Victorian Legal Services
BOARD + COMMISSIONER

Grants Program Handout

VICTORIAN LEGAL SERVICES BOARD GRANTS PROGRAM 2016

The Victorian Legal Services Board provided $3.032 million in funding to sixteen projects through the 2016 Grants Round

2016 GRANTS ROUND RECIPIENTS

Friends of Castlemaine Library

Read-Along Dads and literacy programs.

($45,000 over 2.5 years)

The project consists of two complementary parts: first 'Read-Along Dads' which keeps the men in touch with their children through recording a children's audio book, which is sent to their child together with a copy of the book, and secondly, a literacy program consisting of book groups, creative writing, craft sessions and events. One aim of the program is to improve the prisoners' and their children's social and emotional health and literacy. As well, the program seeks to improve chances of prisoner rehabilitation through connection with their family.

Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

Tipping the Scales – Improving justice outcomes in Central Goldfields through collective impact.

($571,282 over 3 years)

The project will deliver a multi-faceted approach to identifying and impacting poor justice related outcomes for children, youth and families in Victoria's Central Goldfields area, centring on Maryborough. It will be founded on established networks and institutions, including the Go Goldfields Alliance, and build targeted partnerships with key agencies (including Victoria Police, Victoria Legal Aid, the Centre for Non Violence) to mobilise collective expertise and capacities. The project recognises that working with existing place-based structures is the most appropriate means to design and deliver effective, integrated responses.

Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited

Your life, Your choice

($133,000 over 1 year)

The project will contribute to reducing family conflict in Aboriginal communities by reducing disputes about decision making for relatives with cognitive impairment. Members of Aboriginal communities will gain:

- Increased awareness of the role and responsibilities of substitute decision makers.
- Increased ability to control their futures through exercising their right to choose who will make decisions for them if, in the future, they become unable to make decisions. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability will have improved awareness of their ability to appoint someone to support them to make decisions.

Monash University

Improving educational outcomes for children with a disability in Victoria.

($104,638 over 1.5 years)

The Castan Centre for Human Rights Law will review all laws, policies, procedures and practices regulating the education of children with a disability in Victoria's schools. It will produce recommendations for the Department of Education and Training (DET) detailing the reforms necessary to ensure that all relevant documents and practices comply with Victoria's Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006.

The project addresses recent research showing that many children with a disability are inadequately supported in schools, leading to poor educational outcomes and entrenched disadvantage throughout their lives. The DET is a key supporter of this project.

Deakin University

Evaluating the effectiveness of the new mechanisms in the *Equal Opportunity Act* 2010 (Vic)

($23,886 over 1.5 years)

The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic) is the most modern anti-discrimination law in Australia and contains many innovative mechanisms. This project will evaluate the effectiveness of those mechanisms in addressing the problems with the predecessor Act that the Investigator identified in earlier research and assess the extent to which problems that were not addressed by the 2010 reforms remain. This will be achieved through a combination of case analysis and empirical expert interview data. The project will develop recommendations for increasing the Act's ability to tackle discrimination.

Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc.

Sporting Change

($276,927 over 2 years)

This two year project aims to prevent youth contact with the justice system by integrating legal education and sport-based engagement strategies. Protective factors for youth will be increased through continuing engagement with education and training, and risk factors minimised. The project will be based at Narre Warren South P-12 to maximise engagement and skill development opportunities for at-risk youth.

Inclusion Melbourne

The Right to be Heard: Providing Equal Access To the Law for People with Cognitive and Communicative Impairment.

($38,830 over 1 year)

People with intellectual disability are more likely to be the victims of crime and less likely to report them. This project includes a best practice guide for the legal system and an easy English information guide for people with intellectual disability and will outline the human rights defined by law, practical strategies to reduce barriers and additional resources.

Victorian Bar Incorporated

Duty Barristers' Scheme Online Portal.

($53,818 over 1 year)

The Victorian Bar operates a Duty Barristers' Scheme (the Scheme) that provides pro bono assistance to parties and witnesses before the courts. There are approximately 290 barristers currently participating and providing pro bono services valued at an estimated $350,000-$450,000 per annum.

The project is to implement an online referral and allocation portal to increase administrative efficiency and to broaden the reach of the Scheme to assist more members of the community in need of legal representation and encourage more of our members to participate in the Scheme. The online portal will initially be developed for all Office of Public Prosecution referrals. Phase 2 will expand the portal's operation to the Magistrates' Court, County Court, Supreme Court and Court of Appeal programs.

Federation University Australia

What are the support and communication requirements of people with complex communication needs when interacting with the criminal and civil justice system?

($57,270 over 2 years)

The research seeks to identify strategies to assist justice agencies (civil and criminal) to enhance their response to people with complex communication needs. Data collection methods include interviews with people with complex communication needs (victims, offenders, and those interacting with tribunals: VCAT and VoCAT), focus group with advocates and case file analysis. Data will be gathered from across Victoria. The research will be informed by the direct experiences of this cohort in their interaction with the justice system. These experiences will provide further insight about adjustments available to justice agencies in order to enhance access to justice for this cohort.

Banyule Community Health

Yarning Up Law

($366,890 over 3 years)

This three year project, in partnership with the Indigenous Peoples' Gathering Place and Banyule City Council, focuses on the development of culturally safe and sustainable legal service pathways for Indigenous communities, particularly in regard to child protection matters.

The project will build the capacity of the generalist Victorian legal assistance sector to share and continually learn about respectful strategies to better engage Indigenous Peoples in mainstream services. This will ensure that access to justice for Indigenous Peoples is significantly improved.

Swinburne University of Technology

Effective judicial supervision of offender rehabilitation project.

($47,893 over 1 year)

Reforms to Victorian sentencing law have increased the potential for judicial supervision (JS) to improve offender rehabilitation. There is no research on whether or how these reforms are being applied in practice nor is there guidance for when and how judicial officers might undertake JS. This project's unique partnership between the Centre for Forensic Behavioural Science and the Magistrates' Court of Victoria, will improve the consistency and quality of JS practice by identifying current practice, developing a JS practice framework that is informed by forensic behavioural science, conducting judicial education about this framework and identifying future judicial education needs.

Jesuit Social Services

Best Practice In Recidivism Reduction through improving access to education, training and employment – An Action Research Project

($387,800 over 3 years)

This Action Research Project will improve access to education, training and employment for people on community corrections orders as a means to reduce recidivism, increase our understanding of the personal and systemic barriers to people achieving positive training and employment outcomes, and provide an empirical basis to advocate policies and initiatives that foster systemic change. It will complement recidivism initiatives in the City of Brimbank and inform improvements in these interventions over the life of the project.

Justice Connect

Not-for-profit Law - supporting long-term sustainability of Victorian community organisations.

($412,657 over 3 years)

This project will support the long-term sustainability of Victorian not-for-profit community organisations by providing them with free/low-cost legal help, advocating improving their legal and regulatory landscape, and collaborating with other services that are integral to supporting a sustainable sector.

Using Not-for-profit Law's (NFP Law) acclaimed model, they will equip organisations to navigate myriad complex legal and related issues in a 'new world order', including social enterprise, social impact investment, innovative fundraising approaches and community service funding reforms. Over the next three years, they will build the capacity of Victorian community organisations to adapt and thrive in a rapidly-changing environment.

Social Security Rights

Profiling high risk social security recipients for specialist assistance.

($72,500 over 1 year)

This project will use profiles of high risk social security recipients as a basis to improve the way generalist community legal centres and other community service providers detect, assist, and refer clients with social security law issues.

The project will:

- Develop 3 profiles from high risk social security recipients.
- Work with 4 generalist Community Legal Centres (CLCs) to identify clients that fit the profiles.
- Embed in those CLCs a better understanding of what to do when high risk clients present at their services.
- Create a model for supporting other CLCs who want to increase understanding of social security law issues.

Yarra Ranges Community Legal Centre

Enhancing MABELS Project.

($399,306 over 2 year)

'Enhancing MABELS Project' builds on MABELS Project with an expanded vision:

Partnership between Yarra Ranges CLC and local agencies to increase the safety of mothers and babies from family violence. Through this, the partners seek to establish an evidence base for best practice 'early intervention lawyering', with specialist family violence services based in a universal health context.

Victoria University

Law and Courts in an Online World Conference

($40,000 over 1 year)

This meeting will bring the legal sector together to explore ways in which technology is reshaping law and legal institutions, as well as the practice of law. The broad themes include:

- The Future of the Legal Profession - including implications for legal education and training
- Law for All – access to justice facilitated through a variety of technologies and approaches
- Online Dispute Resolution
- Technology and Court Management
- Solo Legal Practitioner and Small Firms 'new tricks of the new trade'

About the Victorian Legal Services Board (VLSB)

The Victorian Legal Services Board is an independent statutory authority, responsible for regulation of the legal profession in Victoria. Originally established under the *Legal Profession Act 2004*, the Board's role and functions now come under the *Legal Profession Uniform Law Application Act 2014*.

The Board's aims are to:

- ensure the effective regulation of the legal profession and the maintenance of professional standards;
- address the concerns of clients of law practices and lawyers through the regulatory system and provide for the protection of consumers of legal services
- ensure the adequate management of trust accounts, and
- ensure that the Legal Profession Uniform Law is implemented effectively in Victoria.

About the Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Program

The Grants Program was established in 2007 to distribute funding to projects that aim to improve the administration of laws, increase access to justice, improve legal services and inform and educate the wider community about legal services. The grants are available from the Board administered Public Purpose Fund, which includes funds from a number of sources including the interest on solicitors' trust accounts and income from investments. With the approval of the Attorney General, the grants can be used for:

- Law reform;
- Legal and judicial education;
- Legal research;
- Any other purpose relating to the legal profession or the law that the Board considers appropriate.

Aims

The VLSB grants funds to organisation for activities that will create outcomes leading to:

- improved laws and their administration
- improved access and equity
- improved legal services
- better informed and educated consumers of legal services

Organisations that are recipients of a Grant will be delivering programs/research that have a wide impact, create long-term positive change in the Victorian legal environment, and have a strong public benefit.

The Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Staff can be contacted on:

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For further information of the Victorian Legal Services Board Grants Program, please visit the Grants Program page on the Board's website:

http://lsbc.vic.gov.au