

# Media Release

**The Hon Martin Pakula MP**  
Attorney-General  
Minister for Racing



Monday, 29 October 2018

## LEGAL GRANTS TO SUPPORT VULNERABLE VICTORIANS

Women and children escaping family violence and Victorians with mental illness are among those who will benefit from the Andrews Labor Government's funding boost for organisations providing legal assistance and programs.

Attorney-General Martin Pakula announced \$4.55 million in grants today on the 10th anniversary of the Victorian Legal Services Board grant funding program.

Under the program, 18 organisations will share in the 2018 funding allocation to provide support to deal with a wide range of community legal issues including family violence, women's prison programs, and legal education in ethnically diverse communities.

A key project funded under this year's grant program is Anglicare Victoria's *Clean Slates: A health justice partnership between Gippsland Community Legal Service and Community Mental Health Service* – which will provide more accessible and timely access to legal services for people with mental health problems in the Latrobe region.

During the past 10 years, the Victorian Legal Services Board grant program has awarded more than \$39 million in grants to improve the administration of laws, increase access to justice, improve legal services and inform and educate the community about legal issues.

### Quotes attributable to Attorney-General Martin Pakula

*"This program is making a difference to the lives of some of our most vulnerable people, including victims of family violence and people with mental illness."*

*"I'm pleased to be announcing this year's successful grant applicants, and I congratulate each of the 18 organisations for their innovative projects and commitment to increasing access to justice for Victorians."*

Organisation & organisation location	Project	Funding
Sir Zelman Cowen Centre (Melbourne CBD)	<i>The ripple effect: legal education for diverse faith-based communities</i> , which will improve faith-based organisations' understanding of the Australian legal system.	1 year \$120,000
Peninsula Community Legal Centre (PCLC) (Bentleigh East)	<i>Unravelling the complex infringement system</i> , which will identify opportunities for systemic improvements to the infringements system. A specialist fines project co-ordinator will work with health and community services to improve knowledge of avenues available to clients with fines, and enhance access to centre's fines clinic.	2.5 years \$250,000
Springvale Monash Legal Service (Springvale)	<i>Sporting change</i> , which will educate young people about the justice system through sport. The program incorporates community development and legal support, with a school lawyer attending partner schools weekly to increase understanding of legal frameworks. The objective is to empower young people with increased knowledge so that they have positive engagement with the justice system.	2 years \$330,000
Justice Connect (Melbourne CBD)	<i>Joining up justice: building smart integrations between justice agencies</i> , which will develop the Legal Help Gateway - a new online intake, referral, matter-management and pro bono placement system. The aim is to increase the number of lawyers doing pro bono work and the number of people receiving free legal assistance. The project will improve integration and inter-agency referrals between Justice Connect, Victoria Legal Aid, community legal centres, and health services. It will also improve the search experience for help-seekers.	2 years \$180,000
Eastern Community Legal Centre (Box Hill & Boronia)	<i>Eastern integrated practice project</i> , which will pilot an integrated approach to legal services. Legal and community service professionals will provide highly disadvantaged clients with co-ordinated holistic legal support.	2 years \$495,000
Mental Health Legal Centre (Melbourne CBD)	<i>Advance statements</i> , which will increase the mental health services sector's awareness and understanding of advance statements, their uses and their impacts. An advance statement sets out a person's treatment preferences in case they become unwell and need compulsory mental health treatment. The aim is to assist mental health services to develop effective advance statements for clients.	1 year \$80,000
Fitzroy Legal Service (Fitzroy)	<i>Rachel and her children</i> , which will pilot a model between legal assistance services and child centred services. A lawyer and a child-focused worker will assist parents who are victims/survivors of family violence. The pilot will examine some of the ethical issues in such a multi-disciplinary approach, including managing confidentiality and conflicts of interest.	15 months \$268,000
Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (Wodonga)	<i>Invisible hurdles project (stage 2)</i> , which will build on stage 1 of the project. Stage 1 involved a lawyer being placed at partner agencies one day per week, to provide assistance for young people with legal problems, including family violence. Stage 2 will continue stage 1 of the project, add a community development worker, and evaluate whether the project gives young people greater confidence to access help regarding family violence.	2 years \$340,000

<p>Federation of Community Legal Centres (Melbourne CBD)</p>	<p><i>Stories of strength: a storytelling and media project for women with lived prison experience</i>, which will work directly with women, providing them with the skills and platforms to share their stories, with the aim of assisting personal recovery and systemic change.</p> <p><i>Community Legal Centres project</i>, in which the Federation will deliver training and wide level support to community legal centres, in order to build a stronger and more effective community legal sector.</p>	<p>1 year \$120,000 (Stories of strength)</p> <p>1 year \$350,000 (Community Legal Centres Project)</p>
<p>Northern Community Legal Centre (Broadmeadows)</p>	<p><i>Abused and abandoned: family violence in the Australian Indian community</i>, which aims to build understanding of the phenomenon of abused and abandoned Indian brides in transnational spaces. The project will improve co-ordination of legal and non-legal responses to this issue at a local, state and national level.</p>	<p>2 years \$330,000</p>
<p>Inner Melbourne Community Legal (North Melbourne)</p>	<p><i>Community legal PACER partnership</i>, which will establish a partnership between the legal centre and the Police, Ambulance and Clinical Early Response (PACER) team that provides on the spot clinical risk assessments for people having a mental health episode. Under the project, PACER may refer a patient to an IMCL lawyer, who would assess the person's legal issues, such as family violence, tenancy, fines, or employment issues.</p>	<p>2 years \$347,000</p>
<p>First Step (Melbourne CBD &amp; St Kilda)</p>	<p><i>Health-justice outreach project and evaluation</i>, which will deliver and evaluate an integrated legal and health service model that is intended to deal with issues underlying offending behaviour. The evaluation will aim to lead to quality, evidence-based improvements in the treatment of offenders with drug dependency and/or mental health issues.</p>	<p>2 years \$100,000</p>
<p>Health Justice Australia (Melbourne CBD)</p>	<p><i>Building the health justice partnership pipeline</i>, which will assist aspiring health justice partnerships to identify when and how they can reorient their service model towards best practice. This will support the continuing effectiveness and impact of the health justice partnership movement across Victoria and the rest of Australia.</p>	<p>3 years \$150,000</p>
<p>The Torch Project (St Kilda)</p>	<p><i>Women's arts officer in prisons and community</i>, which will employ a designated officer to engage with indigenous female prisoners through art, culture and identity. The project will continue to provide the women with arts vocational support after they are released from prison, to reduce recidivism.</p>	<p>1 year \$100,000</p>
<p>PartnerSPEAK (Online)</p>	<p><i>Peer support for non-offending partners of offenders who access child abuse material online</i>, which will provide legal support to women who report their partner to police for accessing child abuse material online, or who are being interviewed by police. The support will help those women to navigate law enforcement and legal procedures, making the reporting and interviewing processes less difficult.</p>	<p>2 years \$100,000</p>
<p>Anglicare Victoria (Victoria-wide)</p>	<p><i>Clean slates: a health justice partnership between Gippsland Community Legal Service and Community Mental Health Service</i>, which will provide more accessible and timely access to legal services for people with mental health problems in the Latrobe region, and improve health outcomes. The project will provide professional legal education to mental health professionals, which will likely result in earlier detection of legal needs and increased access to justice.</p>	<p>2 years \$260,000</p>
<p>Mind Australia Limited (Heidelberg)</p>	<p><i>Justice in mind</i>, which will establish a health justice partnership by making accessible legal advice and representation available in multiple community mental health settings.</p>	<p>2.5 years \$430,000</p>
<p>Refugee Legal (Collingwood)</p>	<p><i>Family Violence and Migration Law project</i>, which will improve access to</p>	<p>2 years \$199,200</p>

	<i>migration law advice and assistance for women on temporary visas or without visas, who are experiencing family violence. The project will focus on ensuring that support agencies understand the legal requirements for these women due to their visa status, so that there is appropriate referral for expert migration law advice and representation.</i>	
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