



Murray Mallee
Community
Legal Service

2017 Annual Report





Servicing the
Murray Mallee
since 1996



The Murray Mallee Community Legal Service (MMCLS) commenced operating in 1996 and covers more than 120,000 square km which includes ten Local Government Areas. MMCLS is an auspiced Community Legal Centre, a co-located service within Mallee Family Care. Mallee Family Care is the largest welfare not for profit agency covering the Northern and Southern Mallee of Victoria and South West New South Wales. This co-location allows the legal service to work collaboratively with over sixty other community programs on common issues, build and support each other in community development initiatives and also meet the ever increasing needs of residents living in the MMCLS catchment.

About Us	2
Funding	2
Our Team	3
Managers Report	4
Turning 21	8
Principal Solicitors Report	12
Our Work	16
What we do and where we go	18
Family Violence - Commitment for the Mallee	19
Family Violence Legal Unit Report	20
Legal Need in the Murray Mallee	24
Mallee Kids and the Law	25
Partnership with Sunraysia Institute of TAFE	26
Mallee Kids and the Law at FLO Connect	26
Law Week 2017	27
Health Education Legal Project	28
Case Study	29
Mildura Family Relationship Centre Partnership	30
Our partnership with SMECC	30
Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice	31
Our Community Collaboration	33
Case Studies	34
Community Legal Education	36
CLE Presentations	40
Source of Income Received from Other Bodies	44
Organisation's Certification	47
Financial Statements	52
Media	54
Dedication	56

Vision

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

Mission

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

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

Funding Received

Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department	\$514,074.00
Victorian State Government (Victoria Legal Aid)	\$178,843.00
(CLSP funds)	\$692,917.00

Thank you to both the Commonwealth and State Government funding bodies.

Objectives

- To provide a high quality, free and accessible legal service in the Murray Mallee which will empower and support communities in the resolution of legal problems and stimulate understanding of the legal system.
- To use community legal education to provide the people of the Murray Mallee region with a better understanding of the role of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service.
- To promote the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service to the isolated and remote areas of the region.
- To provide a high quality and accountable legal service to the Murray Mallee region based on the human, administrative and financial resources available within and externally to the Service.



Our Team

Staff

- Lisa-Maree Stevens **General Manager**
- Steven Bliim **Principal Solicitor/Manager**
- Nicole Thomas **Administration Officer**
- Allie Collyer **Community Legal Education Worker**
- Kylie Walsh **Intervention Order Support Service/Family Violence Solicitor**
- Janet Bonython **FVLU Project Coordinator/Social Worker**
- Lisa Nguyen **Generalist Solicitor/Youth** (to Sept 2016)
- Ed Laginha **Family Violence Legal Unit Solicitor**
- Anna Sullivan **Generalist Solicitor** (from Jul 2016)
- Tianne Harris **Administration Officer** (from Jul 2016 to Jan 2017)
- Jeri Fung **Generalist Solicitor/Youth** (from Oct 2016)
- Katie-Elouise White-Spier **Family Violence Legal Unit/Generalist Solicitor - Swan Hill** (to Jan 2017)
- Robyn Croydon **Family Violence Legal Unit/Generalist Solicitor** (from Jan 2017)
- Renee Mailes **Administration Officer** (from Jan 2017)
- Geoffrey Dunstan **Family Violence Legal Unit/Generalist Solicitor - Swan Hill** (from April 2017)

Volunteer Lawyers (Evening)

Robyn Croydon, Ryan Maddox and Tyler Wolff.

PLT Students

Keeley Duncan

Law Student/Volunteer

Nicholas Fellows

DIY Divorce Workshop Volunteers

Robyn Garsed, Bernadette Edmanson and Renee Mailes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Volunteers

Without the support of our volunteers, we would not be able to continue to offer late night advice appointments nor deliver our Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Divorce Workshops.



Managers Report

This past year has been very successful, we have expanded our service significantly and continued to specialise in supporting our communities most vulnerable and disadvantaged clients as well as extended our suite of family violence related legal services.

We met our overall targets and celebrated 21 Years of Service in April 2017. We also celebrated the first year of our Women's Safety Package Family Violence Legal Unit pilot project, and undertook other successful projects to extend our reach as well as received successful grants to expand our service. It has been another challenging year for the service and the whole National Community Legal Centre (CLC) sector, with continuing funding issue challenges.

The service has experienced some staffing changes this year, however have been able to remain consistent and deliver all services required both in our office sites and our outreach external sites. The service has again greatly benefitted from the commitment and ongoing mentoring and expertise of our Principal Solicitor, Steven Bliim, who has slowly began the transition to a Manager level position recently and will continue to do so in the next few months.

The service has continued its 'voice' in raising access to justice issues for our communities in terms of services provided locally and the gaps

Staff have travelled over 27,000km to outreach locations this year!

we see. The service has met with Victoria Legal Aid staff continuing discussions in their plans to deliver services into the Mallee area, we will continue to provide input and meet to ensure provision of legal assistance services are understood and mapped out in a considered way.

We have continued to undertake Law Reform activities – an integral role of a CLC.

Law Reform Activities we have contributed to:

- Media activity/support across the sector to highlight CLC funding cuts and issues.
- Victorian Inquiry into the Labour Hire Industry and Insecure Work
- Continued support of campaigns from Fair Agenda and Never Alone – Luke Batty Foundation
- Continued local and National advocacy/support for National Intervention Orders.

- Advocacy and support for the Victoria's gender equality strategy
- Support and participation in the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence as well as White Ribbon day activities.
- Fund Equal Justice Campaign activities
- Safety First in Family Law
- Justice for Kids' petition – fix family law.
- Joint Partnership Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Family Violence in Family Law issues, MMCLS and Mallee Sexual Assault-Mallee Domestic Violence Service.
- as a result of this submission - invited to public session and then closed in camera session July 2017. Focus on rural, regional issues and access to justice concerns as well as our cross border location – tri-State border issues.



Image Top Left: Law Week and Families Week May 2017

Image Top Right: Advocacy and support for the Victoria's gender equality strategy

Image Above: Lisa-Maree (right) with Sheri Moulton from Upper Murray Family Care/Hume Riverina CLS - meeting with Attorney General's chief of staff Mr James Lambie and AG Snr Advisor Ms Ashleigh Saint on 28 March 2017 regarding funding cuts to CLC's - Regional Rural Remote issues and our Cross Border Locations.

Image Left: The Hon. Fiona Richardson MP- Mildura Visit- Minister for Family Violence/Women 20/7/17 Meeting at the Mallee Sexual Assault Unit-Mallee Domestic Violence Service, tour of the buildings and Multi-Disciplinary Centre partners and meeting with the Mallee Family Violence Executive members.

I would like to thank all staff and volunteers for their hard work over the past year. It is with pleasure I present the 2016-2017 Murray Mallee Community Legal Service Annual Report

Advocacy for our service and broader to Government;

Working Groups we are on;

- Royal Commission into Family Violence - Federation CLC working group.
 - Federation CLC - Specialist/Generalist Steering Committee
 - Victoria Legal Aid/Consumer Action Law Centre - Drought Project Steering Group
 - Ongoing partnership with University of Melbourne Research ARC Linkage Project grant "Harmful financial products: analysis of their impact and regulation".
- The partners working with the University of Melbourne Law School on this project include; Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand, Consumer Action Law Centre, Financial Counselling Australia Incorporated, Western Community Legal Centre and Mallee Family Care Inc.

The service aims to work in with other providers to ensure clients are supported with timely initial free legal advice with warm referrals for ongoing casework. We have a high Indigenous population with many disadvantaged groups who access support when violence occurs in their families. MMCLS is committed to supporting victims of violence and to work with our community members to address issues as a broader responsibility for us all.

Lisa-Maree Stevens

Turning 21

Being an auspiced CLC under Mallee Family Care, this event had to be advertised wide and far, 7th April being the party day chosen!!

We began our celebrations with an agency wide morning tea with a very large 21st birthday cake, of course in orange! The service was supported by many local organisations as well as our own many Mallee Family Care colleagues, and in fact used this time to make a point in terms of Access to Justice Issues for the Fund Equal Justice Campaign (see picture right). Teresa Jayet, CEO Mallee Family Care welcomed all staff and community members to the morning tea by focusing on our 'Achievements in our 21 years' and was then followed by our special guest, Serina McDuff, CEO of the Federation of Community Legal Centres focusing on the 'History and Future of CLC's'.

21 Still

After work this same day a formal event was held at a local venue with a variety of special guests, including; Joanne Sheehan-Paterson, CEO of the Mallee Sexual Assault Unit-Mallee Domestic Violence Service; Glenn Milne, Cr & Mayor of Mildura Rural City Council; Cr Mark Eckel of Mildura Rural City Council and White Ribbon Ambassador; Geoff Dea, CEO of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE; local private solicitors, community organisation staff, community members and past/current staff of MMCLS.

Teresa again formally greeted our guests and gave some background to the service beginnings and many insights along the way, with Serina also sharing some of the successes and challenges the service has faced, its law reform work successes and future focus plans. Serina also spoke about 'Lawyers Leading Change; CLC's, Pro Bono and Volunteering'.



Focusing on our Achievements in our 21 years



New MFC legal service

MALLEE Family Care will operate a new community legal service.

Funding of \$150,000 has been provided under a social justice package announced earlier this year by Attorney General Michael Lavarch.

Mallee Family Care chairman Richard Haselgrove said the addition of the service would further broaden the base of Mallee Family Care as a one-stop-shop to meet a wide range of community, family and welfare needs.

The service will be based at Mildura, but will provide an outreach to Robinvale and Swan Hill on a weekly basis.

Swan Hill Mallee Family Care Community Services Director Deborah Patterson said once established, the service will provide phone outreach and face-to-face legal advice and assistance, together with community legal education.

In preparing the submission, Mallee Family Care worked closely with legal representatives, information services and financial counsellors in the Sunraysia area to identify

the market for a legal service.

Ms Patterson said the group's clients, in the past, had difficulty with bankruptcy and could not get legal aid, with the group's financial counsellors regularly seeking legal opinion.

"We also have equal rights issues, credit issues, rural debt, the needs of the indigenous population, interstate cross jurisdiction issues, property division, family law, family violence and sexual assault," Ms Patterson said.

The service will employ two solicitors, with these positions advertised shortly.

Off-the-shelf legal advice will be provided, or the service will direct people to those can best help them.

This will enable people seeking advice to look at their options and determine if they can be helped by either commercial services or legal aid.

"Our service will act as part of a referral network and will be accessible to the whole community," Ms Patterson said.

The legal service is expected to be up and running early next year.

In our 21 years:

Supported over 12,000 clients

Provided over 15,000 legal advices

Taken over 4,000 cases

Provided over 1,300 community legal education sessions in our communities



MMCLS 21st Birthday celebrations

Comments from those at our 21st Birthday:

- Great service
- Best place in Mildura
- Keep up the great work
- Keep on caring
- Fantastic services
- Lovely people, great support
- Wonderful service and staff
- Happy Birthday
- Great job 'Congrats'
- Well done
- Fabulous – great service
- Well done – Happy 21st
- Proud to be part of such an amazing organisation



Principal Solicitor's Report

As I sit down to write this report I realise that I have done this twice before and so I am in my third year in Mildura with the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service. The lifestyle must be agreeing with me.

As in previous years we have had a number of staff movements throughout the year. We were joined by Anna Sullivan as a Generalist Solicitor and Tianne Harris as an Administration Officer in July 2016. Lisa Nguyen returned to the big city in September 2016 and Jeri Fung joined us as a Generalist Solicitor and took over Lisa's role as part time Youth Solicitor in October 2016. Katie-Elouise White-Spier left us in January 2017 and her position as Family Violence Legal Unit/Generalist Solicitor in Swan Hill was filled by a local recruit, Geoff Dunstan in April 2017. Robyn Croydon, who had been one of our volunteers, joined us as a Family Violence Legal Unit/Generalist Solicitor in Mildura in January 2017. We also managed to recruit Robyn's former assistant, Renee Mailes, as an Administration Officer in January 2017.

Having recruited Robyn full time we lost her services as an evening volunteer. Ryan Maddox and Tyler Wolff, our remaining evening volunteers, also advised earlier this year that they would not be able to continue as monthly volunteers but remain available on a quarterly basis. I thank Robyn, Ryan and Tyler for their valued contribution as volunteers. In the meantime I am exploring suitable additional volunteers from the local profession.

April/May this year was a very important time for the Service. On 6 April 2017 we celebrated the first birthday of the Women's Safety Package with a public launch of the Family Violence Legal Unit by our local federal member, Andrew Broad MP.

The very next day Serina McDuff, the Executive Officer of the Federation of Community Legal Centres, was our special guest to celebrate 21 years of operation as the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service.

On 17 May 2017 Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People, Liana Buchanan, was our special guest addressing local professionals on disadvantages regarding local children as part of our Law Week activities.

Other Law Week activities included sessions by visiting legal and insurance professionals for people affected by the November Storm Events, a visit by Arts Law to address local artists and legal health checks for members of the public at Centro conducted by volunteers from MMCLS and the FRC.

In August 2016 I attended the National Association of Community Legal Centre's annual conference in Freemantle with our Women's Safety Package Project Coordinator, Janet Bonython. We were able to catch up with representatives of the other 12 Women's Safety Package projects at a networking meeting the day before the conference started.

This was an excellent opportunity to discuss the way in which each centre delivered its service and to compare notes. Janet and I did a joint presentation on our Women's Safety Package Project as part of the conference program.

During the year we continued with our extended family violence intervention order representation both as to appearing monthly at the Kerang Magistrates Court and being able to represent applicants at directions hearings and, if necessary, at final hearings. This funding has allowed us to provide important representation to needy clients and to be able to continue to represent some clients up to the steps of the Court at a hearing.

We have not had to appear on a final hearing as yet because we have been able to negotiate suitable orders or undertakings with the representatives of respondents.

The Mallee Kids and the Law project also continued throughout the year with Jeri Fung taking up responsibility for this when Lisa Nguyen moved on. The project initially provided advice and some casework through our Ninth Street office and outreach locations such as FLO Connect. It also provided community legal education at local schools. At the commencement of semester one in 2017 the project started providing advice and CLE sessions onsite at the Mildura campus of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE. We are hoping to secure a continuation of the current funding for this project once it ceases in October 2017.



In late 2016 we managed to obtain funding from the State Attorney General for a health justice partnership with the Mildura Rural City Council's Maternal and Child Health Service. This project is aimed at providing advice and community education to staff and clients relating to the types of legal issues that can arise from family violence. The Health Education Legal Project (HELP) is led by Anna Sullivan with input from others such as Janet Bonython and Allie Collyer when needed.

During the early part of the financial year we had a number of visits from senior staff at Victoria Legal Aid who were interested in increasing their presence in the Mallee. In October 2016 VLA held a board meeting in Mildura and subsequently announced the opening of a regional office through a health justice partnership with Sunraysia Community Health Service. In December 2016 the manager of the new office, Heidi Deason, commenced working in Mildura and commenced the consultation process to determine the areas of work that VLA would concentrate on. We had a good opportunity to discuss the work done by our service so as to ensure that there was little or no duplication between us. By the end of June 2017 the office at SCHS was almost ready to start seeing clients, principally in relation to child protection, infringements, mental health, Centrelink decisions and tenancy.

In September 2016 in addition to our existing outreach services to Dareton, Wentworth, Robinvale and the Family Relationships Centre we started regular monthly appointments at the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) office at Mildura. This outreach is aimed at

giving culturally and linguistically diverse clients access to essential information on how the law operates in Australia and in Victoria in particular.

Anna Sullivan attends appointments and from time to time has assistance from Allie Collyer with community legal education sessions.

On 28 April 2017 we commenced the process of re-accreditation with the National Association of Community Legal Centres when we were visited by the Accreditation Coordinator. This process occurs every three years and ensures that our service complies with all appropriate standards.

At the end of June 2017 the Service provided a submission to the Victoria Legal Aid Means Test Review. The review seeks to consider changes to the operation and implementation of the means test for legal aid. The Service did not comment on all of the 47 proposals but concentrated on 14 of those proposals that most seemed relevant to our experience of family law clients who do not qualify for legal aid but at the same time are unable to afford a lawyer to run their case.

The service revisited our Legal Needs Analysis on 27 June 2017 in a consultation with Alexa Ridgway as to the next steps to be taken.

Your hard work is not always commented on and acknowledged, but it is noticed and appreciated



Unfortunately part way through the last year we had to make a decision to discontinue the regular Divorce Workshops that we had previously offered to members of the public. While it is theoretically still possible to file an application for divorce with the Federal Circuit Court by post, the Court has made it clear that it very much prefers people to file their applications online through the Court Portal.

A significant feature of the last financial year has been the uncertainty over the whole of the community legal sector in the face of the federal government's proposed 30% cuts to generalist funding for our sector. This uncertainty was not necessarily displaced when the Federal Attorney General announced just prior to the budget that the planned cuts would not proceed. Unfortunately the continuation of funding appeared to be tied to criteria that had not been passed on to the respective State governments before the end of the financial year. This uncertainty imposes significant stress on staff and clients in our centres and

makes it extremely difficult to properly plan the provision of services to our communities. By way of contrast in May 2017 the Federal Attorney General announced a further year of funding for the Women's Safety Package to October 2019.

A big thank you to everyone at MMCLS for your wonderful work and support in the last financial year. Your hard work is not always commented on and acknowledged but it is noticed and appreciated.

Steven Bliim



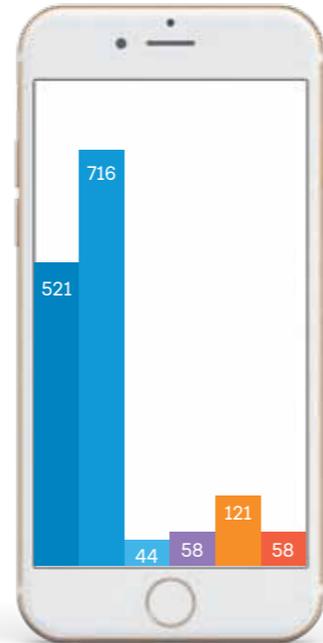
Our Work

We have taken 1,518 phone call enquires - that is an average of 126 per month

They were seeking legal advice for:



- 521 referred out
- 716 booked appts with us
- 44 provided information only
- 58 no longer required
- 121 conflicts
- 58 awaiting call backs at time of reporting

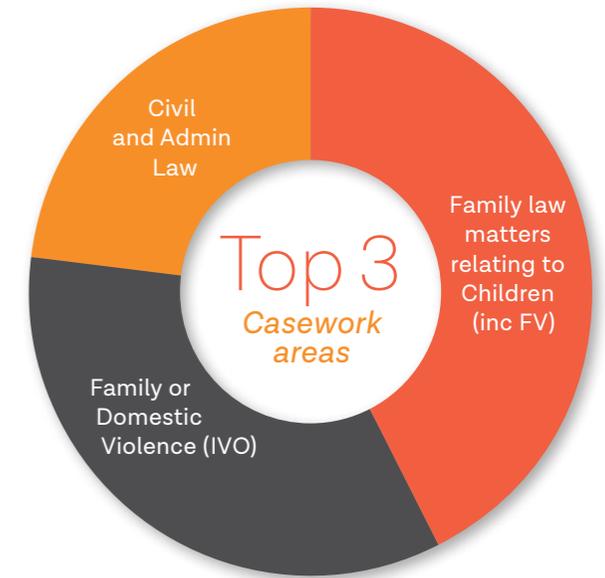
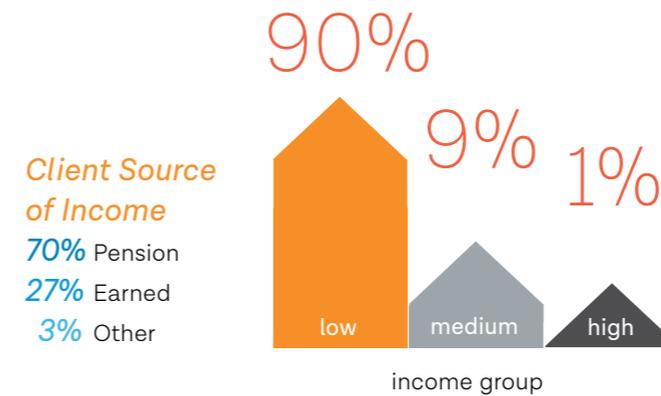


Assistance we have provided in our Generalist Service;

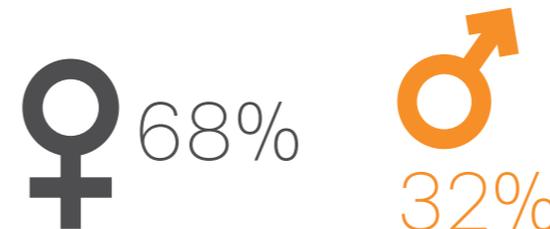
Total F2F Advices: 471
Total Telephone Advices: 111

743 Clients in total supported
Open cases: 743
Total: 348

Over 30% of our clients identified as having a disability



Over 5% of our clients did not speak English well or at all and 8% of clients we supported came from non-English speaking backgrounds



Over 10% of our clients identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (ATSI)

- 2% 0-17 y/o
- 35% 18-34 y/o
- 32% 35-49 y/o
- 21% 50-64 y/o
- 10% 65+ y/o

What we do
and where we go

Outreach Services

Face to Face appointments

(phone at other times)

Robinvale

Mallee Family Care, 33 Herbert Street, Vic

Monthly: Tuesdays and as needed.

Dareton

Mallee Family Care, 3-5 Davenport Street, NSW

Monthly: Tuesdays and as needed.

Wentworth

Mallee Family Care, 59 Darling Street, NSW

Monthly: Tuesdays and as needed.

Swan Hill

Mallee Family Care, 229 Beveridge Street, Vic

Weekly, Friday and as needed.

Intervention Order Support Service

Mildura Magistrates Court

Weekly: Monday, 9am - 4pm

Wentworth Local Court

Monthly: (only as required), 9am - 1pm

Robinvale Magistrates Court

Monthly: Tuesday, 9am - 1pm

Swan Hill Magistrates Court

Fortnightly: Wednesday, 9am - 2pm

Kerang Magistrates Court

Monthly: Thursday, 9am - 4pm

Hours of Operation

Face to Face and Telephone appointments available:

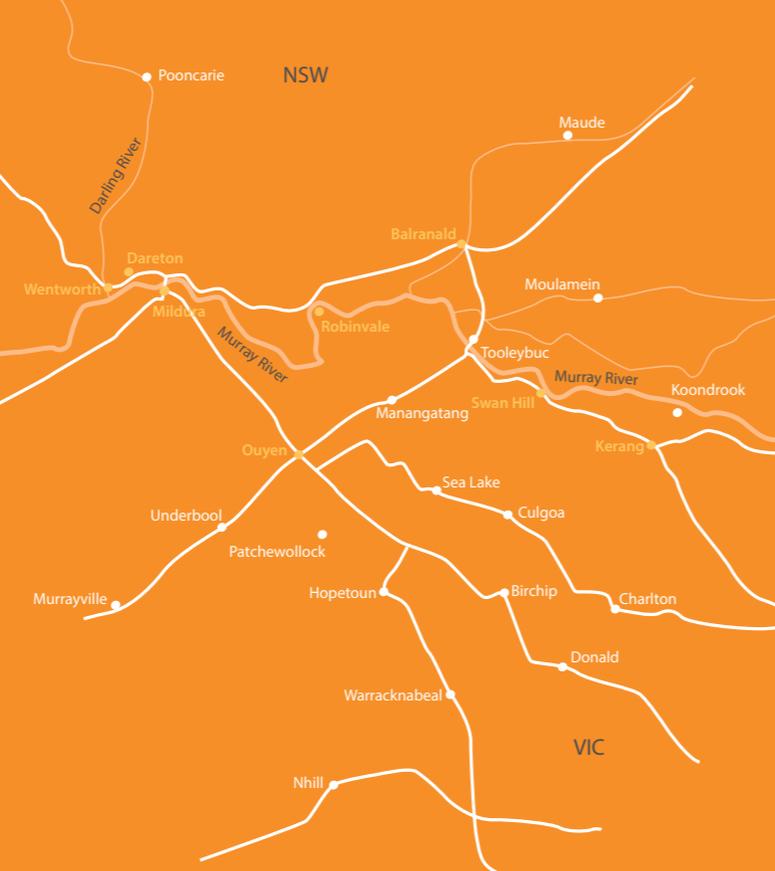
Haselgrove House, 122 Ninth Street, Mildura.

Free Call 1800 243 002.

Monday	afternoons
Tuesday	morning and afternoons
Wednesday	afternoons and after hours (after 5pm)
Thursday	morning and afternoons
Friday	afternoons

Family Relationship Centre, 105 Lemon Avenue, VIC

Weekly: (Mondays)



Family Violence - Commitment for the Mallee. Intervention Order Support Service (IOSS)

Our generalist service has continued to provide the Intervention Order Support Service across our Catchment Courts - Wentworth as needed, Mildura weekly, Robinvale and Kerang monthly and Swan Hill fortnightly. There has been an increase in Family Violence applications being made across our Catchment and we know there is a high incidence of family violence amongst our large catchment area. The service, due to the successful State Attorney-General 'Family Violence Duty Lawyer' grant in 2015 for 2 years (ending October 2017) had added on Kerang Court in our outreach to local Courts due to the number of family violence incidents and need for court support. With this funding we have also taken on contested IOSS matters to extend our clients access to justice - a very significant move.

Our IOSS service has continued to get busier and busier, we have again found there is approx. 50-50% police to non-police applications across our catchment, evidence to support our non-police applicant IOSS service, we are also finding our work with Victoria Police increases our support of the applicants they are working with also - more work to come in this area. Kylie Walsh has continued to run this program with dedicated social justice support and a love of travel - thank you Kylie! The IOSS program

also provides family violence appointments at the local domestic violence services, we will attend Court and provide family violence specific appointments within our own buildings that aim to intervene early in a victim's experience of violence.

MMCLS is very committed to preventing violence, to provide those primary prevention strategies by continuing to advocate for law and policy changes that directly challenges views on family violence and by undertaking community education and development work in our large catchment area.

Our Support for applicants in Family Violence Intervention Order matters;

26	Advices
90	Case Opens
25	Informations

Family Violence Legal Unit Report



MMCLS team with Teresa Jayet and guests Andrew Broad and Joanne Sheehan-Paterson.

2016-17 was implementation time for the Family Violence Legal Unit (FVLU). Although still a pilot funded through the Commonwealth's Women's Safety Package, we were excited to hear the project was extended another 12 months to 2019.

On the 7th April 2017 the FVLU celebrated its launch and 1st Birthday celebration. Guest speakers included Joanne Sheehan-Paterson, CEO Mallee Sexual Assault Unit-Mallee Domestic Violence Service (MSAU-MDVS), Teresa Jayet CEO Mallee Family Care and Andrew Broad Federal Member for Mallee (MP). MMCLS staff celebrated with stakeholders from MSAU-MDVS, VICPOL, SCHS, DHHS and Mildura Rural City Council.

Defining the FVLU was a goal in determining the point of difference of service provision within MMCLS, stakeholder programs and organisations. The approach was taken to support the safety of women and children in the legal system to guide the best practice and allocation of resources. As family law was shown to be the highest legal need of clients followed by family violence, FVLU staffing has reflected this. Robyn Croydon and Anna Sullivan were appointed roles in Mildura. Robyn has experience in family law and Anna in her generalist as well as family violence work created a team to meet the complexity of victim-survivors of family violence. Geoff Dunstan was appointed in Swan Hill, experienced in both family law and family violence legal issues.

The FVLU has experienced staff shortages but also benefitted when utilising the specialist areas of other legal staff within MMCLS. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kylie, Steven, Jeri and Anna for their valued support of the program and clients.

Community Legal Education has been a foundation of the program in building relationships with health & welfare service providers, police, educators and most importantly reaching out to vulnerable members of the community. MMCLS Community Legal Education worker, Allie Collyer, has been amazing in identifying opportunities and partnering with the FVLU team to present and meet with community. This has included reaching out to diverse communities including youth, people with disabilities, elders, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Emerging Communities as well as isolated areas within our catchment. The benefits of outreaching has been valuable in data showing the extent of legal services provided across our catchment.

Family violence creates many impacts on victims and survivors. Financial abuse is recognised as a form of family violence and recently has had widespread coverage in the media in the effect it has on

victims-survivors. The FVLU and Mallee Family Care's Financial Counselling teams work together in acknowledging this abuse. The following case study is an example of their great teamwork.

Legal staff noted the improvement in a client's personal growth and engagement through teamwork with financial counselling and MSAU-MDVS services. The client had been relocating across Australia to escape her violent partner and through her initial contact with financial counselling, FVLU and MSAU-MDVS became involved. This provided a wrap-around service to meet the inter-connecting issues affecting her future safety and independence. Legal and financial needs were met along with future goals of education, safety and well-being to allow the client and her child to feel supported to remain in the community.

The FVLU model is co-location and co-case management. Not only when working with clients but also working with other services and institutions. This has helped to identify need and sharing of the resources. VICPOL had raised concern with the increasing number of family violence incidents in Kerang and Cohuna. This was followed up by a joint response with Police, MSAU-MDVS, Financial Counselling and the FVLU to meet

with local services and schools to offer resources and support. Southern Mallee Primary Care Partnership and the Gannaawarra Local Agency Meeting members sponsored a screening of the 'Call Me Dad' documentary in Cohuna. This was successful in services and community coming together to find solutions. 'The FVLU are now increasing outreach appointments to Kerang & Birchip.

Partnerships and collaboration is essential to establishing clearer pathways and working relationships within Mallee Family Care and other organisations to create safety through the service system. Having the legal teams embedded in the Multi-Disciplinary Centre (MDC) of Mallee Sexual Assault Unit -Mallee Domestic Violence Services in Mildura and Swan Hill has built stronger relationships between staff, identifying better ways to ensure safety and good outcomes for victims-survivors of family violence.

This year in Swan Hill for Law Week a 'Best Interests of the Child' theme was chosen to provide information to Mallee Family Care, MSAU-MDVS, ChildFIRST and Victims Assistance Program staff. Presenters Kate Mitchell from the Family Relationship Centre discussed the effect on children when their parents are in

conflict after separating and Geoff Dunstan from the FVLU explained the Family Law's approach to children's best interests.

Over the next year the FVLU will continue with its focus on safety for victim-survivors of family violence in the legal system through empowerment of the community and being proactive in the recommendations being implemented from the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff and programs within Mallee Family Care's Community Services Directorate for their support of the FVLU project in sharing their time and resources. Also to VICPOL and MSAU-MDVS staff who have made a great team to work with, incorporating a shared outlook in the importance of relationships and working towards a 'community free from family violence'.

Our Data

As at the end of June 2017 the FVLU had provided legal support to 174 women who were victim-survivors of family violence. See following 2 pages.

Janet Bonython

Project Coordinator FVLU

Family Violence Legal Unit - Women's Safety Package

Recognition of Our First Year of Service.

152 Family law matters relating to children
 122 Family or domestic violence (IVO)
 82 Family or domestic violence

WSP Data

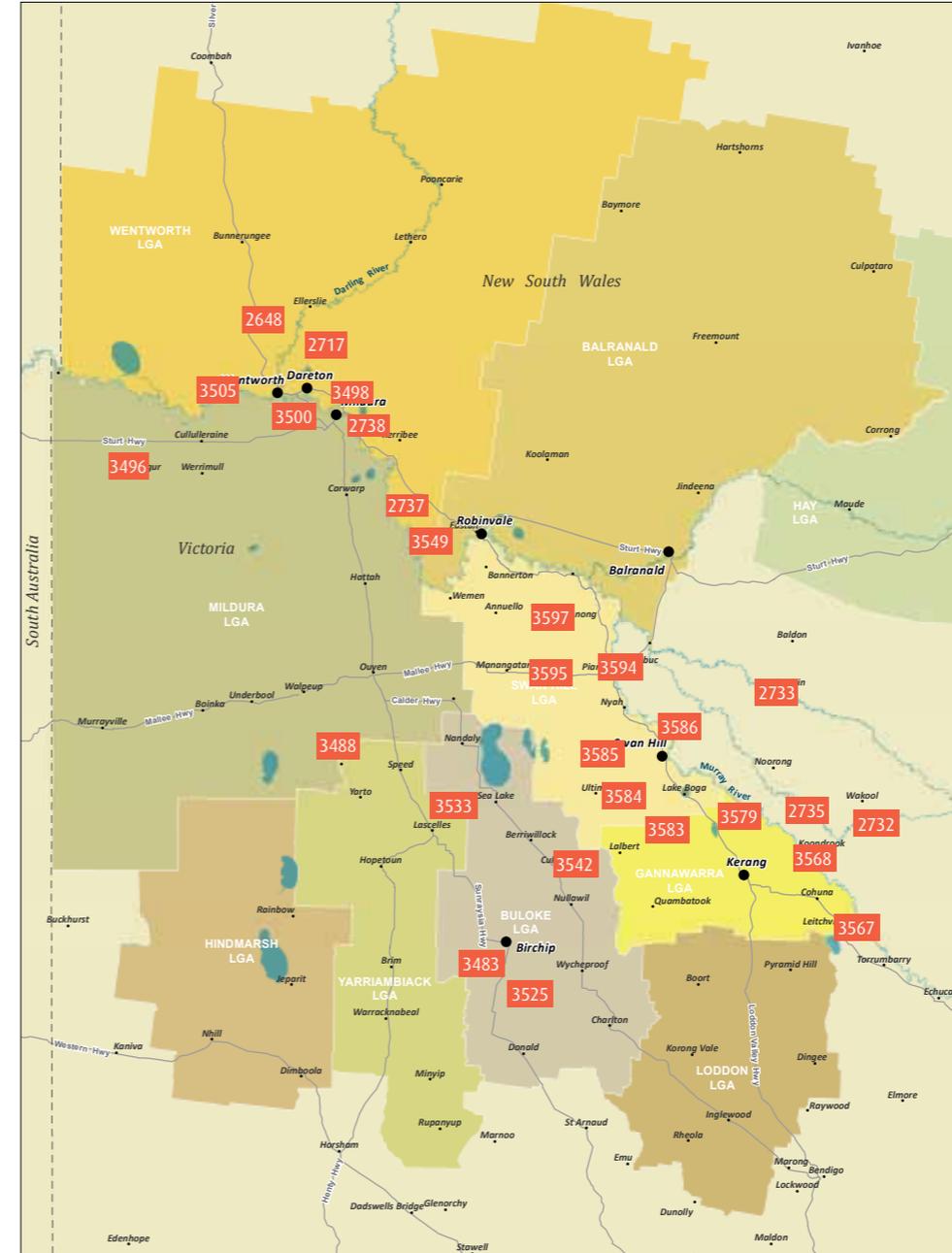
174 Total Clients
 154 Total Advices
 296 Children
 39 Total Cases Closed
 63 Total Case Opens

Legal Assistance we provide

Child Protection	13	Family Law Other	1
Family or Domestic Violence IVO	122	Personal Safety	2
Divorce	17	Parenting	1
Separation	7	Change Names or Birth Records	3
Child Residency	36	Acts Intended to cause Injury	1
Child Contact or Contact Order	53	Other Civil	1
Property in Marriage	23	VOCAT	1
Consumer Complaints	1	Inter-state IVO	1
Family or Domestic Violence	82	Family Law	1
Government Pension	2	Property	4
Credit & Debt	17	Parenting Issues	2
Relationship Issues	1	Infringements	1
Tenancy-Ending Tenancy	4	Child Protection Order/Appl	4
Parenting Plan	25	Paternity	6
Property Defacto	12	Employment	2
Overseas Jurisdiction	2	Sexual Assault	3
Separation Defacto	4	International Order	1
Child Support	5	Parenting order	1
Children's Matter	5	DNA testing	4
Motor Vehicle other	5	Government FOI	1
Child Recovery	2	Wills Probate Guardianship	1

Referrals From:

- 1 Financial Counselling
Mediation Service
Family Member
Victims Assistance Program
Centrelink
Neighbour
Friend
S.A. Domestic Violence
Centacare
Mental Health Service
- 2 DHHS- Child Protection
Sunraysia Mallee
Ethnic Community
Council
Victorian Legal Aid
- 3 Self
- 5 Police
- 6 Community Legal Service
- 7 Courts
- 8 Family Relationship Centre
- 12 Family Support Service
- 22 Other eg: family friends
- 125 Domestic Violence Support Service



Clients we have assisted by Location/Postcode

42% Sunraysia Region
 28% Swan Hill Region

- 5264 SA COASTAL REGION
- 2448 NSW COASTAL REGION
- 3435 REGIONS
- 3756 PAST
- 3844 MELBOURNE
- 3806

Catchment area of Murray Mallee Community Legal Service
 ● MFC Offices
 Total Area
 Hectares = 12,077,109 ha
 Square Kilometres = 120,771 km²
 0 20 40 Kilometres

This plan was prepared by SunRISE Mapping in April 2016. It has been compiled from a range of sources and no guarantee is given to its accuracy or reliability. For further information contact SunRISE Mapping phone (03) 5021 7492.

Legal Need in the Murray Mallee

Our first Interim Legal Needs Analysis (LNA) in 2015 was used to plan our service delivery in 2016 and again in 2017 we have ensured we have moved out of our largest LGA areas for legal education and information sessions. On the 27th June 2017 MMCLS met to discuss the new findings of the Legal Needs Analysis 2017 and explore how these could be used to direct the service's delivery into the future. The workshop involved a presentation of the updated legal needs data for the past three financial years (2014-15; 2015-16; 2016-17). It should be noted that due to the changes to the database (from CLSIS to CLASS) in March 2017 data has been difficult to finalise. The collected data to date was presented in three segments – service delivery across the catchment (geographic analysis), by target group (demographic analysis) and according to legal problem (legal matter analysis). On this day staff examined the findings of the data and explored as a large group the reasons for why these findings exist and the questions the data poses. Staff also spent time reflecting in small groups upon what these findings reveal about current service output, the service successes which should be celebrated and maintained and possible changes that could be made.



In the Murray Mallee region, legal need is complex. The isolation of the region along with the particular needs of diverse communities with high levels of disadvantage all compound to create a situation where legal need is high and requires a distinct, locally-driven response. Our legal needs report is still being worked on for our internal service planning, including stakeholder qualitative interviews, and will be finalised later in 2017.

We again thank Alexa Ridgway for her support in our LNA

Mallee Kids and the Law

Our youth focus

'Mallee Kids and the Law', a project funded by the State Attorney-General's Office aims to educate young people on a variety of legal issues around their rights and responsibilities. The project provides legal education, advice and links young people with the statewide service Youthlaw. The project is a great opportunity for young people in the Mallee to access legal assistance and information about issues that affect them.

Legal issues faced by young people can range from family violence and personal safety to workplace rights and responsibilities. Other issues include: cyberbullying, legal issues with underage consensual sex, dealing with fines, debt, rights and responsibilities when dealing with police. Funding for this project ends in October 2017, two years of this fantastic service, we are hoping to secure ongoing funding and are applying for this again!!

To date, Mallee Kids and the Law has provided advice sessions, conducted community education at local schools as well as casework to young people both at the MMCLS office on Ninth Street as well as outreach locations including at FLO Connect. In the second year of the project MMCLS expanded outreach to include advice and CLE sessions onsite at the Mildura campus of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE. The advice and CLE sessions have allowed MMCLS to give access to the law to young people who are becoming more independent, but would

otherwise not engage with legal assistance due to anxiety or unable to identify that a problem is potentially a legal problem. Please see CLE section for extensive list of activities.

In addition to attending the Youth Service Providers Network meetings, Mallee Kids and the Law has also attended meetings to discuss the project, working in partnership with a number of different organisations including; the Northern Mallee Local Learning and Employment Network's, FLO Connect, Victoria Police, Headspace, Consumer Affairs Victoria, Local Council, FLO Co-ordinators, Mildura Magistrates' Court and various local schools.

Mallee Kids and the Law has continued its commitment to engage with young people at FLO Connect. Topics that have been presented to the young people at FLO Connect to date include; sexting and the law, cyberbullying, criminal records, rights and responsibilities when dealing with police, age of consent, consumer rights and driving without a licence.



Partnership with Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

In Semester One, 2017 the Sunraysia Institute of TAFE and the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service forged a successful partnership to provide a free and confidential outreach legal advice service to SuniTAFE students and staff.

Throughout the semester, Jeri Fung (MMCLS Youth Solicitor) and Deb Broadhead (SuniTAFE Student Counsellor) regularly visited student classes, enabling Jeri to deliver interactive educational information sessions. This enabled students a better understanding of law pertaining to them and their interest areas, with considerable interest concerning general and sometimes complex law matters. Jeri's fortnightly outreach visits also enabled students and staff to obtain legal advice on campus and was widely utilised.

On 17th May, Allie Collyer (MMCLS – Community Legal Education Worker) and Jeri Fung held a very successful and well-attended Law Week display, offering a 'guess the lollies' competition; won by a very pleased SuniTAFE student.

Overall, Jeri's visits provided a great opportunity for all students to become more aware of their legal rights, and SuniTAFE's Student Support Services remains a pivotal point of referral to the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, and is pleased to be associated with this valuable community service.

Deb Broadhead

Student Counsellor, Student Support Services
Sunraysia Institute of TAFE

Mallee Kids and the Law at FLO Connect

The outreach program provided by Mallee Family Care continues to be a very successful and ongoing addition to the VCAL curriculum and activities that the young people at FLO Connect participate in. The program provides relevant, timely and legal information that has empowered our youth to make informative and educated decisions regarding the law and the impact particular issues may have on their lives.

The success is derived from expert delivery to the young people, in their educational setting, around issues and situations that are, or have previously affected them (social media, family law, alcohol and other drugs, age of consent just to name a few). These sessions are delivered in a variety of ways that capture the issues and concerns making learning practical and purposeful. Having a voice and being part of the choice of content and the delivery mode, has encouraged young people to participate and to be actively involved in each session, and as a result became familiar with up to date, expert advice. FLO Connect values this significant partnership as an integral part of providing legal information that can make a huge difference in the lives of our youth. Many thanks to Jeri and Lisa and Lisa-Maree for providing this opportunity.

Bernadette Warburton

Acting Assistant Principal

FLO Connect *engage, educate, aspire*

MMCLS guest here for Law Week



Law Week 2017

This year MMCLS hosted Liana Buchanan, Victoria's Commissioner for Children and Young People. Ms Buchanan delivered a presentation at our Ninth Street office about her role and her observations of how young people were dealing with institutions and what improvements could be made to the current system.

Also during Law Week 2017 our staff held a stall in the Mildura Central shopping Centre and the Mildura campus of Sunraysia Institute of TAFE to offer free legal health checks to visitors of the stall during Law Week. To make the checks more fun, we also offered a competition where visitors had to guess how many lollies were in a jar, with the closest estimate winning the jar. And the lollies.

Mallee Kids and the Law presented several sessions with Allie Collyer at St Joseph Secondary College on social media, cyberbullying and sexting to year 9 students and teachers. There were about 120 students who attended the session. The service has also attended and assisted with the promotion of the MMCLS stall at the Sunraysia Multicultural Festival in May 2017. Mallee Kids and the Law promoted the program.

Mallee Kids and the Law has provided advice and ongoing casework to approximately 27 young people and provided 878 young people/parents/school staff with legal education sessions and information. The Mallee Kids and the Law program is a really rewarding program to deliver and MMCLS would love to be able to continue the program into the future.

Jeri Fung

Youth Solicitor Mallee Kids and the Law

Health Education Legal Project (HELP)

Health Justice Partnership

The HELP was funded late 2016 for one year under the State Attorney-General CLC grant and has enabled our service to extend our existing family violence legal services to a more specialist role in a Health Justice Partnership with the Maternal and Child Health Service at the Mildura Rural City Council. Anna Sullivan took on the reigns of this project along with other staff of the service helping out as needed.

The HELP project aims to;

- provide new mothers with knowledge of their legal rights; not only around family violence and healthy relationships but in terms of general legal issues such as tenancy/ consumer/ credit and debt issues
- 'get' a lawyer out to 'where mothers are' eg hospitals, at maternal child health centres and possibly on home visits as deemed appropriate by and with the enhanced maternal child health nurse if possible and needed.
- provide reciprocal training for nurses and lawyers in legal and associated health approaches.

Anna along with Janet Bonython have attended the Mildura Rural City Council office to present legal information sessions to the Maternal Child Health Nurses (MCHN). The HELP information sessions have provided

an introduction to the law surrounding family violence and a discussion about the types of legal issues that are triggered by family violence and/or a breakdown in the relationship between parents where young children are involved.

The HELP project is intended to provide the opportunity for Maternal Child Health Nurses to become more comfortable with the language used by family violence support workers and knowing how and when to make an appropriate referral for legal advice and family violence support. MMCLS facilitated a discussion with MCHN about the types of issues that are triggered by the separation of parents including tenancy, family law, Child Support, Centrelink, property division, debts, family violence intervention orders.

Janet has been able to recommend relevant family violence training opportunities in the region such as Common Risk Assessment Framework, Financial Abuse, Technology Assisted Abuse and other legal education that MMCLS can offer. It is intended that the HELP information session will equip maternal child health nurses with the appropriate knowledge and language when identifying a new mother showing signs that they are experiencing family violence.

Anna Sullivan

Family Violence/Generalist Solicitor HELP

Case study #1

Our client has 2 young children including a 3 week old baby and is living alone in an isolated town in rural Victoria. The client had a Maternal & Child Health Nurse visit following the birth of the baby. The Health Nurse identified that the client had relocated from the city due to family violence and referred the client to MMCLS for legal advice about an intervention order and parenting arrangements. MMCLS identified that the client needed immediate support regarding the family violence and that the legal issues could be dealt with at a later stage. The client authorised MMCLS to work with the Health Nurse to arrange further support services for the them.

“

Referral process is easy...

Follow up is amazing

Feedback received from MCH staff in relation to the HELP project

”



A morning tea was held celebrating the role of Maternal and Child Health Nurses who worked for either the Mildura Rural City Council, or former Mildura Shire Council.



Photo courtesy QEC

Our Service attended 100 years of Celebration for MCH Services

Well done!

Mildura Family Relationship Centre Partnership

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

11 YFLO sessions under FRC/CLC Partnership offered

80 Advices (Family Law)

Our Support to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse groups

Our Partnership with SMECC

From September 2016 our service has provided monthly outreach advice appointments to the Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) in Mildura. We have also provided community legal education sessions to playgroup participants and staff around legal issues. We have participated in staff meetings and community events with a focus also on family violence and the law. MMCLS will continue to provide timely advice to referred clients either at our buildings or at SMECC and as flexibly required. We have set up a smooth referral email process for flagging client appointments. Our service has also benefitted from professional development sessions around being culturally aware and best practice approaches. Going forward the service is discussing further legal education sessions that can support newly arrived clients of SMECC, exciting times!

“ The MMCLS partnership with SMECC to make legal support more accessible to our clients has started to evolve beyond the initial plans of legal service visits to our facility. This partnership has led to an increase in SMECC staff and clients making appointments for client legal needs at the MMCLS office itself at flexible times. This is an even more positive direction to reach our aim for clients of not having barriers in accessing mainstream services. ”

Andrew Rankin

Program & Development Manager SMECC

Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice (GDLP)

Experience at MMCLS

The best thing about my time at the Murray Mallee Community Legal service has been the support of staff members and the opportunity to learn. As a person who after 4 years of university was terrified that I might not like practicing law, my interest in placement was to find out if practicing was something I wanted to do.

While at the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service I was given the perfect chance to try a little bit of everything and get a real idea of what type of work I'd like to do in the future.

While at the Service I was able to work on many different types of matters. Some of the areas of law I was involved in included Bankruptcy, Family Law, Succession, Criminal law, Superannuation and Family Violence. As a person, unsure of what area to go into, I found it great to be able to work on so many different matters in such a short timeframe.

I believe going to a Community Legal Centre was the best decision I could have made when trying to choose a placement location. I found it great to get involved in a wide

variety of matters and see such a diverse range of clients. Having grown up in the Wentworth area I found to look at local issues from a new perspective. Getting involved in issues of domestic violence really opened my eyes to how much of an issue it is in the area, and to how many people and services are around to help.

Another great thing about my placement was the opportunity to see matters progress from start to finish.

In several advices, I had the ability to sit in on an interview where a client divulges their concerns, assist in the research and problem solving of the matter and then see the advice given and an insight into how it will all be resolved.



After completing my placement at the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, I can confidently say that I do want to practice law, and that in fact a rural Community Legal Centre is where I would like to work in the future. While I was there every single office member was welcoming and supportive, and I learnt new things every day. From data entry to appearing in court I was given amazing opportunities and was pushed out of my comfort zone to learn new things.

I would recommend the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service to anyone wanting to do their placement, it has been a great experience and I have loved every minute of it.

Keely Duncan (centre front)

PLT Student

Combined B Laws and Legal Practice, B International Studies (5th Year)

Our Community Collaboration

MMCLS participates in the following;

- Two Rivers Interagency Group (TRIG) -Balranald Interagency Group (BIG)
- Robinvale Early Years Network (REYN)
- Local Aboriginal Justice Action Committees
- Mildura Court User Group
- Robinvale Service Providers Group
- Mallee Sexual Assault Unit/Mallee Domestic Violence Service Inc. (Committee of Management) MMCLS Manager Lisa-Maree is the President of this Committee.
- Links to the Mallee Family Violence Executive
- Attendance at the Northern Mallee Family Violence Network.
- Continued Link Virtual Outreach partner to the Women's Legal Service Victoria.
- The University of Melbourne Law School partner in the ARC Linkage Project grant titled "Harmful financial products: analysis of their impact and regulation"

MMCLS wish to thank the following services who have assisted us with Pro Bono work for clients:

Gilbert + Tobin (Sydney)
 Laura Johnston - Holmes List (Melbourne)
 Andrew Burnett - Svenson Barristers (Melbourne)
 Cornwall Stodart

Acknowledgements

The Murray Mallee Community Legal Service would like to thank the following for their continued support:

- Victoria Legal Aid
- Commonwealth Attorney-General Department
- Federation of Community Legal Centres
- National Association of Community Legal Centres
- Justice Connect
- Mallee Family Care
- Mildura Family Relationship Centre
- Mallee Sexual Assault Unit Inc & Mallee Domestic Violence Service
- Mildura Magistrates Court
- Maloney Anderson Legal
- Dunstan Law - Swan Hill
- The University of Melbourne Law School
- Consumer Action Law Centre

Our Casework

Case study #2

Fine Assistance - Not My Car

Our client sold one of her cars approximately 2 years ago. 6 months after the sale she started receiving alleged infringements for driving on toll ways. It was clear that the purchaser never submitted the registration documents to VicRoads, but our client no longer had a copy of the transfer document. Due to delay beyond our client's control the infringements had escalated to infringement warrants (fines with additional financial penalties) with the total value of owed fines being approximately \$4,000.00.

We assisted the client draft a statutory declaration in support of an application to revoke the infringements on the basis that she was not the driver. Civic compliance rejected our first application on the basis of insufficient evidence. We then sought copies of images depicting the alleged toll infringements. We made a second application and alerted civic compliance that the car registered to the relevant number plate was green and a particular model of car, but the images depicted a white car of a different model. Civic compliance revoked the infringement warrants (escalated components of the fines) and referred the matter back to Vic Police to reconsider the issuing of the fine.

Case study #3

Advocacy in 'power'

MMCLS assisted a client where they had sought solar panels to be installed for a new power system, but the trades person had installed too many and was threatening to commence proceedings against the client unless the client returned the panels at their own cost. The client wanted to keep the additional panels, but could not afford them initially. MMCLS assisted the client in negotiating a payment arrangement and prevented the client from being sued by the other party.

Case study #4

Advocacy - victim of fraud

MMCLS assisted a client in having a debt owed to two telecommunications companies waived on the basis that they are a victim of fraud. The debt in total is approximately \$10,000. One of the telecommunications companies has waived the debt. We are still assisting the client in having the other telecommunication debt waived on this basis.

Case study #5

Refugee family - our Advocacy

Our clients are the parents of 4 children and speak no English, the children are learning. One of the children needed a specialist medical appointment and treatment not available in Mildura. The client used the Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) to transport her and her daughter to the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne for an appointment and treatment with a specialist doctor.

The client arrived at the Royal Children's Hospital and was seen by the doctor who recommended treatment by the resident Physiotherapist. The Physiotherapist signed off on the VPTAS documents following treatment and the client returned to Mildura with VPTAS. VPTAS then advised the client that it would not cover the cost of travel for physiotherapy services and the client was sent an Invoice for \$1,085.98. The agency in Mildura responsible for coordinating VPTAS was questionable in its approach for recovering the money from the client - entering the client into a payment plan deducting \$50 per fortnight from her Centrelink payments.

It was at this point MMCLS met with the client. Instructions were given via an interpreter. MMCLS arranged for the Centrelink payments to stop and contacted the Mildura agency and DHS regarding a review of the matter. MMCLS obtained a supporting letter from the doctor and made a submission to DHS for the matter to be reviewed. The review was accepted by DHS, the travel was funded and the client was reimbursed the payments already made.

“

Excellent service.
Everybody was
polite and friendly

Amazing and
very helpful.
Thank you!”

Very pleased
with the service
thank you

*Feedback received from
clients after case closure.*

”

Community Legal Education (CLE)

Connecting the Law and our Communities

As noted in our last annual report, the interim Legal Needs Analysis continued to drive our community legal education (CLE). We aimed to focus our activities toward people with vulnerabilities in our community – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, seniors, youth, people living with disabilities and those living in isolated communities.

The session numbers below show that we have definitely achieved our aim in reaching our targeted demographics:

Aboriginal community	13
Seniors	14
People with disabilities	6
Youth	19
Culturally & linguistically diverse (including 10 outreach activities)	11
Isolated communities	19

Overall, it has been another excellent year for CLE. Although activity numbers might be slightly down on the previous year, there has been more travel involved and a number of time intensive workshops delivered.

Collaboration

Community workers practicing in isolated locations often do not have access to the training opportunities that their city equivalents do. We aimed to address this gap by seeking out experts in topics that would professionally enrich local workers by bringing free workshops to our local areas. We had the Office of

the eSafety Commissioner deliver sessions in Mildura, Swan Hill and Kerang on “Technology Facilitated Abuse and its relationship to family violence”. These workshops had attendances of 44, 20 and 8 respectively and attendees were very appreciative of the sessions being provided in person on such an important topic. We also collaborated with Victoria Legal Aid’s Equity Law Program to deliver information sessions in Mildura and Swan Hill on discrimination. These workshops were also very well attended with 44 attending in Mildura and 20 in Swan Hill.

Attendees were very appreciative of the sessions being provided in person on such an important topic

84 Community Legal Education Sessions provided this year – 40 outside of the Mildura area!

Our role is to facilitate the sessions, promote widely to our extensive networks, take RSVP’s and assist with any follow up. We also deliver a short information session about the services we provide at each session. There is a large amount of work involved, however we are committed to upskilling the workforce in our catchment area for better outcomes for clients in our communities.

We collaborated with law firm Gilbert+Tobin to provide two Aboriginal Wills Clinics in Mildura. These were held at the Mallee District Aboriginal Service in October 2016 and after a successful and rewarding first visit, we were able to secure the pro-bono services of Gilbert + Tobin again in April 2017. These clinics resulted in over 20 people from the Aboriginal community having wills and powers of attorney completed at no charge. The workload involved for our service in the organisation of

these clinics was very high, however it was a very important service that we assisted to provide. We thank Gilbert + Tobin for their pro-bono services especially the wonderful lawyers who came from Sydney and Melbourne to provide their expertise.

We’ve been everywhere man...

When collating our statistics for the locations we had delivered CLE activities for the year, we were delighted to see that almost half of the sessions were located outside of the Mildura LGA. Our service visited Balranald, Wentworth, Dareton and Hay in NSW, Ouyen, Sea Lake, Birchip, Kerang, Cohuna, Robinvale, Swan Hill and Hopetoun. The travel involved in visiting some of these location is significant and we generally seek to deliver more than one session in a day to make the trip worthwhile.

For example, in Birchip we were asked to deliver an evening community

session on issues affecting youth. We sought out contacts at the local school to see if they were interested in some CLE sessions on the same day. The result was 2 sessions for students, 1 for school staff and the evening session. ***I spoke for approximately 5 hours that day so the vocal chords were certainly stretched however we were able to reach a large sector of this isolated community and it was an exhausting but very rewarding visit.***

We visited Hay NSW for the first time to deliver 4 sessions to high school students on Sexting and the Law. I spoke to over 120 students in the sessions which were very well received with many students noting that they had no idea of the serious legal consequences of these behaviours. Again, the vocal chords got a good workout and after speaking for almost 4 hours straight so there was no singing in the car on the 3 hour drive back to Mildura.

NSW activities

This year we have delivered 14 CLE activities in our NSW catchment area, including 8 in Dareton. Two of these events were in collaboration with NSW Legal Aid's Money Counts project where we worked together to provide community information events to the Aboriginal community.

Networking

Fostering networks in our communities is a crucial part of the CLE role. I attend many networking meetings to ensure that community workers are aware of our services and how to refer clients to us, create better understanding of the assistance MMCLS can provide,

Support for our Elderly – CLE comment;

*Dear Allie,
Thanks for a great session yesterday,
I know Loris and the group really appreciated it, you are lovely to work with.*
Bertilla Campbell
Dementia Consultant | Alzheimer's
Australia Vic

This year we have delivered 14 CLE activities in our NSW catchment area

We discussed the importance of being safe online with Year 5/6 students at Wentworth Primary School, the sessions in Hay noted above, attended community events and spoke to several groups of Aboriginal youth about cybersafety.

One of the challenges of delivering services cross border is that legislation differs greatly from Victoria to NSW and this topic is no exception. It can be very confusing for young people who may live in one state and attend school in another to get their heads around the differences.

find out updates of other services and their programs and also look for collaboration opportunities. The value of this networking cannot be underestimated and it has resulted in many CLE opportunities. The relationships built with other service providers is very important and an ongoing commitment of our service.

General CLE Comments from participants;

- Thank you – clear, concise and good overview
- The education session was excellent.
- Thank you, will make a change to my practices as a result of this education
- Consent is everything
- Always ask before doing anything sexual
- If someone says no, don't do it.
- I learnt about the consequences of sexting
- Don't be dumb with technology
- Legal consequences are extremely serious and potentially life lasting.

“

I learnt about the consequences of sexting

Consent is everything

If someone says no, don't do it

Don't be dumb with technology

General CLE Comments from participants;

This year I have travelled many country roads, had very rewarding engagement with the communities we service, met many interesting characters along the way, been amazed by painted silos, listened to many hours of true crime podcasts, eaten just a few lollies and talked and talked (and talked). The saying goes “if you have a job you love, you'll never work a day in your life” and this is how I feel about my role. I am so very lucky and thank MMCLS for their support in enabling me to fulfil this very important cog in our working machine.

Allie Collyer

Community Legal Education Worker

”

Community Legal Education Presentations 2016/2017

Where	Topic	Audience	Location	Date
Community Event	NAIDOC	ATSI	Mildura	4 Jul 2016
U3A	Intro to MMCLS and MFC	Seniors	Mildura	12 Jul 2016
Community Event	NAIDOC	ATSI	Dareton NSW	13 Jul 2016
Vision Australia	Funerals & Insurance	Seniors/Disability	Mildura	20 Jul 2016
RSL Community Group	Powers of Attorney/Elder Abuse	Seniors	Mildura	1 Aug 2016
MFC Carer Mental Health Support Group	Intro to MMCLS and FVLU	Carers	Mildura	9 Aug 2016
Community event	Paying for funerals	ATSI	Dareton NSW	9 Aug 2016
Noogar's Neegarna & Tulkalana	Intro to MMCLS	Aboriginal women	Dareton NSW	10 Aug 2016
St Joseph's College	Cybersafety & Sexting	Yr9 students and Parents	Mildura	10 Aug 2016
Red Cliffs Club	Bullying in the workplace	Workers	Red Cliffs	15 Aug 2016
Red Cliffs Club	Bullying in the workplace	Workers	Red Cliffs	16 Aug 2016
Sunraysia Community Health Open Day	General Legal Information	General community	Mildura	26 Aug 2016
My Time Playgroup	Social Media & Sexting	Parents/carers	Mildura	5 Sept 2016
Forward Planning Forum	Powers of Attorney	Seniors/disability	Mildura	6 Sept 2016
La Trobe University	Hunting Ground Panel/sexual Assault on campuses	Students & staff	Mildura	9 Sept 2016
Mildura Specialist School	General MMCLS	Staff	Mildura	15 Sept 2016
Mallee Track Health	Powers of Attorney	Seniors	Ouyen	19 Sept 2016
Mildura District Aboriginal Services	Wills & Powers of Attorney	Aboriginal Elders	Mildura	20 Sept 2016
Mallee Track Health	Powers of Attorney	Seniors	Sea Lake	27 Sept 2016
Dementia Forum	General legal information	Seniors/disability	Mildura	27 Sept 2016
Mildura District Aboriginal Services	Wills clinic with Gilbert + Tobin	Aboriginal Elders	Mildura	7 Oct 2016
Hay Memorial High School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 7 students	Hay NSW	12 Oct 2016
Hay Memorial High School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 8 students	Hay NSW	12 Oct 2016
Hay Memorial High School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 9 students	Hay NSW	12 Oct 2016
Hay Memorial High School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 10 students	Hay NSW	12 Oct 2016

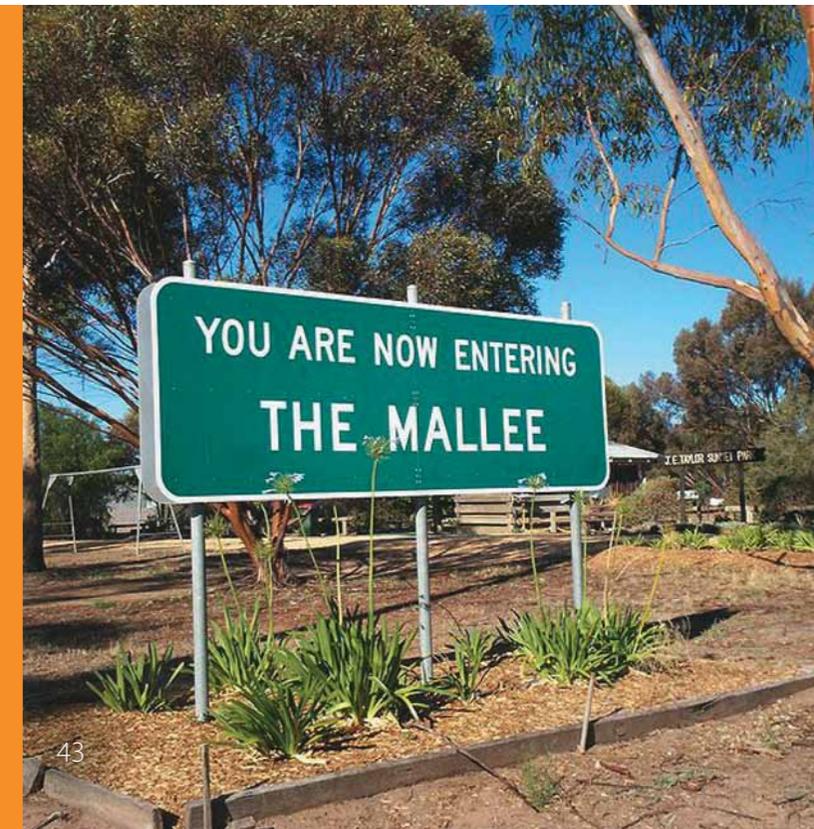
MFC Mildura	Technology Facilitated Abuse & Relationship to Family Violence	Community workers	Mildura	18 Oct 2016
Kerang Community Centre	Technology Facilitated Abuse & Relationship to Family Violence	Community workers	Kerang	18 Oct 2016
MFC Swan Hill	Technology Facilitated Abuse & Relationship to Family Violence	Community workers	Swan Hill	19 Oct 2016
Koorie Community Justice Info Day	General legal information	ATSI	Swan Hill	2 Nov 2016
Go Orange event	Family violence	MFC staff	Mildura	9 Dec 2016
La Trobe University	General MMCLS	Wellbeing Staff	Mildura	11 Nov 2016
FLO Connect	Mallee Kids & the Law	Staff	Mildura	14 Dec 2016
MFC Mildura	Responding to Elder Abuse	Community workers	Mildura	15 Nov 2016
Robinvale P12	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 7 students	Robinvale	16 Nov 2016
Robinvale P12	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 8 students	Robinvale	16 Nov 2016
Robinvale P12	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 9 & 10 students	Robinvale	16 Nov 2016
White Ribbon Day	Family violence	MFC staff	Mildura	21 Nov 2016
Community meeting	Social media and sexting	General community	Robinvale	30 Nov 2016
Coomealla High	Cyberbullying & sexting	Aboriginal girls	Dareton NSW	30 Nov 2016
Coomealla High	White Ribbon Event	High school students	Dareton NSW	7 Dec 2016
Storm Recovery Forum	General legal information	Community affected by storm event	Red Cliffs	20 Dec 2016
Storm Recovery Forum	General legal information	Community affected by storm event	Merbein	21 Dec 2016
SuniTAFE Market Day	General legal information	University students	Mildura	30 Jan 2016
DHHS Roadshow	General legal information	General community	Sea Lake	14 Feb 2017
DHHS Roadshow	General legal information	General community	Hopetoun	15 Feb 2017
DHHS Roadshow	General legal information	General community	Ouyen	16 Feb 2017
DHHS staff meeting	Intro to MMCLS	Workers	Mildura	23 Feb 2017
Robinvale Maternal & Child Health Playgroup	Social media	Parents	Robinvale	7 Mar 2017
U3A	Wills & Powers of Attorney	Seniors	Mildura	7 Mar 2017
La Trobe University	General MMCLS	University students	Mildura	15 Mar 2017
Dareton Family Day	General legal information	ATSI	Dareton NSW	16 Mar 2017
Court Network Volunteers	General MMCLC	Court volunteers	Mildura	16 Mar 2017

Where	Topic	Audience	Location	Date
Irymple Secondary College	Intro to MMCLS and Mallee Kids and the Law	Wellbeing staff	Irymple	16 Mar 2017
Centacare	Social media & sexting	Community workers	Mildura	21 Mar 2017
MFC Mildura	Discrimination workshop with VLA	Community workers	Mildura	22 Mar 2017
MFC Swan Hill	Discrimination workshop with VLA	Community workers	Swan Hill	22 Mar 2017
Hopetoun Probus Club	Powers of Attorney & Elder Abuse	Seniors	Hopetoun	3 Apr 2017
Alzheimer's Australia	Powers of Attorney	Seniors/disability	Mildura	5 Apr 2017
Bring Your Bills day	General MMCLS	ATSI	Dareton NSW	6 Apr 2017
Wills Clinic	Wills Clinic	Aboriginal seniors	Mildura	27 Apr 2017
Respectful Relationships School Forum	Intro to MMCLS	Teachers	Ouyen	28 Apr 2017
Swan Hill Library	Cybersafety with eSafety Commissioner	Parents/carers	Swan Hill	2 May 2017
FLO Connect	Sexual consent & Age of Consent	High school students	Swan Hill	3 May 2017
Multicultural Festival	General legal information	CALD community	Mildura	6 May 2017
Birchip P12 School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 7/8/9 students	Birchip	8 May 2017
Birchip P12 School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	Year 10/11/12 students	Birchip	8 May 2017
Birchip P12 School	Cyberbullying & Sexting	School staff	Birchip	8 May 2017
Birchip Business & Learning Centre	Social media, cyberbullying & sexting	Community	Birchip	8 May 2017
MMCLS & MDVS-MSAU	Best Interests of the Child	Community workers	Swan Hill	16 May 2017
Commissioner for Children & Young People	Children's Rights in 2017	Community workers	Mildura	17 May 2017
Arts Law Workshops	Copyright	Community	Mildura	18 May 2017
Mildura Central Display	General legal information	Community	Mildura	19 May 2017
Dareton Touch Rugby	Social media safety	Aboriginal youth	Dareton NSW	22 May 2017
Disability Expo	General legal information	Youth with disability & carers	Mildura	23 May 2017
Disability Expo	Cybersafety, sexting	Teaching & wellbeing staff	Mildura	23 May 2017
Sisters Day Out	Family violence & general legal information	Aboriginal women	Swan Hill	30 May 2017
MFC Balranald scoping	General legal information	Community workers	Balranald NSW	1 June 2017

Wentworth Public School	Cybersafety & cyberbullying	Year 5 & 6 students	Wentworth NSW	5 June 2017
Friends of Alzheimers	Powers of Attorney	Disability/Seniors	Mildura	7 June 2017
Centrelink Roadshow	General legal information	General community	Cohuna	14 June 2017
Centrelink Roadshow	General legal information	General community	Kerang	15 June 2017
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	General legal information	Seniors	Mildura	15 June 2017
Little Day Out	General legal information	Parents	Mildura	16 June 2017
Red Cliffs Community Centre	Protecting yourself from Scams	Seniors	Red Cliffs	20 June 2017

Board Members

Ross Lake OAM **President**
 Marie Schlemme OAM **Vice President**
 Larry O'Connor **Treasurer**
 Archdeacon Michael Hopkins
 Jim Kirkpatrick
 Julia Morgan
 Michelle Oates
 Marg Thompson
 Dr John Cooke
 Rachel White (retired - 18/5/2017)
 Keith Richards (retired - 1/6/17)
 Chris Riordan (retired - 10/6/17)
 Max Noyce (retired - 26/6/17)



Source of Income Received from Other Bodies - MFC

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

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



National Association of Community Legal Centres
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Email: naclc@clc.net.au
Web: www.naclc.org.au
Mail: PO Box A2245 Sydney South NSW 1235 Australia

1 August 2017

Dear Funder

Reporting from the CLASS database

I write to you on behalf of the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) regarding the Community Legal Assistance Services System (CLASS), which is the main database used by 160 community legal centres (CLCs), family violence prevention legal services (FVPLSs) and some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services (ATSILS) across Australia.

In short, any CLC, FVPLS or ATSIL that uses CLASS will not be able to deliver any form of reports from the database before the end of September 2017. As you may already know, services were until recently using a database called CLSIS, which was provided by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department (AGD). AGD made the decision to decommission CLSIS. NACLC stepped into the role to develop and implement CLASS before CLSIS was decommissioned.

The CLASS project is an exciting opportunity to modernise an obsolete database and create better flexibility for individual users, while still maintaining national consistency in the collection of data. However, the CLASS project has been beset by challenging timeframes and a limited budget with the delivery of some of the key features of the database running behind schedule and still being developed.

Individual CLCs, FVPLS and ATSILS had their data migrated from CLSIS to CLASS over February and March 2017 and started using CLASS shortly thereafter. We had hoped that a reporting function would have been fully implemented by now. On current project timeframes, a limited form of reporting will be implemented by end September 2017, with more comprehensive reporting functions delivered by end November 2017.

This means that, due to no fault of their own, CLCs, FVPLSs and ATSILS will not be able to meet reporting obligations they may have arising from a funding agreement until these functions are fully developed and implemented. NACLC takes full responsibility and is working to have these functions delivered as soon as possible.

Please contact me at the above address if any further information is required.

Yours faithfully

Nassim Arrage
Chief Executive Officer
National Association of Community Legal Centres

Organisation's Certification

I certify that:

- 1 These financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Murray Mallee Community Legal Service as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1.
2. The financial statements are in accordance with the funding agreement, applicable Australian Accounting standards and are based on proper accounts and records.
3. The Organisation has maintained complete and proper accounting records in respect of the Murray Mallee Community Legal Service.
4. The funds received by Murray Mallee Community Legal Service from Victoria Legal Aid under the funding agreement have been properly spent in accordance with the funding agreement.

Glen Hornsby

Company Secretary

11 July 2017

AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATION

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

Financial Year Period: 1/7/2016 to 30/6/2017

I hereby certify that:

- a) I am not a principal, member, shareholder, officer, employee or accountant of the Organisation or of a related body corporate as defined in section 9 of the Corporations Act 2001
- b) In my opinion, the attached financial statements which comprise a Statement of Financial Position, a Statement of Comprehensive Income (previously known as Statement of Financial Performance) and Notes to the Financial Statements of the above-mentioned Organisation, and, if general purpose reports are provided, a Statement of Cash Flows, for the stated Financial Year Period are:
 - i. Based on proper accounts and present a true and fair view of the Organisation's financial position and financial performance in accordance with applicable Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia, and
 - ii. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the Agreement between Commonwealth of Australia, Victoria Legal Aid and Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, Mallee Family Care Extension of Agreement to 30 June 2017, a copy of which has been made available to me, in relation to the provision of community legal services.
- c) The fourth quarter CLSIS Funds Report, containing details of the Organisations transactions for the financial year, including audit adjustments, and the Organisation's grant position at the beginning and end of the financial year is provided in respect of funds provided in accordance with Terms and Conditions of the Agreement referred to in b.ii. above for all Funding Categories.

This is an unqualified audit report.

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

Full Name: Kathie Teasdale

Name of the Company: RSD Audit

ABN Number: 85 619 186 908

Registered Auditor: Yes

Registration No: 453 006

Signature:

Date: 24th October 2017



Income and Expenditure

2016/17 Financial Year

Consolidated	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
<i>Net Surplus/Deficit from previous year</i>			
Surplus/Deficit from previous year		56,639	(505)
Approved Expenditure from Surplus		-	-
Net Surplus Deficit from previous year		56,639	(505)
<i>CLSP Income</i>			
Commonwealth		557,498	514,074
State		179,021	178,843
Service Generated Income		4,095	2,312
Total CLSP Income		740,614	695,229
CLSP General Purpose Income (Total CLSP Income plus Net Surplus / Deficit)		797,253	694,724
<i>CLSP Expenses</i>			
Salaries		467,623	446,702
Superannuation		43,578	42,102
On Costs		10,579	9,406
Rent		14,712	4,006
Repairs and Maintenance		2,920	2,255
Other Premises Costs		10,663	10,930
Staff Training		12,994	7,133
Staff Recruitment		10,537	15,100
Communications		9,451	7,848
Office Overheads		48,800	38,549
Insurance		6,103	6,153
Finance, Audit & Accounting Fees		330	-
Library, Resources & Subscriptions		803	2,082
Travel		30,926	21,488
Programming and Planning		26,234	24,331
Client Disbursements		-	-
Leases		-	-
Minor Equipment		-	-
Depreciation		-	-
Other		-	-

Income and Expenditure continued

2016/17 Financial Year

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Salary and Related Expenses		521,780	498,210
Total Operating Expenses		174,471	139,875
Total CLSP Expenses		696,252	638,085
Surplus/Deficit for Current Year		44,362	57,144
<i>Other Income</i> (Not to be added to CLSP Funds Surplus/Deficit)			
Total Funds received from Other Bodies		-	-
Total Funds received from Other Bodies for non-CLSP CLSIS Activities		-	-
Less Actual Capital Expenditure in Current Year			
		-	-
Surplus /Deficit for Next Year		101,001	56,639

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Balance Sheet
as at 30 June 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Current Assets			
National Australia Bank Operating Account		187,658	223,814
Total Current Assets		187,658	223,814
Non-Current Assets			
Fixed Assets			
Furniture and Equipment		16,866	16,866
Less Provision for Depreciation		16,866	16,866
Total Non-Current Assets		-	-
Total Assets		187,658	223,814
Current Liabilities			
Creditors			
Accrued Wages		15,317	12,946
Employee Entitlements			
Annual Leave		32,912	37,504
Long Service Leave		15,083	15,250
Total Current Liabilities		63,312	65,700
Non-Current Liabilities			
Employee Entitlements			
Long Service Leave		18,467	13,063
Total Non-Current Liabilities		18,467	13,063
Total Liabilities		81,779	78,763
Net Assets		105,879	145,051
Accumulated Funds			
Retained Surplus/(deficit) at Beginning of Year		61,517	4,373
Surplus/(deficit) for Year		44,362	57,144
		105,879	61,517

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Cashflow Statement
Year Ended 30 June 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash inflows (outflows) from operating activities			
Receipts			
Operating grants from Government		810,171	762,209
Other income		4,505	2,543
		814,675	764,752
Payments			
Payments to employees		(518,765)	(471,821)
Payments to suppliers and providers		(191,919)	(153,863)
GST paid		(56,614)	(55,535)
		(767,297)	(681,218)
Net cash from operating activities	(a)	47,378	83,533
Net increase(decrease) in cash for year		47,378	83,533
Cash at beginning of financial year			
		140,280	56,747
Cash at end of financial year			
		187,658	140,280
(a) Reconciliation of net cash from operating activities to surplus from operating activities:-			
Net (deficit) surplus for the year		44,362	57,144
Add (Less):			
Increase (Decrease) in employee provisions		645	23,716
Increase (Decrease) in creditors		2,371	2,673
Net cash from operating activities		47,378	83,533

The accompanying notes form part of these financial statements

Staff members of the Family Violence Legal Unit celebrate the Mildura centre's first anniversary with Member for Mallee Andrew Broad (centre) yesterday. The centre helped more than 100 clients with their ongoing legal issues in its first year.



Grants help legal centre
 THE Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre has received two grants totalling \$152,000 for the operation of its services.
 The Victorian Government has announced a grant of \$100,000 for the Community Legal Centre Assistance Fund and \$52,174 for the Family Violence Duty Lawyer Fund.
 Attorney-General Martin Pakula said the grants funded a range of key front-line resources and programs including legal support for family violence; improved access to justice for newly arrived and refugee communities; and services for regional and remote youth.

Family violence team to celebrate first birthday

A PILOT program that offers free legal advice and assistance to victims of family or domestic violence has celebrated 12 months of operation in the Mallee this week.
 A joint partnership between Mallee Family Care's (MFC) Murray Mallee Community Legal Service (MMCLS) and the Mallee Sexual Assault Unit (MSAU) and Mallee Domestic Violence Service (MDVS), the program was made possible thanks to funding from the Federal Government's Women's Safety Package.
 Named the Family Violence Legal Unit, the initiative was established in mid 2014 following the funding with Mallee one of 12 areas funded, picked for the pilot program across Australia.
 "The Mallee was chosen largely because of our high family violence rates," MMCLS principal manager Community Services and Murray Mallee Community Legal Service, Lisa Stevens explained. "Each location



• MILESTONE: Mallee Family Care CEO, Teres Jayet, and Mallee Family Care general manager, Lisa Stevens, helped mark 12 months since the launch of the Family Violence Legal Unit.

Legal program turns one

By Daniela White
 dwhite@sunraysia.abc.com.au

A PILOT program that has helped more than 100 victims of family violence in the region has celebrated a year of service.

Family Violence Legal Unit is a specialist unit offering tailored and wide-ranging support to victims of family violence and their families.

Funding links health and law

MALLEE Family Care has recently been awarded almost \$50,000 to provide more family violence support services to the community.

Mallee Family Care was one of 26 successful applicants to share in \$1.3 million of the State Government's Community Legal Centre Family Violence Fund grants.

The \$47,577 grant will be used to deliver

legal services to work together around family violence issues for clients.

"We've been able to co-locate lawyers within the Mildura and Swan Hill Mallee Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Service, so they are able to provide advice and case work for family violence victims for whatever supports they need," she said.

"Within a year of intensive case management, we've been able to support 105 clients with their ongoing legal issues. Within

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Funding cuts despair

Birthday marred by threat to service

By Daniela White

Specialist legal service in a 400km radius of Mildura, servicing the 11-state area.

"Every year our service works with vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community," she said.

"Ninety per cent are on social security income support. It's the most vulnerable members of our community who will be affected."

The cuts would mean the centre would lose a solicitor, who currently works with hundreds of clients seeking intervention orders for family violence matters as well as for generalist legal advice.

The solicitor under threat attends courts across MMCLS's catchment area for applicants of intervention orders.

Federation of Community Legal Centres CEO Seana McHugh

said the cuts would put at risk people escaping family violence.

"That intervention order service is so people escaping family violence can get orders to feel safe," she said.

"Without the legal assistance to actually obtain that order there's no doubt that people escaping family violence will be at risk and in danger."

"Community legal centres are already experiencing over whelming and crushing demand."

"Already across Australia we turn away 150,000 people a year - we can't reach everyone who needs help now and these cuts will mean we will have to turn even more people away."

"This prime minister has talked a lot about a commitment to family violence... so it simply does not make sense for these cuts to go ahead."



Mallee Sexual Assault Unit and Domestic Violence Service CEO Joanne Sheridan, Murray Mallee Community Legal Service principal solicitor Steve Elliott, and general manager of Community Services Mallee Family Care Lisa Stevens.



Lisa Stevens, Peter Noble and Teres Jayet meet to discuss a partnership between Victoria Legal Aid and Mallee Family Care.

Partnership to boost access to justice

By Tyrone Dalton
 tdalton@sunraysia.abc.com.au

SUNRAVNSA residents will receive more legal aid in Mildura.

Thursday's meeting between Mallee Family Care (MFC) and Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) followed another earlier this year to identify the needs of private lawyers and community service providers in the justice sector.

The meetings have been held to identify gaps so VLA can deliver services that complement existing providers in Mildura and out-
 (left) Mallee Family Care director of community services Lisa Stevens (right) MFC executive director Teres Jayet and VLA director of innovation and service Peter Noble.

"We can do more work with the private profession, but also legal service providers, to build the capabilities of those lawyers to deliver and work in this region," he said.

Another area was to target areas of law that have been neglected, such as the civil law arena of mental health, advocacy, bereavement and child protection.

Sir Noble said the Northern Mallee Community Partnership was a shining example of a collective impact approach to resolving difficult issues.

"I don't think there are many examples of collaboration in Victoria where a community partnership has evolved into this space," he said.

"If justice plays a role within that arena then you will drive change."

Every person you are working with has a legal issue. It's our job to identify it and help people.

MFC executive director Teres Jayet said the partnership provided better opportunities for the community by offering a model that offered more than one level of service.

"She said family law, family violence, tenancy, disputes and mental health issues were all identified as needing assistance from legal aid."

"MFC director of community services Lisa Stevens said legal issues affected debtors and many were unaware of some issues in their lives that presented legalities."

"Every person you are working with has a legal issue. It's our job to identify it and help people," she said.

"The more equities we have to access legal assistance, the greater chance it is from and who is delivering it and how, its beneficial for the community."

Ms Stevens and many people often come in for advice on one legal issue, but needed assistance on more legal matters.

She said Murray Mallee Community Legal Centre's solicitors worked across South Australia, New South Wales and Victorian law because of its geographical location.

*We would like to dedicate this
Annual Report to our 'Kylie Walsh'*

22 February 1971 - 15 July 2017

The service was devastated by the sudden tragic passing of our valued co-worker Kylie Walsh on 15th July 2017. Kylie had made an impact in our team and community and this was experienced with the outpouring of sadness and support from her extended network of friends and peers both internal and external to Mallee Family Care. Kylie had worked for MMCLS since 29/09/2015 – a great day for us.

Kylie will be remembered fondly by the team as our respected solicitor colleague, friend and the office prankster. She will be missed by all and has left a legacy in Mildura with the clients who benefited from her vast experience and support in both the WSP and IOSS programs.

All our thoughts and love go out to Kylie's beloved family.

'We adored you'





www.murraymalleelegal.com.au

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Robinvale VIC 3549
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Balranald NSW 2715
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