response project are currently exploring potential research and evaluation options for the project, and investigating learnings from other similar projects (such as the Family Violence Integration Project led by Eastern Community Legal Centre in Ringwood).

## Family Violence Community Legal Education

HRCLS believes that it is important to provide regular education to the community to raise awareness of family violence and the legal remedies available.

We presented at a Family Law Pathways Network event in Benalla for school and pre-school staff in collaboration with Victoria Police, the Family Relationship Centre and other Upper Murray Family Care services. The presentation on family law and family violence highlighted the services available for separated parents locally, and gave information about when to refer parents for legal assistance and support, particularly addressing the need to be alert to family violence issues.

This year we also hosted Victoria Legal Aid in Wodonga, who provided training to 27 participants as part of their Settled and Safe project, which aims to increase awareness of family law issues and prevent family violence in recent migrant communities. Local organisations who attended the training alongside the Hume Riverina Community Legal Services included Gateway Health, Volunteers Resource Bureau, Wodonga City Council and representatives from the local Indian, Bhutanese and African communities.

Victoria Legal Aid family violence education coordinator Allyson Foster said:

*'We know that, without the support of earlier generations, new arrivals may not know where they can get help and are often unaware of laws within their new country.'*

*'While family violence affects all families, there are many issues that leave people from new and emerging communities especially vulnerable.'*

*'For example, not knowing where to turn to for help, being socially isolated or not trusting law enforcement agencies because of the trauma experienced in the country they have fled can mean that legal problems are not identified early and can become bigger.'*

The training package included stories tailored to specific communities, using different family contexts and scenarios to unpack sensitive issues around family violence, parenting and separation, and child protection.

## Invisible Hurdles Project

We are thrilled to have been successful in a grant application to the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner to deliver a project targeting assistance to young people in relation to family violence.

The recent Legal Australia Wide (LAW) Survey found that young people aged between 15-24 years are 2.4 times more likely to experience a legal problem when compared with older age groups, yet are less likely to seek advice from professionals for their legal problem. There are many factors which work against young people accessing legal services, such as not understanding the law, not knowing where to go to seek legal assistance, and not wanting to be pre-judged or embarrassed further. This is compounded in regional areas where there is a lack of services compared to metropolitan areas. Furthermore, services in regional areas tend to focus on "adult" relationships and not cater adequately for young people.

The two year project to commence in 2016 addresses these concerns by increasing legal services available to young people in North East Victoria, providing an age appropriate family violence legal assistance service, and tailoring services to overcome the hurdles that young people specifically experience in getting family violence assistance in the region.

Discussions by HRCLS with local service providers, including particularly family violence services and the Victoria Police Family Violence Advisor covering the catchment area, indicates a shared hope that if young people receive specific and dedicated legal help with family violence problems, family violence rates in the region will decrease. Young people who have increased knowledge and positive experiences of services available to help them are more likely to use them longer term to avoid adverse outcomes.

The outcomes we want to see over the next three years include:

- Better cross-border practices in relation to enforcing family violence protection orders;
- Easier access to a range of services for people experiencing or at risk of family violence;
- More young people understanding their rights and responsibilities in relation to family violence.

† Coumarelos, C., Macourt, D., People, J., McDonald, H. M., Wei, Z., Iriana, R., & Ramsey, S. (2012). Legal Australia-wide survey: Legal need in Australia (Vol. 8). Law and Justice Foundation.

## Focus on NSW

### NSW Outreach Program:

Our valuable work in our NSW Outreach locations has exceeded our targets. Much of Southern NSW is quite cut off from free legal advice services. The closest Legal Aid office is in Wagga Wagga and the closest CLCs are in Dubbo (527kms away from Albury), Nowra (481kms) or Mildura (613kms away in SA). We have provided 244 face to face advices and telephone advices in NSW this year.

Our Albury Wodonga Aboriginal Health Service (AWAHS) clinics have been successful with a consistent number of appointments. We have provided Law Check-up training to AWAHS staff to assist them in identifying legal issues and then how to refer clients to HRCLS. The staff at AWAHS not only assist clients with making appointments to see us but also often organise transport to and from the appointments. With the new extensions to AWAHS there is now always an interview room in which to see clients who come with a range of issues from family law, children and property, to debt, funeral plans and fines. Occasional visits to the Men's Shed are rewarding and interesting and has led to the organisation of an Aboriginal Wills Workshop to be held in November with the assistance of our pro-bono partners Gilbert & Tobin and the Cooperative Legal Services Delivery.

The Lavington and Albury outreach clinics are usually fully booked and we are enjoying the facilities of the new Lavington Library in which to give advice. Again, staff are supportive and refer clients on a regular basis.

The outreach services provided in Deniliquin, Corowa and Finley have greatly benefited from the establishment of the Coordinated Outreach Clinics, which are operated as part of the Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Network, funded by Legal Aid NSW. The coordinated clinics are provided by CLSD partners including Intereach (who coordinate the clinics), Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, private lawyers, Clayton Utz, Upper Murray Family Care, South West Tenants Advice Service, Disability Advocacy Information Service (DAIS), Salvation Money Care, St David's Care, Catholic Care Sandhurst, and E Works (a disability employment provider). These clinics ensure that there is at least one service provider present each week in Deniliquin and Corowa, and from 2015, in Finley. As a result, clients are able to access not only the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service when it attends once

per month on outreach, but also other services that can provide support and assistance with issues such as fines, debts, apprehended violence orders, family law issues, insurance disputes and other civil law problems. This is of critical importance for people in these towns, where services have been lacking due to the remoteness of the locations, but are areas of high disadvantage and therefore legal need.

The Deniliquin Uke group attendance by our NSW Outreach Lawyer has resulted in a talk on Life Planning given to the U3A in Deniliquin as part of Lunch with a Lawyer series.

We have also been advised that we have been given additional funding for this NSW outreach service to continue for a further year. This is welcome news when the PPF funding while continued, was at a reduced rate. We are looking forward to expanding the NSW Outreach Program in the 2015/2016 year as a result of additional funding.

### Case Studies:

- 1. A client in one of our outreach locations came to us with the assistance of a hospital social worker as he had received a demand from a debt collector for a debt allegedly owed to the Australian Tax Office. The social worker provided invaluable, practical, on the ground support, without which we would not have been able to assist this client. After some difficulty, due to remoteness, disability and complicated ATO procedures, we were able to act on the client's behalf to resolve the debt and any future obligations to lodge tax returns.*
- 2. HRCLS has been able to assist a client on a Financial Management Order with the NSW Trustee and Guardian. We were able to explain the origins of the order, and the procedures to making an application to have it revoked, including how to prove that they have the ability to manage their own finances.*

## NSW Care and Protection Work

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service received some funding from Legal Aid NSW earlier this year to provide a new service for early intervention assistance to NSW clients who are involved with the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS) in relation to care and protection issues.

Whilst HRCLS has previously provided limited advice and casework in relation to NSW child protection matters, this new funding has enabled our dedicated solicitor to liaise with FACS and other organisations more comprehensively to ensure that both clients and service providers were aware of the increased legal services available.

Clients often attend our service with multiple family law issues, and often where child protection services have been involved. Under this funding, we are able to work with clients who are engaged with FACS in the early stages, and often where court proceedings have not yet issued. It is important to give clients early and detailed legal advice (including explaining that both Federal and State laws are involved) and in doing so, attempt to avoid court proceedings altogether.

HRCLS is also able to provide assistance where Court Orders have been made with respect to children, including varying contact arrangements or seeking to change Court Orders. Under this model Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is also an option for parents, carers and other parties to try and reach an agreement for all concerned, but particularly for the children.

## Spotlight on Benalla, VIC

This year we launched our outreach service to Benalla. Hume Riverina Community Legal Service has always provided advice to Benalla residents, in the past via telephone or through our outreach clinic at Wangaratta. However, our legal needs analysis report (completed in 2013) indicated that Benalla was an area of high legal need, with no community legal centre or legal aid office currently providing regular legal advice on outreach.

In February 2014, our outreach service commenced at Benalla Health (Community Health). Benalla Health target the most disadvantaged through the provision of health and community care services to the community, as well as providing a hub for other community based services including aged care, family services, financial counselling, family violence and mental health service providers. Benalla Health have championed our Service in the local community and have greatly assisted us to establish a presence in Benalla and to link in with other service providers. We thank Benalla Health for their ongoing support.

In the past year we have also conducted 5 Community Legal Education Sessions in Benalla, including Elder Law/Life Planning, Family Law Pathways & Legal Health Check Up Training.

There has been a steady increase in the uptake of appointments in Benalla and we look forward to this increasing as we get more established and known in the area in the coming year.

*“The Hume Riverina Legal Service presence on a regular basis at Benalla Community Care makes it easier to provide eligible clients with opportunities to access legal services and advice in a timely manner. It also serves as a reminder to workers to make referrals to the service, and provides opportunities for representatives to present at community meetings and groups, which further increases the service profile and access”*

**Ms Deborah Smith, Community Health Nurse.**

# WHAT WE DO – “Connecting the Community with the Law”

## 2) Community involvement – we are creative and responsive

### A) Law Week 2015

The Hume Riverina Community Legal Service is passionate about connecting the community with the law, and National Law Week is a perfect opportunity to see this in action.

Held from 11 – 17 May 2015, Law Week is an annual event aimed at increasing public awareness about the law, the legal system and the legal professions as well as educating the public about the legal services available.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service engaged in multiple activities in the region. This included:

- Women in Law breakfast
- Legal Health Check-ups
- Free Legal Advice clinics
- Community Radio presentation about Law Week
- “Sexting and the Law” presentation to students at Wodonga Senior Secondary College
- Tour of Wodonga Magistrates Court for recently arrived migrants
- Mock Court for year 8 students at Wodonga Magistrates Court

#### The “Women in Law” breakfast



The “Women in Law” breakfast was organised in partnership with the North East Law Association, bringing together service providers and lawyers from both sides of the Victorian and New South Wales border. The event attracted over 40 women including police, mediators, community workers, court staff, lawyers and paralegals.

Thanks to Magistrate Stella Stuthridge, our guest speaker, and Gaye Pattison from ABC Goulburn Murray, for MCing the event.

#### The Tour of the Wodonga Magistrates Court

The Tour of the Wodonga Magistrates Court was held to assist newly arrived migrants to the Albury Wodonga area to feel comfortable if they had to attend court at any point in time, where to go for assistance and what the normal court procedures are. We had over 60 people attend from a number of culturally diverse community groups, including Bhutanese and African. This event was well facilitated by the staff at the Wodonga Magistrates Court, Albury Wodonga Volunteer Resource Bureau, Department of Justice, Wodonga Council, Albury TAFE and Wodonga TAFE.

#### A Mock Court



A Mock Court was also held at the Wodonga Magistrates Court with approximately 40 students from Wodonga Middle Years College. The scenario was based upon a young person being charged with the crime of “Sexting”. The mock session imitated how a real court scenario would operate. It was a very successful event in Law Week which enabled great media opportunities for our service to educate the broader community on the legal topic. We are very thankful for our local professionals who volunteered their time to participate in the session, including court staff, the Police, local solicitors and barristers who enabled the session to be as real as possible for the students. Special thanks to Sally Wilson & Greg Duncan, who played key roles in the Mock Court.

#### Legal Health Checks

Legal Health Checks were conducted at the Wodonga Sports and Leisure Centre to help people attending the Sports Centre to be informed about the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service, and to help identify whether they had a legal issue that needed advice.

## B) Community Legal Education

Community legal education is an important part of the work that we do. Often, vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the community have a poor understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Through community legal education, we are able to help people to avoid legal problems, and to know where to go for help if legal issues do arise so that those problems are resolved as quickly as possible.

Our community legal education program includes presentations to service providers to ensure that they are also informed about legal pathways and services available for their clients, and are able to make appropriate referrals to HRCLS.

In the 2014/2015 year, community legal education was provided on numerous topics including:

- Family law
- Grandparents and Family law
- Police Powers
- Life planning - Wills and Powers of Attorney
- Law Check-ups
- Sex, Young People and the Law

We have provided several community legal education sessions throughout our catchment, including at our outreach locations such as Benalla, Wangaratta, Mount Beauty, Tallangatta, Deniliquin, Corowa and Albury.

This year we appointed a project worker to review and consolidate our community legal education publications, and investigate other resources developed by other community legal centres and legal aid, so that HRCLS could utilise the work already done by others. A complication of delivering presentations about the law to people living on the border is that HRCLS must ensure that it addresses its audience about the different laws that may apply to a particular legal problem. For example, HRCLS was required to adapt the presentation on “Sexting and the law” prepared by Victoria Legal Aid and Loddon Campaspe to ensure that school students were aware of the different criminal laws that apply in Victoria and New South Wales, noting that school students in Victoria frequently travel across the border for recreational purposes, to access services or because they reside across the border.

### “Law Check – Ups”

The law check-up training was developed by Legal Aid NSW, and has been a great education tool to present to service providers. Through scenarios and checklists, the presentation enables the community worker to identify legal issues being experienced by their clients, and refer them to the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service for assistance. We have provided the law check-up training to Rural Housing, North East Support and Action for Youth Inc., and Albury and Wodonga TAFE students studying community service courses. HRCLS also facilitated training in Wodonga, where there was attendance from employees from Gateway Health, Junction and Upper Murray Family Care.

So far, a total of 85 community workers have participated. We have seen the positive impact of such training with an increase of referrals to our service for assistance and advice.

### “Sex Young People and the Law”

The “Sex Young People and the Law” presentation was developed by Victoria Legal Aid and the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre, covering three topics of Consent, Age of Consent and Sexting. Presentations were delivered by HRCLS lawyers to Wodonga Senior Secondary College year ten students, as part of Law Week 2015. The topics were very relevant to the age group and students were engaged. The presentations commenced with legal information on the topic. Throughout this stage students were readily asking questions to confirm their understanding in relation to proposed legal issues. Short videos in each presentation were played to better enable students to understand a “real situation” scenario. After the legal information session concluded, students were divided into their allocated classrooms to discuss a series of questions related to the legal topics. During this time there were some fabulous conversations regarding questions and scenarios posed. After the small group sessions the sessions concluded with a final Q & A. We are grateful for the opportunity to present within the senior secondary college on such relevant topics for youth. With attendance of 450 year 10 students over the three sessions, this series of presentations was very successful.

## Elder Law: Life Planning – Wills and Power of Attorney

Many of the Life Planning sessions have been delivered in partnership with Older Persons Mental Health Service, Wangaratta as part of the “Healthy and Wise” program, targeting the elderly and also carers of people with disabilities, in relation to health and mental health issues. Education sessions took place in locations including Bright, Beechworth, Myrtleford, Wodonga and Mount Beauty, with a total of 97 participants. These presentations are interactive with plenty of opportunity for questions, many of which related to powers of attorney (in relation to the new legislation and validity), challenging the provisions of a Will and also Advanced Care Plans.

Sue Cowan, coordinator for the Healthy and Wise program, said “The legal content is consistently and overwhelmingly received. Members frequently state it is full of very relevant and salient information that is helpful, and with many, surprisingly, having never heard of HRCLS. The members continue to state that the content addresses what they need and want to hear about to ensure their rights and that of their family/others... We routinely ask each member to provide feedback... there is a common theme that the legal team’s presentation is greatly valued”.

## Police Powers

Albury and Wodonga TAFE are keen participants when it comes to HRCLS presenting CLEs. The students participating in CLEs are normally studying a community service related qualification. HRCLS presented to the Wodonga TAFE and Albury TAFE on Police Powers and also on the Australian Legal System. Over the 4 presentations there was a total of 100 attendees.

## Case study – family law

A non English speaking woman, Jacinta, attended at a Supervised Student Clinic seeking assistance with a divorce Application. Jacinta had made her Application for divorce to the Court, however as she had been unable to serve her husband with the Application, the Court had been unable to grant her divorce.

*The HRCLS assisted Jacinta to draft the appropriate Application and Affidavit for dispensation of service with the assistance of the telephone interpreter service (TIS). Due to being in a regional and remote area, there were some difficulties experienced in engaging an interpreter in person for the purpose of swearing the Affidavit. The required documentation was then filed with the Court and Orders were made granting the Divorce.*

## Case study – civil matter (road traffic and motor vehicles) – NSW matter

Our client, Ross, drove his friend (who had lost his licence) using the friend’s car to an appointment. During the drive, he was pulled over by the police and was issued an infringement for driving a vehicle that was unregistered and uninsured. Ross did not know that the vehicle was not registered or insured as it was not his. Ross was on a Disability Support Pension and was unable to afford the fines.

*A law student, under supervision of a supervising lawyer, assisted in drafting a letter to the State Debt Recovery Office notifying them of his financial position as well as the nature of his disability. The State Debt Recovery Office withdrew both penalties against Ross, and instead applied a caution.*

## C) Communications

At HRCLS we communicate in various ways with clients, stakeholders and the general public. We believe that it is an important part of our role, both individually and collectively, to effectively communicate with these groups in order to meet our objectives, to promote our services, as well as to inform, educate and empower our clients and broader community. We recognise that we do not exist in isolation but are part of a community in which we must actively participate. This year we completed a review of all our Communications and drafted a Communications Strategy.

### E-Newsletter

A regular e-newsletter was distributed on a bi-monthly basis to numerous individuals and organisations. As a result of our Communications Strategy, we have seen more subscribers to the newsletter as well as increased media exposure through Facebook, Twitter and traditional news streams. This is great for our service as it enables another avenue for people and organisations to keep up to date with information relevant to our service, as well as legal issues that are relevant to them and/or their clients.

### Media

Traditional methods of communication have particular significance in regional and rural settings. We have sought to maintain a presence in our local media throughout this past year and were featured in numerous newspaper articles, local radio and local TV News, particularly in relation to family violence, cross-border issues and sector funding cuts. We also participated in the 2REM Albury Wodonga Community Radio on topics including neighbourhood disputes, family law, financial worries, and wills and estates.

### Online Presence – Website & Social Media

The 2014/2015 year saw the launch of the new HRCLS website thanks to a grant from the Victorian Law Foundation. The website is our online ‘face’, providing information on our services, avenues for legal assistance, and legal fact sheets. It is also a portal for our social media and our e-newsletter and another way for the community to be informed and to make contact with our Service.

We emerged into the world of social media with our Twitter profile in May 2015. One of the objectives of our communications strategy is to promote the services provided by HRCLS as well as to inform, educate and empower clients and the general community. Social media was seen as a free platform to engage those groups, to be more visible in our catchment area and in the CLC/community justice sector, as well as complementing more traditional means of communication.

The Twitter launch was timed to coincide with Law Week 2015 and was used to inform the community of both the messages of Law Week and the events occurring in the local region. Twitter posts about Law Week were seen by nearly 800 people. In the two months to June 2015, HRCLS’ Twitter posts reached 325,000 people, followers have grown to 86 with a steady engagement rate of about 3%. Nearly 5,000 people saw posts informing them of HRCLS’ services, including the workshops conducted by IDRS (Intellectual Disability Rights Service) NSW and facilitated by HRCLS.

Twitter has enabled HRCLS to participate in current “conversations”, particularly around CLC funding cuts and family violence and in those few months led to 9 different mainstream media opportunities (newspaper, TV & radio) where these matters have been raised and discussed. A radio interview and 3 newspaper articles (in different regional papers) in the last month specifically arose as a result of tweets. All of this would not have been possible without the use of social media.

HRCLS is also featured UMFC’s YouTube Channel. 3 short videos were filmed for the Family Relationship Centre about the legal framework for separated parents. The coming year will see us continue to implement our Communications Strategy and utilise technology to meet our CLSP objectives.

## D) Raising issues about community need

### Cross-border Survey

HRCLS is a cross-border service, providing legal advice on both sides of the NSW/Victorian border. Anecdotally it has been long known that this gives rise to unique problems. HRCLS created an online survey and used Twitter and our e-news to promote the survey which was designed to find out how often people in the region cross the border each week, and what the community thought were the main cross-border issues. Over 3,000 people saw the tweets regarding the survey, which was also picked up by local TV and print media. Collaboration has since taken place with the other NSW/Victorian cross border CLC, Mallee Family Care, who have since conducted the same survey in their region.

Over 47% of people surveyed said they crossed the border between Albury & Wodonga more than 7 times per week and over 14% said they did so more than 16 times! This compares with only 28% of people in the Murray Mallee who said they crossed the border 7 or more times per week.



The main issue identified by respondents was traffic, road rules and different licensing requirements. This was a key source of confusion and frustration, and obviously has significant legal implications.

This was closely followed by service access/delivery issues, where the border was a barrier to people trying to access services and support, where processes were duplicated or services not available depending on which side of the border people lived. This was seen as being most obvious in the health and social services sector, but also in the legal sphere, relating to courts, jurisdiction, grants of aid and police powers.

Since that time we have been able to raise the profile of these issues in the local media, with our NSW State MP Greg Aplin, Victorian State MP Bill Tilley and the NSW Cross-border Commissioner.

### Piecing Together the Puzzle Report

As part of the HRCLS Community Services Program for 2014-15, HRCLS employed a project officer to survey a range of community organisations legal need in our catchment. Through this project, a variety of organisations provided us with key insights into their perception of legal need, when and where they are likely to refer their clients, and what barriers they face in doing so. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the organisations and stakeholders that contributed to the findings of this report.

This report indicated that HRCLS is already taking a number of positive steps to effectively link clients of community organisations with legal services, including providing targeted outreach legal advice and Community Legal Education across the catchment, which we believe is a reflection of HRCLS's commitment to the broader community. However, the report also indicated a number of continuing difficulties faced by organisations including their difficulties with finding appropriate referral services, conflicts of interest and the uncertainty of what assistance their clients will receive upon referral. The results also indicated that clients of organisations experience diverse barriers when accessing legal assistance, particularly, financial, literacy and disability barriers.

Importantly, this report allowed us to use key findings to suggest prospective solutions that can assist HRCLS and the broader legal community to continue building sustainable community partnerships between legal and non legal organisations. It also provided us with information that highlighted the importance of having supported pathways to ensure that clients can access legal services, regardless of where they initially go to seek assistance.

We are glad to be able to share the findings and recommendations of this research project with the wider community sector at the NACLCL conference in August 2015. In early 2016, HRCLS also plans to hold a community consultation to share our results and prospective solutions and will be inviting the general community to come along to share their thoughts.



## Congratulations Karen Bowley

HRCLS lawyer, Karen Bowley, has made significant contributions to our Service over many years. We were thrilled to be able to celebrate her 10 years with us at our 15th Birthday Celebrations.

It is a testimony to her impact that this year she was also nominated for the NSW Justice Medal for her work in improving and expanding legal outreach services in the Southern Riverina of NSW for the socially and economically disadvantaged.

In addition Karen was recognised for her work with the Disability Advocacy and Information Service (DAIS) by receiving the Jack Irvine Memorial Shield. Karen has worked closely with DAIS in her capacity as a community lawyer since 2004 and has always been impressed with DAIS who champion those with a disability and give them a voice, encourage self-reliance and believe in a strong local community.

Congratulations Karen!

## Case studies – civil matters (motor vehicle/ insurance VIC)

John approached us for assistance after he had a motor vehicle accident, a result of hitting an animal that was on the road. His insurance company paid for the vehicle, as it was written off, but had refused to pay for a rental car which John needed because he lived in a rural town, where there was no public transport.

*Under the supervision of a lawyer, a law student assisted in writing a letter to the insurance company requesting reimbursement of the car hire charges. The insurance company reviewed their decision and agreed to pay John for the reasonable costs incurred in renting a vehicle.*

## Debt - MVA (motor vehicle/debt)

James was exiting a service station and turning right, when his car hit another vehicle travelling on the main road. James is supported by a disability pension for physical disability and bipolar disorder, and did not have motor insurance. The insurer for the other driver pursued a claim against James for damage in the sum of \$3,050.62. James accepted liability for the accident, but was not in a position to pay out the claim.

*HRCLS worked with a financial counsellor from Upper Murray Family Care who prepared a report detailing James's income and expenditure. HRCLS then wrote to the insurer, enclosing James's income and expenditure statement and healthcare card, asking that they write off the debt based on James's financial circumstances. The insurer agreed to cease recovery action, and closed the file.*

# WHAT WE DO – “Connecting the Community with the Law”

## 3) Partnerships & Networks – We are connected & collaborative

### NETWORKS

We encourage and facilitate stakeholder engagement in our Service. We participate in local network and interagency meetings to build strong partnerships and referral pathways with other local service providers, including:

- Albury Wodonga Ethnic Community Council
- CALD Advisory Committee
- Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Network
- Albury Wodonga Domestic Family Violence Network
- Hume Region Homelessness Networks – Wodonga, Benalla, Wangaratta
- Multicultural Interagency Meeting (MIN)
- Koori Interagency Meeting (KIN)
- North East Law Association
- Albury Wodonga Family Law Pathways Network
- Ovens & Murray Family Violence Operations Group
- Ovens & Murray Goulburn Strategic Family Violence Network
- Albury Wodonga Disability Network
- Berrigan Jerilderie Interagency Network
- Corowa interagency Network
- Albury & District Law Society

HRCLS also participates in a number of networks through the Federation of CLCs (Victoria) and CLCs NSW to collaborate with other community legal centres and continue to develop strength in various areas of service delivery and strategic advocacy.

### PARTNERSHIPS

#### A) Gateway Health –Health Justice Partnership (“HALO” Project)

The “HALO” project (holistic assistance and legal outreach) is a health justice partnership inspired by the partnerships established by Inner Melbourne Community Legal Centre with Royal Women’s Hospital, and Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre with Bendigo Community Health Service.

The project involves Hume Riverina Community Legal Service delivering a legal advice service on-site at Gateway Health, Wodonga with the aim of reaching vulnerable and disadvantaged clients who might not otherwise get the legal help that they need. Since February 2015, the pilot project has involved a lawyer attending Gateway Health and providing up to 4 legal advice appointments per fortnight to clients of Gateway Health on-site at the Health Centre.

During the 5 month period from February to June 2015, a total of 27 clients were referred to the HRCLS by Gateway Health staff. A total of 22 clients were provided legal advice and assistance, and 5 people were provided legal information and referrals due to a conflict of interest preventing the Service from providing legal advice.

The assistance provided to clients has included a range of legal issues, including family violence, family law (child contact, property and divorce), wills and powers of attorney, neighbourhood fencing disputes, criminal law issues, motor vehicle accident issues, and debt problems.

The partnership is effective because it enables integration of health and legal services. It is well documented that most people do not seek help from a lawyer when they have a legal problem. For people who fail to get timely legal help, their legal problem can often escalate, causing increased costs to public spending through the Courts or Health Centres where a problem could have been avoided or resolved through early access to legal assistance.

For example, for people dealing with fines who also suffer from mental health issues or are at risk of homelessness, there are often other ways of dealing with fines (such as by accessing the Work Development Order scheme in New South Wales or by applying to the Infringements Court in Melbourne under special circumstances), that would not be known by clients without accessing legal advice. Health workers are in the best position to notice these legal issues, and to facilitate a referral to our lawyer on-site to ensure that problems are resolved as soon as possible.

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and Gateway Health have worked together to ensure that people accessing the community health services are made aware of legal services on-site. This has strengthened referral pathways between Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and services within Gateway, including Mental Health, Headspace, Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs, Counselling, Family relationship and Youth team, Indigenous programs, GPs, Nurses and other visiting services.

The future of the partnership is strong, with HRCLS having secured funding from the Department of Justice for the 2015/2016 year to continue and expand services. We see this as an exciting opportunity to strengthen our partnership, through increasing our on-site services at Gateway Health from fortnightly to weekly. In the very near future, we aim to provide the Law Check Up training to the programs that run through Gateway, to train staff to spot legal needs and refer clients for legal advice. The service will also be able to expand to Wangaratta next year.

We look forward to building a long term relationship with Gateway Health and are thankful that we have been given the opportunity to reach and assist people who are particularly disadvantaged and may never have approached a legal service for help.

## **B) Victoria Legal Aid Secondment – Family Law Service**

The Family Lawyer Service was formed by a partnership between Victoria Legal Aid and the Community Legal Service sector in July 2006, primarily because there is no Victoria Legal Aid office in the region. A lawyer employed by Victoria Legal Aid is seconded to Hume Riverina Community Legal Service to provide legal advice to clients experiencing difficulties with family law issues through a telephone advice clinic, and ongoing casework, court representation and family dispute resolution for clients who are eligible for a grant of legal aid.

As the HRCLS is situated on the border of Victoria and NSW, we are able to provide advice and assistance to clients who have legal aid funding in either of those states, in family law, child protection or family violence matters.

The Family Lawyer Service provides an invaluable service to the region, as there are very few private lawyers in the region who are able to accept legal aid work. Our Victoria Legal Aid lawyer brings specialist skills and knowledge to our whole team which has increased our overall expertise in relation to family law, family violence and child protection, and built our credibility with the Federal Circuit Court and local private lawyers.

## **C) Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program**

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service Delivery is pleased to be the coordinator for the Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program. Funded by Legal Aid NSW, the CLSD Program aims to unite legal service providers and community organisations to improve outcomes for the socially and economically disadvantaged in our communities. The partners of the CLSD Program work together to extend services to meet emerging legal needs, develop targeted community legal education sessions, improve client referrals between agencies, develop new resources and provide training and capacity building initiatives.

The CLSD partners meet quarterly to identify and address any areas of legal need and undertake project work throughout the year. Some of our partners are Albury Police, Disability Advocacy & Information Service, Centrelink, Upper Murray Family Care, South West Tenants Advice Service, Community Justice Centre, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service and NSW Legal Aid.

In previous years, the Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Network (CLSD) developed and rolled out two joint-service legal and advocacy clinics in Deniliquin and Corowa (“Coordinated Outreach Clinics”). The Coordinated Outreach Clinics ensure that a weekly advice clinic is held on outreach at both locations, serviced by a combination of public legal, pro bono and advocacy services on a weekly roster. Administrative support is provided by Intereach. These coordinated clinics continue to run successfully.

This year, the CLSD Network initiated a new Coordinated Outreach Clinic in Finley, thanks to the hard work of the staff at Intereach. There are various different services visiting Finley, including E-works, CVGT, a mental health social worker and the Personnel Group as well as Disability Advocacy Information Service and Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. Clayton Utz pro bono lawyers have also made themselves available for telephone legal advice on civil law issues, in between the attendance of HRCLS. St David’s Care provides financial counselling but only remotely. We have been unable to find a face to face financial counsellor to visit Finley since UMFC, who provided this service, lost funding.

Two other successful CLSD projects this year have been:

- A Law Week networking breakfast. This was organised to encourage and emphasise the coordinated and cooperative manner in which we must deliver our services to the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our community. The guest speaker was Frank Johnson who is an experienced and well respected member of our Albury CLSD group and who addressed the breakfast attendees on the local Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community and their legal needs. Frank spoke of the common legal issues that face the CALD community and the challenges this presents to service providers, in addition to looking at the changes in overseas born and non-English speaking population locally and the broader issues and challenges for our community as a result of this.
- A visit by a lawyer from the Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS) who gave two sessions, one information session to parents and individuals living with intellectual disability as well as service providers on making financial decisions; and the other to legal professionals on areas of law and intellectual disability, for example making Section 32 applications. IDRS is a specialist CLC in the area of intellectual disability and has the expertise and credibility with the community in this area of knowledge.

In May we held a well-attended Planning Day where we drafted an Action Plan for 2015-2017. This plan targets the migrant community, family violence and outreach services.

#### **D) Pro Bono Partnerships**

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service has enjoyed a partnership with Clayton Utz for many years. This has enabled Hume Riverina Community Legal Service to refer appropriate client matters to Clayton Utz where HRCLS does not have the capacity or expertise to assist, but the client is still economically and socially disadvantaged. Clayton Utz are continuing to assist a client with a builder's insurance matter which is still going, two years later, and an employment law issue for a young worker who was underpaid. We have also benefited from attending employment law training conducted by Clayton Utz.

Ashurst Australia continues to assist us with Wills seminars for parents and carers of people with impaired intellectual capacity, and matters where Clayton Utz is conflicted and unable to assist.

Gilbert & Tobin are to assist in the running of a Wills workshop for Aboriginal people at AWAHS at the initiation of the Men's Shed at AWAHS.

There are many local lawyers who readily offer their expertise to us and provide an invaluable support to all of us.

All of our pro bono partners are approachable and willing to assist us and our clients whenever they are able. We feel privileged to have this valuable resource at our disposal.

#### **E) Elder Law: Subsidised Wills Scheme**

Hume Riverina Community Legal Service coordinates a "subsidised wills scheme" for people with limited financial capacity and health issues. This scheme enables eligible participants to have their life planning documents prepared by a local lawyer, at a reduced cost. We currently have 24 participating law firms in Albury, Wodonga, Wangaratta, Benalla, Myrtleford, Cobram, Deniliquin and Wagga Wagga.

Once per month, our lawyer interviews clients and assesses their eligibility for the scheme. It is possible for our outreach lawyers to make an assessment for the scheme in appointments in outreach locations and even in some circumstances over the telephone.

#### **F) Family Relationship Centre, Wodonga**

HRCLS has an established partnership with the Wodonga Family Relationship Centre. Services provided include:

- Providing legal advice to clients at the Family Relationship Centre in Wodonga and Albury;
- Delivering legal information sessions as part of the family dispute resolution process;
- Participating in Legally Assisted Family Dispute Resolution (LAFDR) sessions;
- Providing legal information to Family Relationship Services staff;
- Co-presenting on the model at conferences and forums.

It is imperative for legal and non-legal family services to work well together to assist separated families. The HRCLS looks forward to continuing to provide services to clients of the FRS, and to maximizing outcomes for separated parents, and in particular the children.

This year HRCLS continued to provide support at Legally Assisted Family Dispute Resolution sessions provided by

the Family Relationship Centre, Wodonga and the Family Relationship Centre, Mildura. This service enables both parents attending mediation to have representation and assistance from a community lawyer (one from the HRCLS and the other from Murray Mallee Community Legal Service). We were able to showcase this at NACLCL14.

The Centres have worked together to provide legally assisted family dispute resolution since 2012. HRCLS & MMCLS are a distance of approximately 618 kilometres (7 hour drive) from each other. Despite distance, HRCLS & MMCLS were able to develop a partnership as both are located in large regional centres with bordering catchment areas in Victoria. Both Centres operate within catchment areas that are lacking in legal services, with no legal aid office or other CLC servicing their areas, and had the desire to ensure that clients of their local Family Relationship Centres did not miss out on the option of a legally assisted mediation, just because of their rural location.

2014: Internal Evaluation of LAFDR. 15 participants were surveyed and reported the following benefits of having a lawyer assist:

- *Helped me understand it / made it easier.*
- *Made me feel more comfortable / confident with speaking for myself.*
- *Helped me get the outcome I wanted.*
- *Helped to have legal advice/someone to run my ideas past.*
- *Appreciated an extra person there to make it run more smoothly.*
- *Made the other party listen to what was said and understand the law.*

100% of respondents said:

- *They felt like they got helpful advice during the process.*
- *That having a lawyer to assist them helped to feel confident about expressing their views/wishes.*
- *They felt they were better off by having a lawyer.*
- *They would do this type of mediation again.*

## G) Clinical Legal Education Program

HRCLS is in the fifth year of its partnership with Charles Darwin University and this year hosted 12 law students from Charles Darwin University.

This year 8 law students undertook their Practical Legal Training (PLT) with us. Many of the PLT students are placed with us through the NACLCL PLT RRR Program, and we gratefully acknowledge the work by Mary Flowers in coordinating this program. Some students have enjoyed their experiences so much that they continue to volunteer with the service well after their requirements have been met, and often as volunteer solicitors.

### What we offer our students:

HRCLS prides itself on being a teaching practice. We have tailored clinics where students are able to interview clients and take detailed instructions. The students will then discuss the legal matters with the supervising lawyer, and then the information will be provided to the client. Over 100 advices were provided through our supervised student advice clinics in this period.

Students assist the lawyers to take instructions, draft letters of advice, research case law and legislation, draft court documents, create and deliver community legal education sessions and prepare submissions on various areas of the law and law reform.

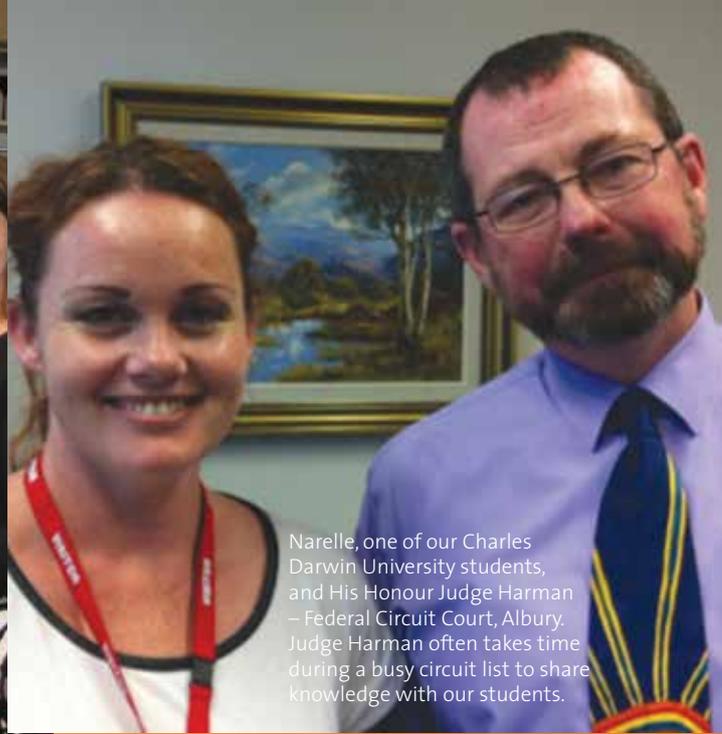
### What the students offer us:

Without our students, the HRCLS would not be able to deliver as many services to clients. Assistance might be in the form of filling out a legal aid application or offering support to a client in a family violence intervention order matter. Our students can never complain of boredom.

Students also keep the staff on their toes constantly asking questions and looking for ways to assist vulnerable clients. They add to the happy and collegial workplace which we enjoy.



Alison Maher, lawyer with students on placement from Charles Darwin University. L to R: Cheryl Fitzsimmons, Debora Wallace, Michael Vailas and Suzie Zakis



Narelle, one of our Charles Darwin University students, and His Honour Judge Harman – Federal Circuit Court, Albury. Judge Harman often takes time during a busy circuit list to share knowledge with our students.

### What our students say:

*“The staff at HRCLS were what made my experience - they were friendly and approachable and generous with their knowledge. All of my expectations were able to be met because of the people there, prepared to share their professional experience and knowledge”.*

*“The placement provided us with the opportunity to run our own client interviews and gather client information on their legal issues. It was above and beyond what I expected we would be able to do”.*

*“I had a very positive and well-rounded experience. I always felt comfortable and felt that my supervisors accurately assessed my abilities and tasked me accordingly. Will absolutely recommend this program to other students”.*

This year we engaged an external evaluator to review our Clinical Legal Education program, as the program has now been in operation for 5 years. In that time, we have had a total of 110 students attend HRCLS and participate in a placement. Between 2011-2014, 499 advices were provided to clients directly as a result of this program (through the supervising lawyer).

Comments from students who were surveyed as part of the evaluation include:

- *It enabled me to experience real interaction with clients who had both socioeconomic difficulties, but also mental health difficulties. Law students are told nothing about the effect the arbitrary nature of the law has on the disadvantaged, and how CLCs act as a buffer against this arbitrariness.*
- *This experience has increased my awareness of, and strengthened my commitment to addressing, social justice issues unique to regional Australia...*
- *To know that I have contributed in the betterment a client's life even for a small time is rewarding. Also, there is no better way to start my legal career than by helping the people who need it.*

### Client feedback

*I am representing myself. The lawyers here have prepared me for that. The judge has said to me, for someone with no legal experience whatsoever, I have represented myself very well and very clearly.*

*I have been made to feel very comfortable and very welcome. I've been given great advice and help and if not for HRCLS, I wouldn't be in the great situation I am in now.*

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of our clients in all case studies report.

A close-up photograph of a woman with long dark hair hugging a young girl with curly brown hair. The woman is looking down at the girl with a gentle expression. The girl is resting her head against the woman's shoulder. The lighting is soft and natural, highlighting the textures of their hair and clothing.

“... we now  
feel safe in our  
own home ”

We help with free legal advice

## Financial Statements

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# Financial Statements - Generalist

## Funds Report 12 month 2014 - 2015

Centre : 3689

Status : Approved

Generalist Services

01/Sep/2015

### NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR

Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	16,358.00	A.Surplus/Deficit from previous year
Approved Capital Expenditure	0.00	
Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	16,358.00	B.Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr

### CURRENT YEAR

	12 month	YTD Budget	Variance to Date	% over Year
<b>CLSP Income</b>				
Commonwealth	360,476.00	360,476.00	0.00	100.00
State	178,719.00	178,721.00	-2.00	100.00
Service Generated Income	29,600.00	25,183.00	4,417.00	117.54
<b>J.Total CLSP Income</b>	<b>568,795.00</b>	<b>564,380.00</b>	<b>4,415.00</b>	<b>100.78</b>
<b>K.CLSP General Purpose Income</b>	<b>585,153.00</b>	<b>K = {[ (Quarterly Period)/4] x B} + J</b>		

### CLSP Expenses

Salaries	288,681.00	294,709.00	6,028.00	97.95
Superannuation	30,181.00	27,997.00	-2,184.00	107.80
On Costs	28,214.00	16,906.00	-11,308.00	166.89
Rent	7,177.99	7,178.34	0.35	100.00
Repairs and Maintenance	1,940.82	1,913.87	-26.95	101.41
Other Premises Costs	10,610.81	10,422.39	-188.42	101.81
Staff Training	8,515.00	4,300.00	-4,215.00	198.02
Staff Recruitment	191.00	503.96	312.96	37.90
Communications	9,562.69	9,516.38	-46.31	100.49
Office Overheads	17,777.78	15,040.00	-2,737.78	118.20
Insurance	701.16	691.43	-9.73	101.41
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	9,068.16	8,863.39	-204.77	102.31
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	5,290.91	4,385.00	-905.91	120.66
Travel	16,797.53	11,628.18	-5,169.35	144.46
Programming and Planning	3,390.63	2,564.00	-826.63	132.24
Client Disbursements	94.00	0.00	-94.00	0.00
Leases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Minor Equipment	4,223.21	2,219.08	-2,004.13	190.31
Depreciation	15,986.49	15,764.55	-221.94	101.41
Other	110,856.36	146,135.43	35,279.07	75.86
<b>Salary and Related Expenses</b>	<b>347,076.00</b>	<b>339,612.00</b>	<b>-7,464.00</b>	<b>102.20</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>222,184.54</b>	<b>241,126.00</b>	<b>18,941.46</b>	<b>92.14</b>
<b>L. Total CLSP Expenses</b>	<b>569,260.54</b>	<b>580,738.00</b>	<b>11,477.46</b>	<b>98.02</b>
<b>M.Surplus/Deficit for Current Year</b>	<b>-465.54</b>	<b>M = J - L</b>		<b>15,892.46</b>
				<b>Total Variance</b>

### Other Income

Total funds Received from Other Bodies	20,711.00	20,711.00	0.00	100.00
Total funds Received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

### Calculate Surplus/Deficit For Next Year

Actual Capital Exp in Current yr	0.00	P
<b>N.Surplus/Deficit for Next Year</b>	<b>15,892.46</b>	<b>N = A + M - P</b>

# Family Law Focussed Clinical Legal Education Project

Clinical Legal Education Project

01/Sep/2015

**NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	78,193.52	A.Surplus/Deficit from previous year
Approved Capital Expenditure	0.00	
Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	78,193.52	B.Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr

<b>CURRENT YEAR</b>		12 month	YTD Budget	Variance to Date	% over Year	
<b>CLSP Income</b>						
Commonwealth		118,010.00	118,008.00	2.00	100.00	
State		2,989.00	2,987.00	2.00	100.07	
Service Generated Income		0.00	-5,859.00	5,859.00	0.00	
<b>J.Total CLSP Income</b>		<b>120,999.00</b>	<b>115,136.00</b>	<b>5,863.00</b>	<b>105.09</b>	
<b>K.CLSP General Purpose Income</b>		<b>199,192.52</b>	<b>K = {[ (Quarterly Period) / 4 ] x B } + J</b>			
<b>CLSP Expenses</b>						
Salaries		80,375.00	56,030.00	-24,345.00	143.45	
Superannuation		4,410.00	5,323.00	913.00	82.85	
On Costs		2,432.00	3,215.00	783.00	75.65	
Rent		781.56	1,321.03	539.47	59.16	
Repairs and Maintenance		211.32	357.19	145.87	59.16	
Other Premises Costs		1,287.46	1,965.82	678.36	65.49	
Staff Training		16,125.00	150.00	-15,975.00	10,750.00	
Staff Recruitment		55.00	0.00	-55.00	0.00	
Communications		794.59	1,621.06	826.47	49.02	
Office Overheads		2,635.93	2,818.26	182.33	93.53	
Insurance		76.34	129.04	52.70	59.16	
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees		978.66	1,654.17	675.51	59.16	
Library, Resources & Subscriptions		869.00	534.00	-335.00	162.73	
Travel		2,214.06	5,730.33	3,516.27	38.64	
Programming and Planning		1,087.55	56.00	-1,031.55	1,942.05	
Client Disbursements		199.00	0.00	-199.00	0.00	
Leases		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Minor Equipment		961.40	28,634.20	27,672.80	3.36	
Depreciation		1,740.65	2,942.14	1,201.49	59.16	
Other		65,172.02	55,812.76	-9,359.26	116.77	
<b>Salary and Related Expenses</b>		<b>87,217.00</b>	<b>64,568.00</b>	<b>-22,649.00</b>	<b>135.08</b>	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>95,189.54</b>	<b>103,726.00</b>	<b>8,536.46</b>	<b>91.77</b>	
<b>L. Total CLSP Expenses</b>		<b>182,406.54</b>	<b>168,294.00</b>	<b>-14,112.54</b>	<b>108.39</b>	
<b>M.Surplus/Deficit for Current Year</b>		<b>-61,407.54</b>	<b>M = J - L</b>		<b>-8,249.54</b>	<b>Total Variance</b>

**Other Income**

Total funds Received from Other Bodies				
Total funds Received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities				

**Calculate Surplus/Deficit For Next Year**

Actual Capital Exp in Current yr	0.00	P
<b>N.Surplus/Deficit for Next Year</b>	<b>16,785.98</b>	<b>N = A + M - P</b>

# HRCLS/FRC Partnership Project

FRC

01/Sep/2015

**NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	19,226.09	A.Surplus/Deficit from previous year
Approved Capital Expenditure	0.00	
Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	19,226.09	B.Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr

**CURRENT YEAR**

	12 month	YTD Budget	Variance to Date	% over Year
<b>CLSP Income</b>				
Commonwealth	62,249.00	62,247.00	2.00	100.00
State	1,577.00	1,576.00	1.00	100.06
Service Generated Income	0.00	-5,859.00	5,859.00	0.00
<b>J.Total CLSP Income</b>	<b>63,826.00</b>	<b>57,964.00</b>	<b>5,862.00</b>	<b>110.11</b>
<b>K.CLSP General Purpose Income</b>	<b>83,052.09</b>	K = {[ (Quarterly Period)/4 ] x B} + J		

<b>CLSP Expenses</b>				
Salaries	43,063.00	42,034.00	-1,029.00	102.45
Superannuation	3,413.00	3,993.00	580.00	85.47
On Costs	3,583.00	2,411.00	-1,172.00	148.61
Rent	946.08	946.08	0.00	100.00
Repairs and Maintenance	255.80	255.80	0.00	100.00
Other Premises Costs	1,305.11	1,356.11	51.00	96.24
Staff Training	6,028.00	150.00	-5,878.00	4,018.67
Staff Recruitment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Communications	1,044.85	1,272.85	228.00	82.09
Office Overheads	1,951.94	2,217.94	266.00	88.01
Insurance	92.41	92.41	-0.00	100.00
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees	1,184.66	1,184.66	0.00	100.00
Library, Resources & Subscriptions	1,163.00	619.00	-544.00	187.88
Travel	1,151.74	1,202.74	51.00	95.76
Programming and Planning	51.00	70.00	19.00	72.86
Client Disbursements	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Leases	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Minor Equipment	322.11	96.11	-226.00	335.15
Depreciation	2,107.06	2,107.06	-0.00	100.00
Other	9,892.23	9,892.23	-0.00	100.00
<b>Salary and Related Expenses</b>	<b>50,059.00</b>	<b>48,438.00</b>	<b>-1,621.00</b>	<b>103.35</b>
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>27,495.99</b>	<b>21,462.99</b>	<b>-6,033.00</b>	<b>128.11</b>
<b>L. Total CLSP Expenses</b>	<b>77,554.99</b>	<b>69,900.99</b>	<b>-7,654.00</b>	<b>110.95</b>
<b>M.Surplus/Deficit for Current Year</b>	<b>-13,728.99</b>	<b>M = J - L</b>	<b>-1,792.00</b>	<b>Total Variance</b>

**Other Income**

Total funds Received from Other Bodies				
Total funds Received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities				

**Calculate Surplus/Deficit For Next Year**

Actual Capital Exp in Current yr	0.00	P
<b>N.Surplus/Deficit for Next Year</b>	<b>5,497.10</b>	<b>N = A + M - P</b>

**NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	11,395.54	A.Surplus/Deficit from previous year
Approved Capital Expenditure	0.00	
Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	11,395.54	B.Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr

<b>CURRENT YEAR</b>		12 month	YTD Budget	Variance to Date	% over Year
<b>CLSP Income</b>					
Commonwealth		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
State		69,077.00	69,077.00	0.00	100.00
Service Generated Income		1,253.00	-6,497.00	7,750.00	-19.29
<b>J.Total CLSP Income</b>		70,330.00	62,580.00	7,750.00	112.38
<b>K.CLSP General Purpose Income</b>		81,725.54	K = {[ (Quarterly Period) / 4] x B} + J		

<b>CLSP Expenses</b>					
Salaries		39,635.00	31,068.00	-8,567.00	127.57
Superannuation		3,896.00	2,951.00	-945.00	132.02
On Costs		6,972.00	1,782.00	-5,190.00	391.25
Rent		699.30	699.30	-0.00	100.00
Repairs and Maintenance		189.08	189.08	0.00	100.00
Other Premises Costs		1,044.63	1,020.63	-24.00	102.35
Staff Training		7,200.00	250.00	-6,950.00	2,880.00
Staff Recruitment		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Communications		1,304.96	1,315.96	11.00	99.16
Office Overheads		1,490.43	1,591.43	101.00	93.65
Insurance		68.31	68.31	0.00	100.00
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees		875.65	875.65	-0.00	100.00
Library, Resources & Subscriptions		1,680.00	852.00	-828.00	197.18
Travel		3,851.22	1,704.22	-2,147.00	225.98
Programming and Planning		0.00	77.00	77.00	0.00
Client Disbursements		94.00	0.00	-94.00	0.00
Leases		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Minor Equipment		477.04	571.04	94.00	83.54
Depreciation		1,557.45	1,557.45	0.00	100.00
Other		7,311.91	7,311.91	-0.00	100.00
<b>Salary and Related Expenses</b>		50,503.00	35,801.00	-14,702.00	141.07
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		27,843.98	18,083.98	-9,760.00	153.97
<b>L. Total CLSP Expenses</b>		78,346.98	53,884.98	-24,462.00	145.40
<b>M.Surplus/Deficit for Current Year</b>		-8,016.98	M = J - L	-16,712.00	Total Variance

**Other Income**

Total funds Received from Other Bodies	29,500.00	20,000.00	9,500.00	147.50
Total funds Received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities	9,500.00	0.00	9,500.00	0.00

**Calculate Surplus/Deficit For Next Year**

Actual Capital Exp in Current yr	0.00	P
<b>N.Surplus/Deficit for Next Year</b>	3,378.56	N = A + M - P

# Family Lawyers Support

State Project 3

01/Sep/2015

**NET SURPLUS/DEFICIT FROM PREVIOUS YEAR**

Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	17,494.49	A.Surplus/Deficit from previous year
Approved Capital Expenditure	0.00	
Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr	17,494.49	B.Net Surplus/Deficit from previous yr

<b>CURRENT YEAR</b>		12 month	YTD Budget	Variance to Date	% over Year
<b>CLSP Income</b>					
Commonwealth		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
State		69,033.00	69,035.00	-2.00	100.00
Service Generated Income		1,175.00	-5,859.00	7,034.00	-20.05
<b>J.Total CLSP Income</b>		70,208.00	63,176.00	7,032.00	111.13
<b>K.CLSP General Purpose Income</b>		87,702.49	K = {[ (Quarterly Period)/4 ] x B} + J		

<b>CLSP Expenses</b>					
Salaries		41,025.00	44,521.00	3,496.00	92.15
Superannuation		3,859.00	4,230.00	371.00	91.23
On Costs		4,383.00	2,555.00	-1,828.00	171.55
Rent		1,069.52	1,069.52	-0.00	100.00
Repairs and Maintenance		289.18	289.18	0.00	100.00
Other Premises Costs		1,637.91	1,613.91	-24.00	101.49
Staff Training		6,967.00	1,000.00	-5,967.00	696.70
Staff Recruitment		32.00	0.00	-32.00	0.00
Communications		1,222.35	1,459.35	237.00	83.76
Office Overheads		2,376.77	2,604.77	228.00	91.25
Insurance		104.47	104.47	-0.00	100.00
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees		1,339.23	1,339.23	0.00	100.00
Library, Resources & Subscriptions		478.00	897.00	419.00	53.29
Travel		2,274.05	2,077.05	-197.00	109.48
Programming and Planning		0.00	80.00	80.00	0.00
Client Disbursements		1,197.00	1,000.00	-197.00	119.70
Leases		0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Minor Equipment		401.65	608.65	207.00	65.99
Depreciation		2,381.98	2,381.98	0.00	100.00
Other		11,182.90	11,182.90	-0.00	100.00
<b>Salary and Related Expenses</b>		49,267.00	51,306.00	2,039.00	96.03
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>		32,954.01	27,708.01	-5,246.00	118.93
<b>L. Total CLSP Expenses</b>		82,221.01	79,014.01	-3,207.00	104.06
<b>M.Surplus/Deficit for Current Year</b>		-12,013.01	M = J - L	3,825.00	Total Variance

**Other Income**

Total funds Received from Other Bodies				
Total funds Received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities				

**Calculate Surplus/Deficit For Next Year**

Actual Capital Exp in Current yr	0.00	P
<b>N.Surplus/Deficit for Next Year</b>	5,481.48	N = A + M - P

# Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD)

## Attachment 3B

### Regional Coordination Service Income and Expenditure Statement - Yearly Report

Reporting Period: 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015					
Organisation Name: Hume Riverina CLS					
CLSD Region: Albury					
*SURPLUS or DEFICIT from previous year (if approved in writing by Legal Aid NSW)		<b>\$154</b>			
<b>INCOME:</b>	<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>Yearly Budget</b>	<b>Yearly Actual</b>	<b>Variance \$</b>	<b>Variance %</b>
*Surplus/Deficit b/fwd from previous year (+ or -)		\$ 154	\$ 154	\$0	0.0%
Grant		\$ 20,711	\$ 20,711	(\$0)	0.0%
Other - income, or reimbursement		\$ -	\$ -	\$0	
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 20,865</b>	<b>\$ 20,865</b>	<b>(\$0)</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE:</b>	<b>DETAILS:</b>	<b>Yearly Budget</b>	<b>Yearly Actual</b>	<b>Variance \$</b>	<b>Variance %</b>
<b>Employee Related Expenses</b>					
CLSD Regional Coordinator salary		\$12,793	\$12,636	\$157	1.2%
Superannuation		\$1,215	\$1,212	\$3	0.2%
On-costs		\$734	\$2,372	(\$1,638)	-223.2%
<b>Sub-total Employee Related Expenses</b>		<b>\$14,742</b>	<b>\$16,220</b>	<b>(\$1,478)</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Rent		\$295	\$295	\$0	0.0%
Other Premises Costs		\$413	\$413	\$0	0.0%
Staff Training		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Staff Recruitment		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Communications		\$295	\$337	(\$42)	-14.2%
Office Overheads		\$1,322	\$956	\$366	27.7%
Insurance		\$29	\$29	\$0	0.0%
Library, Resources & Subscriptions		\$0	\$134	(\$134)	
Travel		\$295	\$405	(\$110)	-37.3%
Client Disbursements		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Leases		\$0	\$0	\$0	
Depreciation		\$648	\$648	\$0	0.0%
Other		\$3,006	\$3,006	\$0	0.0%
<b>Sub-total Operating Expenses</b>		<b>\$6,303</b>	<b>\$6,223</b>	<b>\$80</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>Other Administrative Costs (must be less than 10% of annual funds)</b>					
Repairs & Maintenance		\$59	\$59	\$0	0.0%
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees		\$354	\$354	\$0	0.0%
Programming and Planning		\$200	\$0	\$200	100.0%
Minor Equipment		\$29	\$29	\$0	0.0%
<b>Sub-total Other Administrative Costs</b>		<b>\$642</b>	<b>\$442</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>31.1%</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>\$21,687</b>	<b>\$22,885</b>	<b>(\$1,198)</b>	<b>-5.5%</b>
<b>*Surplus or Deficit to be C/fwd</b>		<b>(\$822)</b>	<b>(\$2,020)</b>	<b>(\$1,198)</b>	<b>146%</b>

\*Any funding exceeding 10% that remains unspent at the end of the financial year (p/e 30/06/15) must be repayed to Legal Aid NSW within 30 days of the expiry of the funding period - unless you have obtained approval in writing from Legal Aid NSW to c/fwd the surplus/deficit into the next funding period.

#### Signatures:

Hon Sec/ Treasurer:

Date:

President:

Date:

## Additional Income

We received the following additional income:

- \$9,500.00 – Legal Aid NSW for the Care Partner Program
- \$20,711.00 – Legal Aid NSW for Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD)
- \$20,000.00 – Legal Aid NSW for Albury Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) – NSW outreach delivery

## Thankyou to our volunteers, donors, supporters, partners and funders.

HRCLS extends a warm thankyou and heartfelt appreciation to all who have supported us in the community for over 15 years.

We are continually astounded by the strength of support, time, skills and finances given to help make a difference for our clients and the community we serve.

We look forward to the years ahead as we continue to partner together to help and empower those who are disadvantaged to get fair outcomes, and achieve their potential.

*“I honestly don’t know where to start, words cannot describe how thankful I am for all the help and support you have given me and my family over the past year...I was almost about to give up when my last phone call for help was to the Hume Riverina Community Legal Service. You guys made me feel like there was hope again and to keep fighting for what I wanted...What you do is more to me than just your job and I will be forever grateful for all you have done for me. I very much appreciate it and thank you again.”* Client feedback

## CASE STUDY

### Consumer matter (Elder Law/Consumer NSW)

Deirdre is an elderly female in a small, rural town with poor health and difficulty reading and writing. Deirdre was in contact with HRCLS about another legal problem, and mentioned to us that she was receiving frequent phone calls from telemarketers, and this led to her signing up to a new phone provider over the phone. This was unconscionable conduct by the phone provider as Deirdre did not realise she would be paying 3 times more for her phone than previously. Deirdre was struggling to pay the increased bill as she relies on a Centrelink benefit.

*HRCLS wrote to the phone provider requesting the contract be cancelled. They responded by email and initially advised they would charge Deirdre a \$199 cancellation fee. HRCLS then wrote to the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman (TIO). After the phone provider heard from the TIO, they emailed HRCLS to say that they had released Deirdre from the contract which meant there would be no cancellation fee. They also waived the current amount owing. HRCLS also ensured that Deirdre had changed her number to a silent number, and registered herself with the “do not call register”, which she had done just prior to coming to HRCLS.*

### Elder law (Elder Law/Consumer VIC)

The executor of his late brother’s estate was pursuing Helen for a debt. Helen had been loaned the sum of \$35,000 in 1992 by the deceased. The executor alleged that Helen had signed an acknowledgement of the loan in 2000. At the time the acknowledgement was alleged to have been signed, Helen had separated from her violent husband and was in a vulnerable state of mind. Helen also instructed that she had sold the deceased an antique item at a reduced price, in lieu of the debt owed. Helen is an elderly woman who suffers from anxiety, had no income apart from a Centrelink benefit and no assets of value. The pursuit of the debt by the executor was causing her significant distress, as she had received a few letters of demand from the executor’s solicitor.

*HRCLS wrote to the executor’s solicitor on behalf of Helen, and was successful in seeking a waiver of the debt.*



“We don’t  
need to be  
anxious about  
debt collectors  
harassing us  
any more”

We help with free legal advice



**hume riverina**  
community legal service

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