

Changes to service delivery by some Community Legal Centres and other organisations delivering legal services to disadvantaged people in Victoria and Tasmania in response to Covid-19

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Abstract:

Many community legal centres as well as other services which provide legal assistance to disadvantaged people in Victoria and Tasmania have made changes their service delivery practices in response to Covid- 19. The following sets out which centres and organisations have changed their practices, as well as how those practices have changed.

Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (Djirra)

Djirra have closed their doors and are not seeing client face to face. They remain available by phone during business hours and can be contacted on free toll 1800 105 303. The contact details for individual offices is available [here](#). Due to closures, Djirra have limited capacity to accept new clients however where they are unable to assist a referral will be offered. The delivery of all workshops has been suspended until 31 May 2020. The Koori Women's Place will also maintain contact with women by phone, email and text message. They can be contacted on 1800105303 during business hours.

Barwon Community Legal Service (BCLC)

BCLC is now delivering most services by telephone, or video call. As a result, the following changes to service practice have been made:

- Legal outreach services at Corio Community Health Centre, Norlane Child and Family Centre, Colac Area Health, Family Relationship Centre, The Orange Door (TOD) and Sexual Assault and Family Violence Centre (SAFVC) will instead be able to access legal assistance via phone advice or via video link. Clients may attend SAFVC and TOD take the BCLS phone advice call.
- All drop-in clinics will be delivered by phone
- Night service clinics will continue, but will be delivered by phone
- The Deakin Legal Clinic and School Lawyer program will continue as normal but this may change.
- The social work program for family violence clients will be delivered by phone. In person session may be available on a case by case basis, and clients may be able to attend TOD to conduct the call.
- If a client needs to attend a meeting to sign documents, these appointments will go ahead in person at the Belmont office, and will be staggered. On a case-by-case basis a lawyer may be able to attend an outreach location to arrange document signing.
- The intervention order Duty Lawyer services at Geelong Magistrate's Court and Colac Magistrate's Court will continue as normal.
- All community legal education and group sessions are currently cancelled or postponed,

- BCLC staff will attend all meetings and networks remotely via online platforms where possible and will not be attending meetings face to face.

BCLC can be contacted 9:00am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday by phone on 130043599 or by email at bcls@barwoncls.org.au. They can also be contacted on their Inquiry form available [here](#).

Bayside Community Legal Service, Qld.

The Bayside Community Legal Service is moving all in-person appointments online. All services will still be still available and will be conducted via web conferencing, emails and phone. The Bayside Community Legal Centre can be contacted by telephone on 07 31623282, or via their inquiry form available [here](#).

Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre

Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre will be conducting online and phone service delivery. Appointments can be made by phone on 03 85929077. They can also be contacted via their inquiry form available [here](#). Client-group clinics or workshops have all been cancelled. Duty Lawyers will be conducting their services by telephone and will be functioning based on the Courts.

Consumer Action Law Centre, Victoria

The Consumer Legal Advice Service team have transitioned to work from home however telephone and online services continue to operate. Lawyers can be contacted by phone between 10.00 am and 1.00pm each day and can be contacted on 1800 466 477. The Koori Help legal advice line can also be contacted on 1800 574 457. The Community Worker Advice Service, which assists financial counsellors, community legal centres and other community professionals is available Monday to Friday, 10.00am-1.00pm and 2.00pm-5.00pm on 0396023326 The National Debt Helpline can be contacted on 1800 007 007. Further information can be obtained [here](#).

. Disability Discrimination Service, Victoria

The Disability Discrimination Service Victoria has moved its operations off site for two weeks effective 17 March 2020. This situation will be reviewed fortnightly, taking into consideration the government/health department advice in relation to Covid-19. The best way to contact the service is by email at info@dds.org.au. Their regular telephone number, which is 03 9654 8644 or TTY: 03 9654 6817 is still operational, however there may be a delay of a few hours in staff returning calls. Further information, including updates about service delivery is available [here](#)

Eastern Community Legal Centre (ECLC), Victoria

The ECLC is continuing to provide legal help to clients, however where appropriate a telephone or video-call appointment may be made, including by client request. The phone numbers and email addresses for the ECLC offices are available [here](#). The Intervention Order Support Service at Ringwood Magistrates' Court and most outreaches are operating as normal, although this may change Further information, including updates to service delivery is available [here](#).

Environmental Justice Australia (EJA)

The EJA has closed its office and have implemented working from home arrangements for all staff. All EJA events will be held virtually where possible. Events and meetings that cannot be held online will be postponed until further notice. EJA has suspended its in-office volunteer program until further notice. Enquiries and legal advice or support from EJA is still available by email at admin@envirojustice.org.au or through the EJA website [here](#).

Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre, Victoria

The Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre has suspended all face to face appointments and walk in enquiries and will be giving advice by phone only until further notice. They can be contacted 0358310900. Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#)

Human Rights Law Centre

The Human Rights Law Centre has closed its Sydney and Melbourne offices and staff are now working remotely, All travel has been cancelled and arrangements are being put in place so that meetings and activities can occur online. The Centre can still be contacted by telephone, and numbers are available [here](#). Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Hume Riverina Community Legal Centre (HRCLC)

The HRCLC has closed its office but is making appointments by telephone. Appointments can be made by calling 1800 918 377, or by contacting the office through their website, which can be done [here](#). Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Inner Melbourne Community Legal Centre (IMCLC)

The IMCLC is now conducting all client interaction is now by phone. As such, no appointments are available onsite at Queensberry Street or via our outreach clinics. Clients. Appointments can be booked by calling the centre on 03 93281885.

Weekly Monday and Thursday Melbourne Magistrates' Court duty lawyer service will also be conducted by telephone. Ongoing or new casework, we will be conducted by telephone attendance where practical, or if not practical, court adjournments will be sought in the alternative. Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Fitzroy Legal Services, Melbourne

The Fitzroy Legal Services have made the following changes to operations:

- The offices at the Fitzroy Town Hall and 279 Spring Street, Reservoir are closed until further notice.

- The night service at Fitzroy Town Hall and the Reservoir office, including appointment-based services in animal law and family law are suspended until further notice. Whilst offices are closed, Fitzroy Legal Services staff continue to work remotely and can be contacted by telephone on (03) 9419 3744 or by email at enquiries@fls.org.au. Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Launceston Community Legal Centre

Currently all legal assistance by Launceston Community Legal Centre is only being provided by telephone appointment only. Appointments can be made by phoning the centre on 03 63341577, or by filling out the online inquiry form available [here](#). All Outreach appointments and services will also be conducted via telephone and solicitors will not be visiting the various outreach venues. In addition, both the Legal Literacy Volunteer program and the after-hours drop-in clinic is suspended. The Centre intends to reassess these changes on 01 May 2020. Further information including changes in service practices is available [here](#)

Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre, Victoria

The Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre will provide all legal services by telephone only. Appointments can be made by phoning the centre on 03 54450909. All face-to-face appointments and walk-in enquiries will be suspended until further notice. Further information including changes in service practices is available [here](#).

Monash Law Clinics

Monash Law Clinics are currently not seeing clients or taking appointments until further notice. Existing clients who have an inquiry can email the centre at law-clinics@monash.edu. The centre can also be contacted on 1800 860 333. Further information, including changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Moonee Valley Legal Service

The Moonee Valley Legal Service are now providing all legal advice by telephone, and their office is not currently open to in-person attendance by clients or other visitors. Further information is available by telephoning the centre on 03 93767929 or emailing the centre at admin@mvl.org.au. Appointments can be booked on the online inquiry form available [here](#). Further information, including changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Peninsula Legal Centre Melbourne

All offices of the Peninsula Legal Centre are closed, however the centre is still giving advice by telephone. Appointments can be made by telephoning the centre on 03 978 3600 or Freecall 1800 064 784, Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm. The centre can also be contacted by email at pclc@pclc.org.au. Further information, including changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Refugee Legal, Victoria

Refugee Legal are open and we are running all of our services, although all legal advice and assistance is by telephone and video conference until further notice.

Telephone advice is available by phone on 9413 0100 on Wednesday & Friday: between 10am to 2pm, and night service by appointment which can be made on 94130101. Refugee Legal Specialist Legal Clinics to assist applicants to fully prepare Temporary Protection visa or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) applications under the Fast Track Assessment process are available by calling on 03 94130101, Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#)

Springvale Monash Legal Service, Victoria

SMLS has opened a phone service where people can access free and confidential legal advice. They can be contacted on:

- Springvale Office: (03) 9545 7400;
- Narre Warren office: (03) 9038 8002

The service will continue to offer a duty lawyer service Dandenong Magistrates Court and this will also be conducted over the phone. Information is available by email at info@smls.org.au. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#)

Social Security Rights of Victoria (SSRV)

SSRV is undertaking all services remotely. New mobile phone numbers are available, as follows:

- General Advice Line: 0419 793 652, available Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 12.30pm;
 - Worker Help Line: 0429 450 346, available Monday to Thursday 9.00am-5.00pm;
 - Administration/General Inquiries: 03 94810299 Monday to Thursday 9.00am-5.00pm
- Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

UMSU Legal Service, Victoria

UMSU Legal Service are operating remotely and have closed their phone advice line until further notice. Advice will still be provided by email and the service will arrange phone appointments as required. The service can be contacted on their online inquiry form available [here](#). Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

WEstjustice (Western Community Legal Centre, Victoria)

WEstjustice have closed their offices to the public. Legal advice clinics will operate via telephone and appointments can be made by phoning the centre on 03 97497720, Monday to Friday 9.00am to 1.00pm; and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Whittlesea Community Legal Centre

The Centres office is closed to the public; however all core services are operating by telephone. The centre can be contacted on 03 9401 6666. They can also be contacted by email at: admin@whittleseacc.org.au or by messaging through their Facebook page available [here](#). Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Women's Legal Service Victoria

The Women's Legal Service Victoria has made the following changes to practice delivery:

- Duty Lawyer Services: advice and support will be conducted via phone or video-conferencing only. No face to face services will be available. This applies to our duty lawyer services at Melbourne Magistrates' Court, the Moorabbin Justice Centre (Children's Court) and Federal Circuit Court (FLSS/FASS).
- Legal Casework: The Women's Legal Service Victoria will continue to support existing clients through their legal matters and take on new casework via our regular referral partners. All court attendances, client appointments, other communications and meetings will be managed via telephone or video-conferencing.
- Legal Advice Line: The Legal Advice line will continue to operate, but with reduced capacity. It will run on Tuesday and Thursday nights from 5.30pm to 7.30pm on the following numbers:
 - Melbourne: 8622 0600
 - Regional: 1800 133 302
- On-Call advice line: The on-call advice line will be running as usual to support practitioners only and provides preliminary advice and referrals for clients in the areas of family law, family violence law, child protection and victims of crime assistance (VOCAT). The service can be contacted on 03 86220600 during business hours and a lawyer will return your call within 1-2 days.
- All staff are working from home and can be contacted via email, or a message can be left on their direct office line. The reception will be managed remotely during business hours, from 9.00 am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday and can be contacted on 03 86220600 or Toll Free on 1800133302. Reception can also be contacted by email at admin@womenslegal.org.au.

Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Tenants Union of Tasmania

The Tenants Union of Tasmania have suspended their our drop in service until further notice. The service can still be contacted by telephone on 6223 2641. A message

should be left and the service will endeavour to call you back within one working day. The service can also be email at tenants@netspace.net.au. Further information, including contact numbers for regional services is available [here](#).