



2016/17

arc justice | Annual Report



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incorporating:



## Table of Contents

Chairperson's report	4
Executive Officer's report	6
About us	8
Housing Justice	10
Loddon Campaspe CLC	13
Goulburn Valley CLC	17
Loddon Campaspe CLC Family Violence Program	21
Loddon Campaspe CLC Health-Justice Partnership	22
Loddon Campaspe CLC Child Protection Legal Service	23
Loddon Campaspe CLC Tipping the Scales project	24
Goulburn Valley CLC Family Violence Program	25
Goulburn Valley CLC Therapeutic Justice Program	26
Goulburn Valley CLC Rumbalara Health-Justice Partnership	28
Our people	29
Our supporters	30
Financials Report	33

# Chairperson's report

I am pleased to report that ARC Justice is on course in its mission at the conclusion of another year. This year we took the time to review our vision, purpose and values while establishing a new strategic plan for the next five years. Our Executive Officer will provide details elsewhere in this report. Suffice it for me to say the process was inclusive of Board and staff, and the outcomes very satisfying.

Underpinning our planning was the knowledge that the need for ARC Justice's three programs remains as high as ever. Research by Jesuit Social Services indicates that disadvantage is not only geographically concentrated but entrenched in our region, with many of the most disadvantaged postcodes in Victoria falling within our catchment areas. Many of our communities continue to experience disproportionately high levels of unemployment, interaction with the criminal justice system, child protection concerns and family violence.

Our stakeholder surveys confirm this, highlighting high levels of unmet legal need in relation to family violence, family law (as it relates to children), child protection matters, discrimination and harassment matters. Vulnerable groups in our communities, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, or those experiencing a disability, continue to be over-represented in our statistics.

Australia's affordable housing crisis is adding to this persistent disadvantage. More and more people are being pushed into rental accommodation, despite tenants' rights and protections lagging behind those in comparable nations. One hundred per cent of Housing Justice clients tell us they are experiencing financial stress.

## Funding

Faced with this, our services to clients have been maintained in a tumultuous policy and funding environment. At the last moment, the federal government reversed its decision to cut funding to community legal centres by 30%, causing great relief to our own and many other organisations. This followed a coordinated campaign across Australia led by the National Association of Community Legal Centres. We took part in this campaign, meeting with ministers and other members of parliament to discuss the detrimental impact withdrawal of funding would have on the community in our region.

In addition, we sought and were successful with funding applications to continue delivering the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP) and Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP), now rebadged as Tenancy Plus.

These funding rounds coinciding with our strategic planning cycle gave the Board and Executive an opportunity to review our role in service delivery to the Mallee. Ultimately, the decision was taken to withdraw services from the Mallee, so as to focus our resources on our priority areas of Loddon, Campaspe and Goulburn Valley.

## Appointment of Executive Officer Hayley Mansfield

In late October 2016, our new Executive Officer, Hayley Mansfield, commenced duty, after a thorough recruitment process conducted by the Board with assistance from Brooker Consulting, a professional recruitment service. Hayley's appointment followed a four-month tenure as Acting Executive Officer by Chris Sedgman, whose own role has since been reviewed and recast as Manager, People and Corporate Services. These appointments have established the foundation for the important consolidation work that has followed.

## Board movements

As always, I express my gratitude to the members of our Board, who have continued to provide their considerable and expert services to our organisation. During this year I have been pleased to welcome two new Board members – Andrew Chittenden, Finance Manager for Haven; Home, Safe, and Yvette Jaczina, General Manager, Centre for Non-Violence. These appointments are part of an ongoing commitment to ensure renewal in the Board's ranks. Further appointments are anticipated in 2017–18.

Sadly, this year I have accepted resignations from four Board Directors: Barry Keane, Debra Allan, Jennifer Wilson and Celia Adams. I thank them all for the contributions they have made to the governance of our organisation.

*Niall Hensey*

# Executive Officer's report

I was very pleased to accept the role of Executive Officer in late 2016. Prior to this, I was aware of the organisation's important work in the community and excited by the opportunity to lead this work moving forward.

This year has been focused on building and embedding a number of projects that have commenced over the past 18 months, including the Rumbalara Health-Justice Partnership and Therapeutic Justice Program in Shepparton, the Tipping the Scales project in Maryborough, and the Child Protection pilot in Bendigo. In addition, we commenced delivering our Bendigo Health-Justice Partnership through our generalist legal service, which will enable us to continue this important work post project-specific funding. Housing Justice continued to deliver both SHASP and TAAP throughout the Loddon and Mallee regions, before we made the strategic decision at the end of the financial year to cease services in the Mallee to enable us to be more focused in our work in Loddon.

With support from the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres and VLA, this year we have increased our organisation's capacity to monitor and evaluate our work. Staff have been supported to understand and apply key concepts of monitoring and evaluation, including developing key tools. Through the generous support of the Roberta Sykes Indigenous Education Foundation and Aurora Education Foundation, I was sponsored to attend a one-week course at Harvard University in Boston to build my capacity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of programs at a leadership level. We are committed to continuing to build this capacity across ARC Justice in the financial year 2017-18 to ensure our work is evidence-based, that we are continually learning, and ultimately that our work achieves its intended impact.

## THE YEAR AHEAD

This year we undertook an organisation-wide strategic planning process, which has set our direction for the next five years. Building upon our work in recent years, we

will continue our focus upon therapeutic responses that recognise that housing and legal issues do not occur in isolation. If we are to achieve sustainable outcomes, we must work with individuals and the community to address underlying issues. We will draw upon the experience and expertise of local communities to guide our work, ensuring that they are able to speak for themselves and contribute to solutions. To ensure our impact goes beyond those whom we assist directly, we will continue to advocate for systemic change that enhances the rights of rural and regional Victorians in a targeted and strategic way.

We will develop our organisation's first Reconciliation Action Plan to celebrate the strength, culture and contribution of our First Peoples; recognise the systemic injustices brought against them; and work in partnership with local Aboriginal communities to achieve justice.

Finally, all this couldn't be achieved without a commitment to organisational sustainability, including supporting and building capacity across our team of Directors, staff, volunteers and students.

## FINANCIAL POSITION

I am pleased to once again this year deliver a healthy financial outcome for the organisation with an issue-free audit. The 2016-17 financial year saw ARC Justice's total revenue of \$2,741,139 with expenditure of \$2,695,514, which shows a net surplus of \$45,625. The 2017 unexpended grants (see note 16 in the Financial Statements) carried forward for 2018 are \$950,636. Our employee benefits have increased in the areas of annual leave, which is being monitored and managed, and long-service leave, of which ARC Justice currently has 71% set aside in a separate term deposit. Total employee expenses were \$1,907,860 with a staff complement of 29. ARC Justice's net equity as at 30 June 2016 is \$1,500,676 after provisions, with a net cash increase of \$161,615.

## STAFFING MOVEMENTS

We welcomed a number of staff to the organisation this year, into both new and existing positions.

Georgia Morrissey – GVCLC Rumbalara Lawyer, previously working in private practice in Shepparton

Jasmine Day – GVCLC Rumbalara Paralegal, previously working in a primary school in Shepparton

Annika Kearton – LCCLC Project, Education and Community Development Worker, previously working in international development

Dianne Tran – LCCLC Paralegal, previously working in Victorian Government

Thank you to a number of staff who undertook both short-term and casual work over various projects and programs. I'd like to also make individual note of a few ongoing staff members who departed this year and wish them all the best.

Carmendy Cooper – GVCLC Generalist lawyer, was on maternity leave and decided to remain in Melbourne to be close to her family

Mim Dineen – Housing Justice Manager, has moved to a Mental Health Systems Coordinator role at Murray Primary Health network in Bendigo

Acacia Burns – GVCLC Generalist Lawyer, has moved to a family lawyer position at Dandenong Victoria Legal Aid

Jessica McCartney – LCCLC Health-Justice Partnership Lawyer, has moved to a Police Prosecutor role at the Melbourne Drug Court

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to say thank you to all staff, volunteers and students. Whether paid or unpaid, what I have seen across the organisation is their incredible dedication to our purpose, compassion in their work and a very high level of expertise. I was pleased to take on the leadership of such an effective and harmonious team culture and would like to acknowledge management past and present who have contributed to this.

Thank you to all of our funders, partners and other supporters who have made our work in the past year possible. I have been encouraged to see an increasing focus from funding bodies

on impact rather than outputs, as well as an understanding that this takes time and skill to achieve. I look forward to working with our supporters over the coming year in continuing this work.

Thank you to the Board of Directors for their ongoing governance. The organisation faced significant change throughout 2016-17 and the Board's ongoing stability has been critical in ensuring the success of these changes. I would like to say a particular thank you to Niall Hensey, who provided significant time and commitment in ensuring that my transition into the role of Executive Officer was smooth and minimised disruption to the organisation. Thank you also to Peter Noble – not only for leaving behind an incredibly innovative and effective organisation, but also for reaching out and taking time after he wrapped up at ARC Justice to ensure I had the information I needed to be effective in the role. Thank you also to Chris Sedgman for her leadership – both during the period of Acting Executive Officer before I commenced and particularly for her ongoing support since my appointment. All of this support has been greatly appreciated.

Both on behalf of our organisation and personally, I would like to say a sincere thank you to the traditional owners of the land upon which we work. Every day we spend time on and travel through country that has been cared for for many thousands of years by generations of our country's First Peoples. I pay my respects and gratitude to elders past, present and future and I look forward to working in partnership in coming years with local Aboriginal communities.

*Hayley Mansfield*



# About us

## WHO WE ARE

ARC Justice is an independent, not-for-profit organisation based in Bendigo and Shepparton, Victoria. We work to advance access to justice for disadvantaged and vulnerable members of the community through the provision of legal services, housing advocacy and support, education and policy work.

## WHERE WE WORK

Our service covers a large part of central and northern Victoria. From a base in Bendigo, the Loddon Campaspe CLC and Housing Justice operate across the Loddon Campaspe region. This includes the local government areas of Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander shires. Our Shepparton-based Goulburn Valley CLC operates across the local government areas of Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Strathbogie, Moira, Benalla and Mansfield.

## VISION

An inclusive community built on a foundation of human rights and equality before the law.

## PURPOSE

We promote equality before the law for people in rural and regional Victoria by: providing legal, advocacy and support services; elevating justice as an issue in public discourse; and advocating for systemic change that upholds human rights.

## Principles that underpin our work

### COMMUNITY

We serve, build the capacity of and are accountable to the community to which we belong.

### LEARNING

We are inquisitive and receptive to new ideas, use evidence-based practice and share our knowledge to achieve the greatest impact for our communities, and we learn from both our successes and mistakes.

### PARTNERSHIP

We believe partnership and collaboration with individuals, communities and organisations is the only way to create meaningful and sustainable change.

### PEOPLE

We are committed to an ethical and sustainable practice that values our people in achieving our purpose.

### RECOGNITION OF FIRST PEOPLES

We celebrate the strength, culture and contribution of our First Peoples, we recognise the systemic injustices brought against them, and we work in partnership with local Aboriginal communities to bring justice.

### RESPECT

In all of our work, we show respect. We value diversity and acknowledge differences, knowing these strengthen our community.

### OUR PROGRAMS

ARC Justice has three programs:

- Housing Justice
- Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre
- Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre.

## HOUSING SERVICES

Housing Justice delivers housing support and advocacy services across the Loddon-Mallee region. Our Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) assists tenants living in public housing to address barriers to their tenancy and to avoid homelessness. It is funded by the Victorian Government (Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Housing).

Our Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP) provides information, advice and assistance to vulnerable and disadvantaged private tenants, including assistance with appearances before the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT). It is funded by Consumer Affairs Victoria.

## LEGAL SERVICES

Loddon Campaspe and Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centres are generalist CLCs that undertake a range of activities, including: legal assistance (information, referral, advice and casework) community development and legal education law reform and special projects.

We acknowledge the financial and other support we receive from the Commonwealth of Australia Attorney-General's Department, the Victorian Government and Victoria Legal Aid that allows us to provide our services.



# Housing Justice

‘Very open and friendly, non-judgemental contact and expedient at return advice and calls. Assistance was greatly appreciated and assisted in preventing further debt and stress, which was impacting my health and choices.’ *Housing Justice client*

‘I came to a new area and was shown around by Kirsty Waller. Kirsty set me up with a doctor, introduced me to the neighbourhood house and assured me that she would be there to support me.’  
*Housing Justice client*

‘To be quite honest, I was devastated to have something like that happen to me [eviction notice]. I have rented all my adult life without a hitch. I really felt like a criminal when I received [the landlord’s] letter. Thanks so much for coming to my aid. I would have been lost without you.’ *Housing Justice client*

Housing Justice is an accredited advocacy and support service for tenants living in public and private rental properties throughout the Loddon-Mallee region. We employ a small team of Advocacy and Support Workers who are passionate and dedicated to working with our clients to achieve positive outcomes that empower them and provide them with the tools they need to manage their tenancy long term.

As well as providing direct services, Housing Justice works with local and state housing networks to advocate for systemic improvements to Victoria’s residential tenancies landscape, especially with regards to housing access and sustainability for our region’s most vulnerable and disadvantaged tenants.

Many of our clients receive a disability pension and more than half rely upon Centrelink for support. Housing and legal needs are often intertwined, and many of our clients are dealing with multiple issues. Our clients’ most frequent issues are:

- financial problems (fines, credit and debt issues, financial stress, Centrelink issues)
- family or domestic violence
- access to affordable housing
- difficulty obtaining housing
- mental health issues
- drug and/or alcohol dependency
- risk of eviction (sustaining housing)



## TENANT SERVICES

Housing Justice delivers two key programs: the Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) and the Tenant Advice and Advocacy Program (TAAP).

SHASP is a vital service targeted at tenants living in public housing who are at risk of homelessness or who are in need of support to transition into a new area and require linkages to other services such as medical, schooling and social outlets. Tenants who are referred to this program are financially disadvantaged and often experiencing social isolation, a mental health disorder or other barriers affecting their ability to sustain their tenancy.

TAAP works with private rental tenants, including caravan park residents. Many of these tenants are also financially disadvantaged and vulnerable due to issues such as family violence, disability or mental ill health. Our strong and longstanding relationships with local real estate agents allow us to negotiate with landlords and property managers to lessen the stress on

tenants, facilitating better outcomes for them. Our staff are also able to assist or represent tenants at VCAT, which handles disputes between tenants and landlords.

Consumer Affairs Victoria funds the TAAP program. The Victorian Government’s Department of Health and Human Services funds the SHASP program.

## SECTOR STRENGTHENING AND SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Housing Justice contributes to the relevant housing sector networks. We belong to the two regional homelessness service networks, the state-wide TAAP network and the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres’ Tenancy Working Group. We belong to the state-wide SHASP Managers’ Network and the Loddon Campaspe region’s Hoarding Working Group, which is working to improve service coordination for people dealing with hoarding issues, including animal hoarding and squalor.

We have also been contributing to the Make Renting Fair Campaign and the review of the Residential Tenancies Act.

We will continue to monitor developments in the homelessness and housing sectors through these networks and advocate for improvements to tenants’ rights in Victoria.

## THE YEAR AHEAD

This year, Housing Justice secured four years of funding for SHASP, now named Tenancy Plus. Tenancy Plus has extended its criteria beyond public housing, which allows us to provide support services for tenants in long-term community housing, including rooming houses registered through the Victorian Housing Register. This opportunity will allow us to broaden our support services in the community, especially given the recent transfer of 4000 public housing properties to registered community housing providers.

Rural and regional tenants are often forced to accept substandard rental properties, particularly in smaller outlying towns. This funding will allow us to increase our presence in these areas. Our advocates will be able to provide tenants with the necessary information, resources and support they need to challenge landlords without fear of eviction.

## CLIENT STORY

Darren\* is a middle-aged tenant living in public housing with part-time custody of his two teenage daughters. For a number of years, Darren struggled with poor mental health. He was socially isolated and lived in squalor. Darren eventually became overwhelmed by his circumstances and was hospitalised at a local psychiatric centre.

A Tenancy Property Officer with the Department of Health and Human Services visited Darren at the centre and he agreed to her visiting him at home following his release. When she visited his property, it was in a poor state and Darren was distressed. The property was dirty inside and out, Darren was holed up in the lounge room, and the bedrooms were unused.

The Tenancy Property Officer told Darren and his caseworker about Housing Justice’s SHASP and outlined the support options available to him. The following day, with Darren’s consent, she referred him to SHASP, and Housing Justice’s Manager, Kirsty Waller, became Darren’s support person.

After several months of working with Kirsty, the Tenancy Property Officer revisited Darren’s house. The property was clean and Darren was a different man. He greeted her with a smile and invited her in to see the transformation that had taken place. The rooms were organised, the kitchen had been scrubbed and the yard was spotless.

Kirsty had helped Darren to get new mattresses for his daughters’ rooms. And he referred to Kirsty as a ‘godsend’. His daughters were now happy to stay with him on weekends and had even asked to stay longer at their last visit.

Darren had regained control of his life and was happy for the first time in years. His health had improved markedly and his tenancy was now sustainable.

\* Not his real name

# Housing Justice



# Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre

‘My case was very detailed. You can’t get better with a paid lawyer. For someone who can’t get a lawyer it is good.’ *Loddon Campaspe CLC client*

‘They were just really good. They took me seriously. [The Loddon Campaspe CLC Lawyer] knew that my ex was there, and was really supportive.’ *Loddon Campaspe CLC client*

‘Just treated me decently and were nice, understanding. Did everything they could to help.’ *Loddon Campaspe CLC client*



Loddon Campaspe CLC is a generalist CLC that undertakes a range of activities, including:

- legal assistance (information, referral, advice and casework)
- community development and legal education
- law reform and special projects

Loddon Campaspe CLC operates across the Loddon Campaspe region (Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Macedon Ranges and Mount Alexander shires).

Loddon Campaspe CLC staff attended the August 2016 National Association of Community Legal Centres Conference in Fremantle and undertook numerous Continuing Professional Development and other training opportunities, especially those provided through the Women’s Legal Service, the Victorian Federation of CLCs and Victoria Legal Aid CPD programs.

## CORE GENERALIST SERVICES

Loddon Campaspe CLC assists vulnerable and disadvantaged people in our catchment

\* Due to client services database change in 2017, only 2015-16 figures available.

with face-to-face and telephone advice, as well as follow-up referrals and casework. We focus on those people most in need and on the work that has the greatest impact – both on the individual and the community. Advice and casework services were delivered in a range of areas including family violence, child protection, family law, credit and debt, fines, crime, government complaints, consumer law and neighbourhood disputes. Where we were unable to assist, we provided information and relevant referrals.

### FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICE

Loddon Campaspe CLC provided advice, casework and Duty Lawyer services at Bendigo, Kyneton, Maryborough, Echuca and Castlemaine courts. We provided nuanced, respectful and quality family violence legal services, despite a changing environment, high client volumes and funding gaps.

Following the completion of our family violence research and service project ‘Why Didn’t You Ask?’, the Victorian Department of Justice and Regulation funded us to continue providing frontline services, for which we are very grateful.

We have continued our collaborative work with a multitude of other services including the Centre for Non-Violence and Annie North. We also have a particular focus on financial abuse via our relationship with Bendigo Family & Financial Services. We are active members of local family violence prevention networks and remain proactively involved with the implementation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence recommendations to ensure local needs are addressed.

### HEALTH–JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

Health–Justice Partnerships recognise that legal problems are often connected to long-term illness and disability. Our Health–Justice Partnership with Bendigo Community Health Service (BCHS) embeds a Loddon Campaspe CLC Lawyer within BCHS’ Kangaroo Flat site. The result is direct referrals and secondary consultations by health service staff. The evaluation has shown the program’s success and highlighted that those clients who received

assistance through this program would otherwise not have received legal assistance. With the funding of this program now forming part of our generalist services, other Loddon Campaspe CLC staff are forming relationships within BCHS. Loddon Campaspe CLC co-located with BCHS’ central Bendigo site in September 2017.

### CHILD PROTECTION LEGAL SERVICE

Our Child Protection pilot began in late 2015, extending the child protection services initiated through our Health–Justice Partnership with BCHS. This pilot was funded by Victoria Legal Aid and allowed us to increase our impact in this space.

Loddon Campaspe CLC delivered advice, casework, Duty Lawyer and emergency application assistance at Bendigo, Kyneton, Maryborough, Echuca, Swan Hill, Kerang and Castlemaine courts. The pilot provided parents and children with a Lawyer at a time of incredible vulnerability. We provided a quality holistic service that empowered clients and ensured that their rights were protected and that they were supported in their child protection and other legal matters. Following a positive evaluation, the program is set to be ongoing as of 2018.

### TIPPING THE SCALES

In early 2017 we commenced the Tipping the Scales project, based in Maryborough. It uses place-based community development principles to address family violence. Focusing on women and children who have experienced family violence, the project attempts to stop cycles of violence as well as make systemic changes to the justice response in Maryborough.

### CONSUMER ADVOCACY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

We continued to assist vulnerable people with their consumer complaints, focusing on networking and building our relationships with various community services, which increased the number and quality of referrals. Common trends in 2016–17 included irresponsible lending, solar panels, motor vehicles and junk insurance. Unfortunately, the funding for this program from Consumer Affairs Victoria

has ceased, with the funding instead being centralised in Melbourne.

### LA TROBE UNIVERSITY (BENDIGO) STUDENT LEGAL SERVICE

This service, funded by the Bendigo Student Association and delivered by Loddon Campaspe CLC Lawyers, has provided students with free legal advice and referrals, a Justice of the Peace service, community legal education and online content since 2012. Loddon Campaspe CLC provided ongoing services throughout the university year and the Student Legal Service is now a core component of the Bendigo Student Association’s services to the Bendigo student body. We are also piloting telephone advice to the Wodonga campus.

### CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Loddon Campaspe CLC hosted four students in 2016. Our Clinical Legal Education Program links intelligent and dedicated students to the Community Legal Centre sector and offers a pathway to volunteering and employment.

### COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Community legal education is a core component of our work. We frequently respond to ad-hoc requests from schools and community organisations to deliver plain-language legal education to students, staff and members. As well as a focus on family violence education, our Health–Justice Partnership and Child Protection Legal Service Lawyers regularly deliver community legal education as part of their work.

In May 2017 we presented Talking Justice for the fourth year, coinciding with Law Week. This event brings distinguished speakers to Bendigo. The 2017 opening night address was presented by the Hon. Chief Justice of the Family Court of Australia, Diana Bryant AO. Other speakers included Liana Buchanan (Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People), Roz Ward (Co-founder and former Manager of Safe Schools Coalition of Victoria), Chris Zappone (Journalist, The Age) and Aunty Lois Peeler (Executive Director, Worawa Aboriginal College). This year’s Moderator was Damien Carrick from Radio National’s ‘Law Report’.

This year’s topics ranged from the current

challenges facing the Family Court, to children in detention, the rights of transgender children, the impact of digital disruption on individual rights and social justice, and the potential of restorative justice programs to forge a link between traditional Indigenous values and our criminal justice system.

### PALLIATIVE CARE LEGAL PROGRAM

We continued to work with local volunteer solicitors and BCHS Social Workers to provide free and confidential legal advice to people in palliative care.

### HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT

Assisting clients to assert their rights against the state or other people is our core business. However, this year we have looked internally and considered our ethical and legal obligations under the Victorian Charter of Human Rights. We have scrutinised our service to ensure our practices and procedures are compatible. The project will continue into 2018, focusing on our accessibility to clients and the role of Community Legal Centres in contributing to a human rights culture in Victoria, as well as our human rights-based advocacy.

### ADVOCACY AND CONNECTEDNESS

We advocate on issues that affect our clients and community. Our advocacy is based on expertise developed through our casework and work in the community. We are active in numerous networks across the region to ensure collaboration on common issues and on behalf of clients. We are also active in Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres networks, and networks involved with the implementation of the Royal Commission into Family Violence findings. Loddon Campaspe CLC has made submissions to government on issues such as child protection legislation, police complaints, family violence and spent convictions. We are also active on social media and feature in print and broadcast media.

### EVALUATION AND LEGAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

We continue to increase our capacity around monitoring and evaluation (M & E), in part through our participation in the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres’ Outcomes Measurement Framework project.

M & E allows us to improve our practice and increase and demonstrate our impact. Many of our projects now include M & E as a core component of the work.

### THE YEAR AHEAD

With strategic planning being a focus of the first half of 2017, Loddon Campaspe CLC will work to ensure our programs and projects are focused, strategic, and reach the most vulnerable people in our community with a review of our processes, eligibility criteria, work plans, theories of change and measurement outcomes. We work to ensure our staff are supported and skilled in focus areas of practice to enable quality assistance.

We will also be reviewing how we work with our volunteers and our pro-bono partners.

Consistent and adequate long-term funding continues to be a source of stress for staff, impacting on continuity of service for clients and our ability to form relationships in the community. This will also continue to be a focus.

As the new client services database beds down in 2017-18, we hope to increase our ability to report on the demand for and the impact our two CLC programs.

Finally, with our co-location with Bendigo Community Health Service comes a great opportunity to enhance our Bendigo Health-Justice Partnership and make this program a whole-of-practice model. We are also excited by the beginning of the Tipping the Scales project in Maryborough, leading the way in legal practice with community development principles.

### Client story

Patrick is a retiree with a history of poor health. Following a heart attack, Patrick became depressed and attempted suicide. He was hospitalised for several weeks, heavily medicated upon his release, and State Trustees were appointed administrators to manage his financial affairs.

Patrick resented the loss of control and considered the Administration Order premature: 'When you get to a certain age, when you get old, I mean old and decrepit and everything like that ... then you wouldn't care about money or where you are because you wouldn't know what you're bloody doing anyway. Then it [an Administration Order] would be alright. But they had me'.

Prior to the Administration Order, Patrick had managed his affairs well. In fact, he felt he had done a better job than the administrators. And the order caused him great anxiety: 'They were taking 95% for rent, right. And then by the end of that I had only \$20 or \$40 to live on. A week! You

try and live on that. They call it "spending money". I spent it in about two minutes'.

Patrick tried talking to the State Trustees and asked for a copy of his file, without success. He then approached several lawyers for help, also without success. Eventually, a friend put him in contact with our Health-Justice Lawyer at Bendigo Community Health Service's Kangaroo Flat site.

Our Health-Justice Partnership Lawyer took Patrick's matter to VCAT, which overturned the order. He and his wife now manage their affairs independently and Patrick feels like he has regained control of his life: 'I got my life back ... You need to get some sort of control. If you don't get any sort of control, you might as well just get up and bang your head against the wall'.

His health has also improved: 'I felt like a lot of pressure ... and anxiety ... was lifted straight off ... my blood pressure started to come down ... If I did not have access to the Health-Justice Partnership Lawyer I would probably be in a mental health facility'.

## Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre

Goulburn Valley CLC is a generalist CLC that undertakes a range of activities, including:

- legal assistance (information, referral, advice and casework)
- community development and legal education
- law reform and special projects

Goulburn Valley CLC operates across the Goulburn Valley (Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Strathbogie, Benalla, Mansfield and Moira LGAs).

Goulburn Valley CLC staff attended the August 2016 National Association of Community Legal Centres Conference in Fremantle and undertook numerous Continuing Professional Development and other training opportunities, especially those provided through the Women's Legal Service, the Victorian Federation of CLCs, the GV Legal Association and Victoria Legal Aid CPD programs. Our Managing Lawyer visited the Magnuka Aboriginal Community Service, Aboriginal Legal Service and the court in Bourke, NSW to discuss the Justice Reinvestment project being trialled there and promote our learnings regarding the value of a therapeutic justice approach to offending.

### SHEPPARTON-BASED GENERALIST SERVICES

Goulburn Valley CLC Lawyers provided face-to-face advice and casework in Shepparton and at outreach clinics at Benalla Health Service. Tuesday Evening Advice clinics were supported by local volunteer Lawyers and supervised by Goulburn Valley CLC Lawyers.

CLC staff provided information, advice and casework services in relation to family law, credit and debt, fines, crime, government complaints, consumer law and neighbourhood disputes. Where we were unable to assist, we provided information and relevant referrals.

### RUMBALARA HEALTH-JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

Goulburn Valley CLC and Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative's Health-Justice Partnership embeds a Community Lawyer and a Paralegal

at Rumbalara to provide legal services in a culturally appropriate location. The highlight for the year was the recruitment of a Senior Lawyer and a Paralegal for the new Rumbalara HJP and the establishment of our legal service at the Mooroopna Campus. The Paralegal role is an Identified Position under the EO Act and a very important factor in ensuring that our Aboriginal clients not only receive strong therapeutic support from the health service, but that this occurs in a culturally sensitive environment. The continuing support and advice of the Rumbalara Steering Committee has been greatly valued.

### FAMILY VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEGAL SERVICE

Goulburn Valley CLC's strong involvement in the Family Violence Duty Lawyer scheme continued through the year with a further round of successful funding applications to the Victorian Government. The centre was also successful in obtaining grants to provide legal education to women with disabilities and CALD youth.

Goulburn Valley CLC provided family violence prevention Duty Lawyer services at Shepparton, Bendigo, Seymour, Cobram, Benalla and Mansfield courts. We provided nuanced, respectful and quality family violence legal services, despite a changing environment, high client volumes and funding gaps. We have renewed our collaborative work with many other services and are active in family violence prevention networks.

### BENALLA HEALTH-JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

In 2015-16, Goulburn Valley CLC entered into a partnership with Benalla Health Service. Our Lawyer continues to attend the service one day per week to provide legal advice and casework to health service clients and other disadvantaged members of the local community dealing with legal issues.

Our Benalla Lawyer and Therapeutic Justice Lawyers delivered Legal Health Check education to health service staff, to help therapists understand the types of legal issues

‘Goulburn Valley CLC staff were amazing. Very, very helpful. I was after an IVO ... they could see I was distressed. I was taking out the IVO to protect my autistic son, making the son distressed. It was a safety issue. Your staff were like ... let's get that IVO. They were willing to fight to get what I needed to protect my kids.’ *Goulburn Valley CLC client*

‘The Lawyer made me feel at ease. Willing to actually help me. All came back to the safety of my kids. Made me feel safer.’ *Goulburn Valley CLC client*

‘Definitely positive. Able to get things and have more control over the situation. She gave me confidence, reassured me every time that what I'm doing is what's best.’ *Goulburn Valley CLC client*

‘It's good to know that they are there. The Loddon Campaspe CLC Lawyer was really good and when you are going through tough times, she was there to help. She told me different ways I could go ahead with it and she gave me all the different answers and she helped me go about it. She was very helpful.’ *Goulburn Valley CLC client*

‘It really was explained well, which was good ... and both times I have used the service were good, particularly the second time. I would have no hesitation to tell people to use your services.’ *Goulburn Valley CLC client*



\* Due to client services database change in 2017, only 2015-16 figures available.

that might impact on their clients' health and to help them make appropriate referrals.

### THERAPEUTIC JUSTICE PROGRAM

This highly successful project, funded by the Legal Services Board and Commissioner, is now in its third year of operation. The program is an innovative and collaborative service based on the principles of therapeutic jurisprudence. It targets people with complex healthcare needs and related legal issues who are users of the Shepparton Magistrates' Court.

The program has its foundations in a Health-Justice Partnership between Goulburn Valley CLC and Primary Care Connect. The program Lawyer provides legal information, advice and advocacy assistance to program participants and legal education to the relevant health and social services. The program Case Manager is an allied health professional who connects participants in the program to appropriate support services in the areas of health, social and cultural support (of particular importance to Koori participants and new arrivals to the Shepparton community).

Several 'snapshots' have been taken with volunteer assistance during the course of the project and final data processing and evaluation will occur early in 2018.

### COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

Community legal education is a core component of Goulburn Valley CLC's work. We frequently respond to ad-hoc requests from schools and community organisations to deliver plain-language legal education to students, staff and members.

GVCLC Seymour and Benalla Lawyers presented the first of two suites of Community Legal Education sessions to CALD youth in Shepparton, with assistance from Uniting Care and funding from the Department of Justice and Regulation.

### ADVOCACY AND CONNECTEDNESS

We continued to develop and strengthen our relationships with other service providers in our community and participated in a number of joint activities, including the White Ribbon campaign, the Koori Court Reference Group,

the Shepparton Law Courts Redevelopment Steering Committee, the Goulburn Valley Family Law Pathways Network, the Therapeutic Justice Project Reference Group, the CALD Community and Youth Committees and the Goulburn Valley Family Violence Prevention Network.

Our close relationship with the Centre for Multicultural Youth saw their Youth Referral and Independent Persons and School programs relocate into our recently refurbished suite 4 at Nixon Street, with a generous contribution to the additional rent for this enhanced facility.

### EVALUATION AND LEGAL NEEDS ANALYSIS

We continue to increase our capacity around monitoring and evaluation (M & E), in part through our participation in the Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres' Outcomes Measurement Framework project. M & E allows us to improve our practice and increase and demonstrate our impact. Many of our projects now include M & E as a core component of the work.

### THE YEAR AHEAD

Securing adequate longer-term funding will continue to be a major challenge despite the small relief given us when the Commonwealth reversed its planned cuts at the end of the financial year.

The Family Violence Duty Lawyer responsibilities grew with the addition of Mansfield Court to our list. They will grow again within months as the Specialist FV Court commences operation in Shepparton, with additional hearing days already occurring.

The loss of our Family Law Lawyer in May left a large hole in our service capabilities, and recruitment is a priority once forward funding is properly secured.

The next step will be to try to draw together the strings that hold our court services together with a continuity-of-service model that closes the current gap between our Family Violence, Therapeutic Justice and Rumbalara HJP practices.

## CLIENT STORY

Sally\* is a disability support pensioner. She approached Goulburn Valley CLC after she was arrested by the local Sheriff and bailed to appear before a Magistrate in relation to 14 warrants totalling almost \$4500 in unpaid parking tickets, speeding fines and tolls accrued by her ex-husband and her son in cars registered in her name.

In 2009 Sally separated from her husband, with whom she had three children. Sally had run her own business. When she approached Goulburn Valley CLC she was depressed and anxious, with little family support. Her son and his girlfriend were trying to force her to sign her car over to him and to pay for the car's registration.

Sally explained that her ex-husband had been controlling and manipulative and that all of the family's bills, debts and other liabilities were in her name, including the vehicles. Sally felt that her son had begun to mirror her ex-husband's abusive behaviour and was pressuring her to give into his and his girlfriend's demands.

The situation was made worse by Sally's battles with post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from the abuse in her marriage, which had in turn led to the breakdown of her business. Sally was no longer working and was struggling to get by on the pension.

Sally told us that she had informed VicRoads that she was not responsible for the fines and had done her best to pay. However, she had not been notified about many of her ex-husband's and son's fines and, as a result, they had not been paid.

Without any income and with debts left by her ex-husband exceeding \$100,000, Sally was struggling financially. She often had to request food from St Vincent de Paul just to get by. Due to her financial situation, Sally was not in a position to pay the fines, even under a payment plan. Sally was frightened that she would be sent to prison.

Even though her marriage had ended several years previously, Sally was only now beginning to understand the extent of her ex-husband's control over her and how isolated she had been for so many years. We explained to Sally that family violence takes many different forms, including, physical, emotional, psychological and financial abuse. Sally later reflected that this was a 'lightbulb moment' for her.

We helped Sally to write a submission to the Magistrate that argued that, given her medical condition and financial situation, imprisonment would be unduly harsh and oppressive. Sally represented herself at court. The Magistrate determined that the \$4500 be withdrawn and Sally was free to go.

A week later, Sally visited our office. She felt like a weight had been lifted from her shoulders. She told us that before the court case she would have simply caved in to her family's demands and signed anything that was handed to her. She now recognises that this behaviour is unacceptable and constitutes family violence. She now feels less overwhelmed and more confident about her situation. And she can now stand up to her son and his girlfriend and has said 'No' several times.

\* Not her real name

## Loddon Campaspe CLC Family Violence Program

Loddon Campaspe CLC's Family Violence Prevention and Child Protection services steer people towards safety via court applications for Intervention Orders.

Loddon Campaspe CLC continues to offer free legal advice and support to people experiencing family violence when they appear at Bendigo, Maryborough, Echuca, Castlemaine and Kyneton Magistrates' Courts. We provide high-quality, respectful and specialist information, referrals, advice and casework for some of the region's most vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

The continuation of these services is especially important in the aftermath of the Royal Commission into Family Violence.

Following the completion of the 'Why Didn't You Ask?' family violence project in 2014, the Victorian Government provided additional and much-needed funding to ensure that we were able to continue to assist clients at the Castlemaine and Kyneton courts.

We work holistically and in partnership with other services to ensure that clients experiencing family violence are supported. In 2015-16 we started to collaborate with Bendigo Family & Financial Services, who attend our Family Violence Prevention Legal Service outreach to Bendigo Magistrates' Court to provide advice and referrals for vulnerable clients whose family violence includes financial abuse, an often unrecognised aspect of family violence.

We continue to engage with family violence networks in our region, including the Bendigo White Ribbon initiative and the Loddon Campaspe Family Violence Advisory Committee. We also continue to work with local agencies such as Annie North and the Centre for Non-Violence. In 2017 Bendigo Court welcomed an Applicant & Respondent worker. Bendigo Court now employs Applicant and Respondent Workers, and we work with them to identify clients at high risk and needing priority assistance.

While the Royal Commission into Family Violence has shone a light on the issue, a great deal of work needs to be done to ensure that its recommendations are implemented. Our role will be to ensure that vulnerable and disadvantaged clients experiencing family violence continue to get the help they need, when they need it. We will continue to work with local MPs and other community organisations to ensure that we provide a robust voice in this space.



# Loddon Campaspe CLC Health–Justice Partnership

‘Once I got linked to the Lawyer and she got involved, my anxiety got better. I am not on Xanax. Now I have help so my anxiety has reduced ... Why am I less stressed? Well, with the Lawyer, I know my options. I never knew I could fight and be heard. I didn’t know my options after reunification and I never knew I could get half so far. Now I feel I have my life back. I am on the way to a certificate and feel like jumping in the air like the Toyota ad.’ *Health–Justice Partnership client*

‘Training that’s tailored and sequential like building blocks is key. Combine this with secondary consultations and we get validations and it helps our confidence in helping clients ... It empowers us to do what we need to do, to front up to power when it’s abused and arm our clients when they get trampled on ...’ *Bendigo Community Health Service professional*

For many people, legal problems can manifest as health issues. Health–Justice Partnerships recognise this link and bring health and legal service providers together to improve the health, social and legal outcomes for their clients.

Our Health–Justice Partnership with Bendigo Community Health Services (BCHS) embeds a Lawyer at BCHS’ Kangaroo Flat site. The Lawyer provides legal advice and casework to BCHS’ vulnerable and disadvantaged clients. The Lawyer also delivers tailored professional development opportunities to BCHS staff and provides them with secondary consultations that result in client referrals.

Over the last 12 months the relationships between our Lawyer and BCHS staff have continued to grow, as has the health workers’ trust and confidence in our Lawyer. To further strengthen and extend the partnership, Loddon Campaspe CLC co-located with BCHS’ central Bendigo site in September 2017.

The partnership has identified a range of client legal issues, including family law child contact matters, infringements, criminal matters, family violence, child protection and consumer issues.

The project has now been evaluated and indicates positive impacts for clients; the final evaluation will be released in late 2017. Key evaluation findings demonstrate that over the period of the pilot program (2013–16), our Health–Justice Partnership Lawyer provided casework on 159 occasions (covering 47 legal problem types) and provided advice on 160 occasions (covering more than 50 legal problem types). Over the pilot period, the Lawyer provided 540 secondary consultations to BCHS staff.

Given the positive evaluation results, we hope that dedicated funding for this partnership will be continued and secured.



# Loddon Campaspe CLC Child Protection Legal Service

Loddon Campaspe CLC’s Child Protection Legal Service helps people with child protection matters at courts in Bendigo, Echuca, Kerang, Swan Hill, Kyneton, Castlemaine and Maryborough, and at VCAT in Melbourne. The service is a pilot program funded by Victoria Legal Aid, who were keen to explore the potential for greater community legal centre involvement in child protection matters.

The service addresses priority clients’ children’s law and related legal issues by providing targeted, timely and continuous services, including advice, Duty Lawyer assistance, casework and community legal education (e.g. The Stronger Communities, Safer Children forum held in late 2016, below).

As a holistic service, our Lawyers encourage and support clients with referrals to other local services (legal and non-legal) that can help them address underlying issues. While the program has continued to employ two Lawyers focused on child protection work, other CLC Lawyers have also assisted with this work, and staff capacity and awareness of child protection issues has significantly increased for the benefit of our clients.

Family violence is a ubiquitous feature in child protection matters. Our program complements Loddon Campaspe CLC’s existing services and builds capacity among our staff, allowing them to continue to provide assistance to our priority client groups: women and children.

The pilot’s focus in its second year has been evaluation. The consultants, the Incus Group, conducted a qualitative and quantitative evaluation. Although their report is yet to be finalised, the feedback to date has been extremely positive and in September 2017 Victoria Legal Aid committed to ongoing service funding.



## Loddon Campaspe CLC Tipping the Scales project

Tipping the Scales takes a multifaceted approach to identifying and addressing the injustices faced by women, children, young people and families in Maryborough. Tipping the Scales is a Community Justice Partnership (CJP) and justice reinvestment program.

We view our work through a human rights lens, which informs both the work and its direction. As a CJP, Tipping the Scales' philosophy aligns with Health-Justice Partnerships and Therapeutic Justice Partnerships. These growing movements believe that clients with interrelated health, social and legal issues are better served when their legal, health and other professionals work together.

In the Central Goldfields region, our project Lawyer and community development professional work alongside partner organisations to provide clients with timely legal advice and to engage them with appropriate community-based agencies and supports.

The aim of this is to provide a locally networked, rural legal service that can support vulnerable clients seeking legal advice and/or representation at Maryborough courts while also being a vehicle for effective social/community advocacy and systemic change. We recognise that, in order to address injustices, we have to promote and develop community connectedness, knowledge of processes for systemic change and place-based strength.

Our work focuses on family violence but recognises that child protection, criminal law and family law are often inextricably linked to this issue.

By working with organisations that already have a presence within the Maryborough community, we deliver effective and targeted legal advice and advocacy. We work alongside Go Goldfields and its community partners (Victoria Police, the Centre for Non-Violence, Maryborough Rotary and local health services) to mobilise collective expertise and extend our reach into that community.

The Legal Services Board and Commissioner funds this program.

## Goulburn Valley CLC Family Violence Program

Goulburn Valley CLC's Family Violence Program steers people towards safety via court applications for Intervention Orders.

In 2016-17 we continued the delivery of our family violence services to the Shepparton, Cobram, Benalla and Seymour Magistrates' Courts. We also successfully applied for funding to extend this service to Mansfield Magistrates' Court. This new service has been established with the support of the local Victoria Police Family Violence Unit, Court Registry staff and Mansfield Health and has been well received.

Our Lawyers take a holistic approach when providing family violence legal services. The aim is to resolve the legal issues while at the same time linking clients with services that will address the ongoing impact of family violence on a client's life. Clients are frequently referred to support services such as counselling, parenting, men's behaviour change, drug and alcohol, housing, and for further legal advice in family and criminal law.

Most family violence services are undertaken on a Duty Lawyer basis. However, clients identified as being particularly vulnerable receive follow-up and ongoing casework support across a number of court dates. Frequently, staff from other services flag particularly vulnerable clients with our staff prior to court appearances to ensure they get the level of care they require.



## Goulburn Valley CLC Therapeutic Justice Program

Goulburn Valley CLC's Therapeutic Justice Program is delivered at the Shepparton Magistrates' Court three days a week, in partnership with Primary Care Connect. The program employs one Lawyer and one Case Manager. Both work at Primary Care Connect and at the courts, breaking down traditional workplace barriers. The resulting relationships are leading to a cross-pollination of referrals and secondary consultations and an increase in client trust.

The program provides a holistic health and legal case management service which helps offenders to address underlying health and personal issues that prevent them from dealing with their offending behaviour.

In its second year, the program assisted 107 people. Twenty of the 107 clients were assisted in the traditional Health-Justice Partnership model; i.e., the Therapeutic Justice Lawyer saw clients of Primary Care Connect. The remaining 87 clients fell within the Therapeutic Justice target group of complex healthcare issues and legal matters before the Shepparton Magistrates' Court.

All clients had substance and mental health issues. In eight instances, the program connected not only the offender but the whole family. Eleven per cent of our clients were referred by a friend or a family member who had previously participated with or engaged with the program.

All of our clients who received a prison term had their term reduced and many continued to engage with the program after their release.

The program Lawyer provided legal assistance to 43 clients, 23 of whom fell within the program's target group. Twenty of our clients were assisted in the traditional Health-Justice Partnership model by the program Lawyer for legal matters other than criminal matters.

The program Lawyer provided 435 secondary consults. This has increased the capacity and knowledge of health and social workers in relation to certain legal issues and processes. It also resolves the issue for clients and builds Primary Care Connect clients' trust in Lawyers.

The Therapeutic Justice Lawyer, alongside other Goulburn Valley CLC Lawyers, has delivered eight legal education seminars to health and social staff from Primary Care Connect, Goulburn Valley Health, FamilyCare, Kildonan Uniting Care, and Brayton Youth. Six of these were information sessions about legal services in the Goulburn Valley and covered the Legal Health Check Tool, which we adapted from QPILCH. The remaining two sessions covered infringements and family violence. These sessions have increased local workers' capacity to identify legal issues and support clients.

The Legal Services Board and Commissioner funds this program.



## Goulburn Valley CLC Rumbalara Health–Justice Partnership

Goulburn Valley CLC and Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative's Health–Justice Partnership embeds a Community Lawyer and a Paralegal at Rumbalara to provide legal services in a culturally appropriate location.

Our Rumbalara team have their own portable unit at Rumbalara, with separate offices and a waiting room and kitchen area. The unit has been set up to make clients feel welcome and valued, with comfortable seating and books and toys for children.

The program has adopted a therapeutic justice approach. We engage with community members before a legal issue arises or early in the issue's evolution. Once engaged, we work with clients to help them overcome the social issues underlying their legal issues. The Community Lawyer also takes every opportunity to work with Rumbalara staff to develop and promote their understanding of therapeutic justice practices and concepts.

The program provides legal advice, information and referrals in all areas of law. The greatest need has been around family law, family violence, child protection, wills and debt-related issues.

The team was originally based at Rumbalara for three days and at Goulburn Valley CLC for two days. However, we came to realise that we needed to be available at Rumbalara more often. Our Rumbalara office is now open from 9am to 1pm daily, with the option of afternoon appointments as necessary.

Relationships and time spent with the community are key to promoting change for some of our most vulnerable clients. Accordingly, we now also deliver intensive support to 5–6 vulnerable clients with multiple socio-legal issues. We meet weekly with these clients and closely monitor their engagement with other services.

Our Community Lawyer is currently working towards sharing case management of these clients with appropriate Rumbalara staff and other culturally appropriate professionals. This model is developing organically with one of our intensive clients, who is also working with an Aboriginal Support Worker at Primary Care Connect.

The program also provides legal education to Rumbalara staff. We help them to identify legal issues arising in their clients' lives and where to refer their clients regarding appropriate legal and quasi-legal issues. This education is provided through secondary consults initiated by Rumbalara staff and via informal yarns and the Lawyer's attendance at Rumbalara events. Initially, we thought it would be provided through Legal Health Check seminars. However, we found this method was unsuccessful. One-to-one and informal delivery was found to be more effective so we have adopted this approach.

Victoria Legal Aid's Community Legal Centre Innovation and Transformation Fund funds this program.

## Our People

### PATRON

Howard Nathan, Supreme Court Justice (ret.), Adjunct Professor, La Trobe University Law School

### BOARD

Niall Hensey (Chair): Operations Manager, Haven; Home, Safe

Sally Smith: Manager, Right People for Country Program, Department of Premier and Cabinet

Trevor Kuhle: Lawyer, Robertson Hyetts

Tim Adam: Centre Supervisor, Lifeline

Baydon Widdicombe: Deputy CEO/HR Manager, Bendigo and District Aboriginal Co-operative

Patrick Jennings: Certified Practising Accountant, Strategem

Andrew Chittenden: Finance Manager, Haven; Home, Safe

Yvette Jaczina: General Manager, Centre for Non-Violence

### ARC JUSTICE STAFF

Hayley Mansfield, Executive Officer (from October 2016)

Chris Sedgman, Acting Executive Officer (July–October 2016); Manager, People and Corporate Services (from October 2016)

Natasha Gray, Finance Officer

Dawn Jackson, Finance Officer

Cheryl Urch, Finance and Administration Officer (casual)

Steve Womersley, Communications Worker

### HOUSING JUSTICE STAFF

Mim Dineen, Manager (resigned September 2016)

Kirsty Waller, Lead Worker; Acting Manager (September 2016–July 2017); Manager (from July 2017)

Lyndall Williams, Advocacy Support Worker; Acting Lead Worker

Leah Berger, Advocacy and Support Worker

Ann-Marie Roberts, Advocacy and Support Worker

Denise Williams, Administration Officer

# Loddon Campaspe CLC

## LODDON CAMPASPE CLC STAFF

Clare Sauro, Legal Practice Manager  
 Anna Dorevitch, Senior Lawyer  
 Nickie King, Senior Child Protection Lawyer  
 Jessica McCartney, Health-Justice Partnership Lawyer  
 Christie George, Child Protection Lawyer  
 Robert Southgate, Community Lawyer; Health-Justice Partnership Research Assistant  
 Carolyn Dew, Maryborough Project & Community Development Worker  
 Nicole Smith, Community Lawyer  
 Greg Johnston, Community Development Lawyer  
 Annika Kearton, Project, Education and Community Development Worker  
 Isabelle Manning, Paralegal  
 Diane Tran, Paralegal  
 Elaine Harrington, Legal Administration Worker  
 Carolyn Staszkiwicz, Reception/Administration

## GOULBURN VALLEY CLC STAFF

Kaz Gurney, Managing Lawyer  
 Acacia Burns, Community Lawyer  
 Sejal Amin, Therapeutic Justice Lawyer  
 Hannah Fiddelaers, Community Lawyer  
 Julie O'Connor, Community Lawyer  
 Georgia Morrissey, Rumbalara Community Lawyer  
 Brandy Skipper, Paralegal Receptionist  
 Jasmine Day, Paralegal Receptionist

## Our Supporters

Our volunteer Lawyers, administrators and students help us to deliver our services to the community. They make our advice services possible and extend our ability to service the unmet legal needs in our communities. We are indebted to them for their hard work and enthusiasm.

### HOUSING JUSTICE

#### Student placements

Kerry Butterworth  
 Ann-Marie Roberts

#### Volunteers

Phillipa Close  
 Beth Jones

Loddon Campaspe CLC volunteer Lawyers, administrators and students contributed

**1 8 1 4** VOLUNTEER HOURS

#### Student volunteers/ placements

Eleisha Cairns  
 (Alex) Jim Allan Collins  
 Georgia Edwards  
 Alex Fitzgerald  
 Isabelle Fletcher  
 Tristana Freeman  
 William Griffin  
 Kelsey Johnston  
 Joseph Keily  
 Peter Korteman  
 Joshua Liebe  
 Keely McDonald  
 Shannon Robinson-Hore  
 Shaun Stephenson  
 Sarah Stewart  
 Nakita Thomson  
 Khayshie Tilak-Ramesh  
 Hayden Walker

#### Administration volunteers

Zoe Friday  
 Bev Garlick  
 Heather Osland  
 Freya Peel  
 Emma Wright

#### Legal volunteers

Mark Bolton  
 Annette Brewer  
 Zoe Broadbent  
 Melissa Buchanan  
 Chris Casey  
 Jay Chandramohan  
 Will Conlan  
 Carolyn Davey  
 Aaron Day  
 Mark Donaldson  
 Skye Engwerda  
 Frank Gay  
 Meg Gilbert  
 Paula Glassborow  
 Peter Goffin  
 Caroline Granger  
 Michael Hennessy  
 Jess James-Murphy  
 Kayla Kristensen  
 Trevor Kuhle  
 Alastair Lyall

Aimee Maud  
 Ashlyn McCurdy  
 Sam McGee  
 Trent McGregor  
 John McPherson  
 Tessa Mead  
 Peter Mendi  
 Clare Molan  
 Emma Murphy  
 Kimberly Parker  
 Alexandria Redding  
 Russell Robertson  
 Lachlan Singe  
 Alix Steed  
 Shea Stewart  
 Madeleine Vear  
 Cathryn Wardrop  
 Greg Westbrook  
 Hannah Wilson  
 Tom Wolff  
 Greg Wolszczak



Goulburn Valley CLC volunteer Lawyers, administrators and students contributed

**1 5 3 1 VOLUNTEER HOURS**

### Student volunteers/ placements

Sheredyn Legg  
Mae Mactier  
Annabelle Mendoza  
Christopher Mingah  
Jacqueline Napolitano  
Alexander Newell  
Celia O’Kane  
Shelby Pridham  
Erin Ritchie  
Jacinta Robinson  
Erin Ritchie

Peter Sherman  
Meagan Van Der Schoor  
Patrick Westman  
Bronwyn Wrigley

### Administration volunteers

Natasha Boyle

### Legal volunteers

Shane Appel  
Olivia Barlow  
Sachini Chandrasekara  
Jessica Eagles

William Gubbin  
Cameron Hook  
Owen Lai  
James Maxwell  
Andrew McCowan  
Tessa Mitchell  
Erica Molyneaux  
Gregory Prosser  
Louise Secomb  
Polly Symons  
Louise Secomb  
Stephen Tuck

### PRO BONO AND IN-KIND SUPPORT, SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS

#### Housing Justice

Consumer Affairs Victoria  
Department of Health and  
Human Services  
Victoria Legal Aid

Go Goldfields  
Haven; Home, Safe  
Juliana Smith Law  
La Trobe University  
La Trobe University, Bendigo  
Students Association  
Legal Services Board and  
Commissioner  
O’Farrell Robertson McMahon  
Lawyers  
Reichstein Foundation  
Robertson Hyetts Solicitors  
Strategem Community  
Foundation  
Stuthridge Legal  
Victoria Law Foundation  
Victoria Legal Aid  
Women’s Health Loddon Mallee

#### Goulburn Valley CLC

ANZ Seeds  
Benalla Health Service  
Department of Justice and  
Regulation  
Fairley Foundation  
Family Care  
Fairley Foundation  
Igniting Change  
Legal Services Board and  
Commissioner  
Mansfield District Hospital  
Primary Care Connect  
Rumbalara Aboriginal  
Cooperative Ltd  
Victoria Legal Aid

#### Loddon Campaspe CLC

Arnold Dallas McPherson  
Bendigo Community Health  
Services  
Bendigo Law Association  
Boomtown Wines  
Catholic Care Sandhurst  
Centre for Non-Violence  
City of Greater Bendigo  
Clayton Utz Foundation  
Department of Justice and  
Regulation

**ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED**  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

**FINANCIAL REPORT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED**  
**30 JUNE 2017**

**DIRECTORS' REPORT**

Your directors present their financial report of Advocacy and Rights Centre Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2017.

**DIRECTORS**

The names of the directors in office at any time during or since the end of the year are:

Niall Hensey	Chairperson
Sally Smith	Member
Trevor Kuhle	Member
Tim Adam	Member
Baydon Widdicombe	Member
Patrick Jennings	Member
Barry Keane	Resigned January 2017
Jennifer Wilson	Resigned October 2016
Deb Allan	Resigned October 2016
Celia Adams	Resigned June 2017

Directors have been in office since the start of the financial year to the date of this report, unless otherwise stated.

**PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES**

The major activities during the year were the:

- Provision of support & referrals for current & potential public & private housing tenants in the Loddon Mallee area.
- Provision of free legal assistance in the Loddon Campaspe and Goulburn Valley areas.
- Provision of consumer complaints to disadvantaged consumers.
- Provision of specific legal project work.

**SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN STATE OF AFFAIRS**

There were no significant changes in the state of affairs of the Company.

**OPERATING RESULTS**

The net result of the Company for the financial year was a profit of \$45,625 (loss of \$101,886 in 2016).

Revenue has increased by \$498,707 compared to the previous financial year.

Expenses have increased by \$351,196 compared to the previous financial year.

An increase in cash of \$161,615 was achieved.

**DIRECTORS' DECLARATION**

The directors of the company declare that:

1. The financial statements and notes are in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001*; and
  - (a) comply with Accounting Standards and the Corporations Regulations 2001; and
  - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June 2017 and of its performance for the year ended on that date of the company.
2. In the directors' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

This declaration is made in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTOR

Dated this 30 day of October 2017.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTOR

DIRECTORS' REPORT

DIRECTORS AND AUDITORS INDEMNIFICATION

The Company has not, during or since the financial year, in respect of any person who is or has been an officer or auditor of the Company:

- indemnified or made any relevant agreement for indemnifying against a liability incurred as an officer, including costs and expenses in successfully defending legal proceedings; or
- paid or agreed to pay a premium in respect of a contract insuring against a liability incurred as an officer for the costs or expenses to defend legal proceedings.

DIRECTORS BENEFITS

Since the end of the previous financial year no director of the Company has received or 'become entitled to receive' a benefit other than:

- (i) A benefit included in the aggregate amount of emoluments received or due and receivable by directors shown in the accounts; or
- (ii) a fixed salary as a full-time employee of the Company or of a related corporation,

by reason of a contract made by the Company or a related entity corporation with the director or with a firm of which they are a member or with an entity in which they have a substantial financial interest.

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd is a company limited by guarantee. If it is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the Company. At 30th June 2017, the number of members was 6.

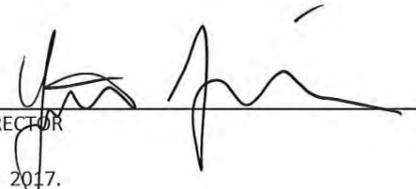
AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

The lead auditor's independence declaration for the year ended 30 June 2017 has been received and can be found on the following page.

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Board of Directors.

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIRECTOR

Dated this 30 day of October 2017

  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIRECTOR

2017.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME  
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Revenue	2	2,741,139	2,242,432
Employee Expenses	3a	(1,907,860)	(1,678,926)
Supplies & Consumables	3b	(728,580)	(611,616)
Audit Fees	11	(4,730)	(4,730)
<b>Net Result Before Capital and Specific Items</b>		<b>99,969</b>	<b>(52,840)</b>
Depreciation and Amortisation	4	(54,344)	(49,046)
<b>Net Result for the year</b>		<b>45,625</b>	<b>(101,886)</b>

The above Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
AS AT 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	5	1,601,759	1,440,144
Investments		54,770	54,112
Trade and Other Receivables		7,600	8,211
Income in Advance		11,000	-
Accrued Income		1,230	1,650
Bond Paid		27,574	8,801
Prepayments		70,908	80,742
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,774,841</b>	<b>1,593,660</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, Plant & Equipment	6	132,662	173,394
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>132,662</b>	<b>173,394</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>1,907,503</b>	<b>1,767,054</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Trade and Other Payables	7	152,640	123,298
Provisions	8	216,688	166,082
Interest Bearing Liabilities	9	209	2,334
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>369,537</b>	<b>291,714</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Provisions	8	37,290	20,080
Interest Bearing Liabilities	9	-	209
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>37,290</b>	<b>20,289</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>406,827</b>	<b>312,003</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,500,676</b>	<b>1,455,051</b>
<b>EQUITY</b>			
Retained Earnings		1,500,676	1,455,051
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>		<b>1,500,676</b>	<b>1,455,051</b>
Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets	12		
Commitments for Expenditure	15		

The above Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Retained Earnings \$	Total \$
<b>Balance at 1 July 2015</b>	1,556,937	1,556,937
Result Attributable to the Entity	(101,886)	(101,886)
<b>Balance at 30 June 2016</b>	<b>1,455,051</b>	<b>1,455,051</b>
Result Attributable to the Entity	45,625	45,625
<b>Balance at 30 June 2017</b>	<b>1,500,676</b>	<b>1,500,676</b>

The above Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>			
<b>Receipts</b>			
Commonwealth, State and Local Government Grants		2,929,675	2,489,094
Receipts from Donations, Bequests and Raffles		-	2,159
Interest Received		16,022	23,530
<b>Payments</b>			
Employee Expenses		(1,840,044)	(1,666,912)
Supplies & Consumables		(771,894)	(707,609)
Net GST Paid to ATO		(155,540)	(168,524)
<b>CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>	14b	<b>178,219</b>	<b>(28,262)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Payment for Property, Plant and Equipment		(13,612)	(34,062)
Proceeds from (Payments for) Investments		(658)	(12,771)
<b>NET CASH USED IN INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>(14,270)</b>	<b>(46,833)</b>
<b>CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>			
Proceeds/(Repayment) of Borrowings		(2,334)	(2,081)
<b>NET CASH FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES</b>		<b>(2,334)</b>	<b>(2,081)</b>
<b>NET INCREASE IN CASH HELD</b>		161,615	(77,176)
<b>CASH AT BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>		1,440,144	1,517,320
<b>CASH AT END OF YEAR</b>	14a	<b>1,601,759</b>	<b>1,440,144</b>

The above Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

**NOTE 1 : STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements cover Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd as an individual entity, incorporated and domiciled in Australia. Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd is a company limited by guarantee.

**Basis of preparation**

These general purpose financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the *Corporations Act 2001* and Australian Accounting Standards and Interpretations of the Australian Accounting Standards Board. The company is a not-for-profit entity for financial reporting purposes under Australian Accounting Standards. Material accounting policies adopted in preparation of these financial statements are presented below and have been consistently applied unless otherwise stated.

The financial statements, except for cash flow information, have been prepared on an accrual basis and are based on historical costs, modified where applicable, by the measurement at fair value of selected non-current assets, financial assets and financial liabilities. The amounts presented in the financial statements have been rounded to the nearest dollar.

**(a) Cash and Cash Equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term highly liquid investments with original maturities of 3 months or less and bank overdrafts. Bank overdrafts are shown within borrowings in current liabilities in the Statement of Financial Position.

For the Statement of Cash Flows presentation purposes, cash and cash equivalents includes bank overdrafts, which are included as current borrowings in the Statement of Financial Position.

**(b) Receivables**

Receivables and other debtors include amounts due from members as well as receivables from customers for goods sold in the ordinary course of business. Receivables expected to be collected within 12 months of the end of the reporting period are classified as current assets. All other receivables are classified as non-current assets.

Receivables are initially recognised at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method, less any provision for impairment.

**(c) Financial Instruments**

**Initial recognition and measurement**

Financial assets and financial liabilities are recognised when the Company becomes a party to the contractual provisions to the instrument. For financial assets, this is the equivalent to the date that the Company commits itself to either purchase or sell the asset (i.e. trade date accounting is adopted).

Financial instrument are initially measured at fair value plus transaction costs except where the instrument is classified 'At fair value through profit or loss', in which case transaction costs are expensed to profit or loss.

**Classification and subsequent measurement**

Financial instruments are subsequently measured at fair value, amortised cost using the effective interest method, or cost.

*Amortised cost* is calculated as the amount at which the financial asset or financial liability is measured at initial recognition less principal repayments and any reduction for impairment, and adjusted for any cumulative amortisation of the difference between the initial amount and the maturity amount calculated using the *effective interest method*.

The *effective interest* method is used to allocate interest income or interest expense over the relevant period and is equivalent to the rate that discounts estimated future cash payments or receipts over the expected life of the financial instrument to the net carrying amount of the financial asset or financial liability. Revisions to expected future cash flows will necessitate an adjustment to the carrying amount with a consequential recognition of income or expense in profit or loss.

**Loans and receivables**

Loans and receivables are financial instrument assets with fixed and determinable payments that are not quoted on an active market. These assets are initially recognised at fair value plus any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial measurement, loans and receivables are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less any impairment.

Loans and receivables category includes cash and deposits, term deposits with maturity greater than three months, trade receivables, loans and other receivables, but not statutory receivables.

NOTE 1 : STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(c) Financial Instruments (Continued)

**Held-to-maturity investments**

Held-to-maturity investments are non-derivative financial assets that have fixed maturities and fixed or determinable payments, and it is the Company's intention to hold these investments to maturity. They are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest rate method.

**Available-for-sale financial assets**

Available-for-sale financial assets are those designated as available-for-sale or not classified in any other category of financial instrument asset. Such assets are initially recognised at fair value. Gains and losses arising from changes in fair value are recognised directly in equity until the investment is disposed of or is determined to be impaired, at which time the cumulative gain or loss previously recognised in equity is included in the net result for the period.

(d) Property, Plant and Equipment

Each class of property, plant and equipment is carried at cost or fair value as indicated less, where applicable, any accumulated depreciation and impairment losses.

Plant and equipment are measured on the cost basis and are therefore carried at cost less accumulated depreciation and any accumulated impairment losses. In the event the carrying amount of plant and equipment is greater than the estimated recoverable amount, the carrying amount is written down to the estimated recoverable amount and impairment losses are recognised either in profit or loss or as a revaluation decrease if the impairment losses relate to a revalued asset. A formal assessment of recoverable amount is made when impairment indicators are present.

The cost of fixed assets constructed by the Company includes the cost of materials, direct labour, borrowing costs and an appropriate proportion of fixed and variable overheads.

Subsequent costs are included in the asset's carrying amount or recognised as a separate asset, as appropriate, only when it is probable that future economic benefits associated with the item will flow to the Company and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. All other repairs and maintenance are recognised in the profit or loss during the financial period in which they are incurred.

(e) Depreciation

The depreciable amount of all fixed assets, including buildings and capitalised lease assets, is depreciated on a straight-line basis over the asset's useful life commencing from the time the asset is available for use. Leasehold improvements are depreciated over the shorter of either the unexpired period of the lease or the estimated useful life of the improvements.

The following table indicates the expected useful lives of non current assets on which the depreciation charges are based.

Asset Class	Rate - 2016/17	Rate - 2015/16
Leasehold Improvements	30% to 40%	30% to 40%
Plant & Equipment	36%	36%
Leased Assets	33%	33%
Motor Vehicles	25%	25%

(f) Impairment of Assets

At the end of each reporting period, the Company assesses whether there is any indication that an asset may be impaired. The assessment will consider both external and internal sources of information. If such an indication exists, an impairment test is carried out on the asset by comparing the recoverable amount of the asset, being the higher of the asset's fair value less cost of disposal and value-in-use, to the asset's carrying value. Any excess of the asset's carrying value over its recoverable amount is immediately recognised in profit or loss.

NOTE 1 : STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(f) Impairment of Assets (continued)

Where the future economic benefits of the asset are not primarily dependent upon the asset's ability to generate net cash inflows and when the company would, if deprived of the asset, replace its remaining future economic benefits, value in use is determined as the depreciated replacement cost of an asset.

Where it is not possible to estimate the recoverable amount of an individual asset, the Company estimates the recoverable amount of the cash-generating unit to which the asset belongs.

Where an impairment loss on a revalued asset is identified, this is recognised against the revaluation surplus in respect of the same class of asset to the extent that the impairment loss does not exceed the amount in the revaluation surplus for that class of asset.

(g) Comparative Figures

Where necessary, comparative figures have been reclassified to facilitate comparisons.

(h) Payables

Payables represent the liability outstanding at the end of the reporting period for goods and services received by the Company during the reporting period that remain unpaid. The balance is recognised as a current liability with the amounts normally paid within 30 days of recognition of the liability.

(i) Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the Company has a legal or constructive obligation, as a result of past events, for which it is probable that an outflow of economic benefits will result and that outflow can be reliably measured. Provisions recognised represent the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation at the end of the reporting period.

(j) Goods & Services Tax

Revenues, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of GST, except where the amount of GST incurred is not recoverable from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of GST receivable or payable. The net amount of GST recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO is included with other receivables or payables in the Statement of Financial Position. Cash flows are represented on a gross basis. The GST components of cash flows arising from investing or financing activities which are recoverable from, or payable to, the ATO are presented as operating cash flows included in receipts from customers or payments to suppliers.

(k) Employee Benefits

**Short-term employee benefits**

Provision is made for the Company's obligation for short-term employee benefits. Short-term employee benefits are benefits (other than termination benefits) that are expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service, including wages and salaries. Short-term employee benefits are measured at the (undiscounted) amounts expected to be paid when the obligation is settled.

The Company's obligations for short-term employee benefits such as wages and salaries are recognised as a part of the current trade and other payables in the Statement of Financial Position.

**Other long-term employee benefits**

Provision is made for employees' long service leave entitlements not expected to be settled wholly before 12 months after the end of the annual reporting period in which the employees render the related service. Other long-term employee benefits are measured at the present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments are measured at present value of the expected future payments to be made to employees. Expected future payments incorporate anticipated future wage and salary levels, durations of service and employee departures, and are discounted at rates determined by reference to end-of-reporting-period market yields or Government bonds that have maturity dates approximating the terms of the obligations. Any remeasurements of other long-term employee benefit obligations due to changes in assumptions are recognised in profit or loss in the periods in which the exchanges occur.

The Company's obligations for long-term employee benefits are presented as non-current provision in the Statement of Financial Position, except where the Company does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date, in which case the obligations are present as current provisions.

**NOTE 1 : STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

**(k) Employee Benefits (continued)**

**On-Costs**

Employee benefit on-costs, such as superannuation and workers compensation are recognised together with the provisions for employee benefits.

**Superannuation**

Contributions to contribution superannuation plans are expensed when incurred.

**(l) Leases**

Leases of fixed assets where substantially all the risks and benefits incidental to the ownership of the asset, but not the legal ownership, are transferred to the Company are classified as finance leases.

Finance leases are capitalised by recording an asset and a liability at the lower of the amount equal to the fair value of the leased property or the present value of the minimum lease payments, including any guaranteed residual values. Lease payments are allocated between the reduction of the lease liability and the lease interest expense for the period.

Leased assets are depreciated on a straight-line basis over their estimated useful lives where it is likely that the Company will obtain ownership of the asset or ownership over the term of the lease.

Lease payments for operating leases, where substantially all the risks and benefits remain with the lessor, are recognised as expenses on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Lease incentives under operating leases are recognised as a liability and amortised on a straight-line basis over the life of the lease term.

**(m) Income Recognition**

Revenue is recognised in accordance with *AASB 118 Revenue*. Income is recognised as revenue to the extent it is earned. Unearned income at reporting date is reported as income in advance.

Amounts disclosed as revenue are, where applicable, net of returns, allowances and duties and taxes.

**Government Grants**

Non-reciprocal grant revenue is recognised in profit or loss when the entity obtains control of the grant and it is probable that the economic benefits gained from the grant will flow to the entity and the amount of the grant can be measured reliably.

If conditions are attached to the grant which must be satisfied before it is eligible to receive the contribution, the recognition of the grant revenue will be deferred until those conditions are satisfied.

When grant revenue is received whereby the entity incurs an obligation to deliver economic value directly back to the contributor, this is considered a reciprocal transaction and the grant revenue is recognised in the Statement of Financial Position as a liability until the service has been delivered to the contributor, otherwise the grant is recognised as income on receipt.

**Donations and Other Bequests**

Donations and bequests are recognised as revenue when received. If donations are for a special purpose, they may be appropriated to a reserve, such as specific restricted purpose reserve.

**Interest Revenue**

Interest revenue is recognised on a time proportionate basis that takes in account the effective yield of the financial asset.

**Other Income**

Other income is recognised as revenue when the cash is received.

All revenue is stated net of the amount of goods and services tax.

**NOTE 1 : STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)**

**(n) Economic Dependence**

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd is dependent on the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health & Human Services for the majority of its revenue used to operate the business. At the date of this report, the Board of Directors has no reason to believe these Departments will not continue to support Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd.

**(o) New Accounting Standards for Application in Future Periods**

The AASB has issued a number of new and amended Accounting Standards that have mandatory application dates for future reporting periods, some of which are relevant to the Company. The Company has decided not to early adopt any of the new and amended pronouncements. The Company's assessment of the new and amended pronouncements that are relevant to the Company but applicable in future reporting periods is set out below:

Standard / Interpretation	Summary	Applicable for reporting periods beginning on	Impact on Company's Annual Statements
AASB 9 Financial Instruments	The key changes include the simplified requirements for the classification and measurement of financial assets, a new hedging accounting model and a revised impairment loss model to recognise impairment losses earlier, as opposed to the current approach that recognises impairment only when incurred.	1 Jan 2018	The assessment has identified that the financial impact of available for sale (AFS) assets will now be reported through other comprehensive income (OCI) and no longer recycled to the profit and loss.  While the preliminary assessment has not identified any material impact arising from AASB 9, it will continue to be monitored and assessed.
AASB 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers	The core principle of AASB 15 requires an entity to recognise revenue when the entity satisfies a performance obligation by transferring a promised good or service to a customer.	1 Jan 2018	The changes in revenue recognition requirements in AASB 15 may result in changes to the timing and amount of revenue recorded in the financial statements. The Standard will also require additional disclosures on service revenue and contract modifications.  A potential impact will be the upfront recognition of revenue from licenses that cover multiple reporting periods. Revenue that was deferred and amortised over a period may now need to be recognised immediately as a transitional adjustment against the opening retained earnings if there are no former performance obligations outstanding.
AASB 16 Leases	The key changes of AASB 16 requires an entity to recognise a right-of-use asset and liability for all leases (excluding short-term leases with less than 12 months of tenure and leases relating to low-value assets), depreciation of right-of-use assets in line with AASB 116 <i>Property, Plant and Equipment</i> in profit and loss and unwinding of the liability in principal and interest components and inclusion of additional disclosure requirements.	1 January 2019	When effective, this Standard will replace the current accounting requirements applicable to leases in AASB 17 <i>Leases</i> and related interpretations. AASB 16 introduces a single lessee accounting model that eliminates the requirement for leases to be classified as operating or finance leases.  While the adoption of AASB 16 will impact on the Association's financial statements, it is impracticable at this stage to provide a reasonable estimate of such impact.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 2: REVENUE	2017 \$	2016 \$
Operating Grants - Other	2,249,969	1,734,829
Operating Grants - DHHS	417,376	406,717
Interest	16,622	23,530
Donations	178	163
External Payments Income	200	11,769
Other	56,794	65,424
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>2,741,139</b>	<b>2,242,432</b>

Refer to Note 16 for grants received and bought to account as revenue in the current financial year which are expected to be utilised in future periods.

NOTE 3: EXPENSES	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>Note (3a) Employee Expenses</b>		
Salaries and Wages	1,729,995	1,523,975
Superannuation	153,357	134,006
Work Cover	5,154	3,775
Other Employee Expenses	19,354	17,170
<b>Total Employee Expenses</b>	<b>1,907,860</b>	<b>1,678,926</b>

Note (3b) Supplies & Consumables	2017 \$	2016 \$
Advertising & Promotion	41,128	20,280
Consultants	166,679	158,345
Bank Charges	576	663
Cleaning	8,940	8,980
Computer Expenses	29,942	27,355
Electricity & Gas	10,600	11,275
Insurance	5,341	5,182
Resource & Subscriptions	28,260	29,141
Licenses and Permits	277	139
Minor Equipment	5,274	9,145
Other Expenses	38,544	28,005
Printing, Postage & Stationery	27,378	25,907
Projects	30,100	30,099
Rates and Taxes	5,562	5,376
Rent	135,300	98,911
Repairs & Maintenance	5,262	3,781
Security	2,708	6,526
Telephone & Internet	51,052	46,159
Travel/Accommodation & Professional Development	53,991	35,595
Vehicle Expenses	81,666	60,752
<b>Total Supplies &amp; Consumables</b>	<b>728,580</b>	<b>611,616</b>

NOTE 4: DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION	2017 \$	2016 \$
Plant & Equipment	30,153	25,175
Leasehold Improvements	21,300	21,197
Motor Vehicles	891	673
Leased Assets - Amortisation	2,000	2,001
<b>TOTAL DEPRECIATION AND AMORTISATION</b>	<b>54,344</b>	<b>49,046</b>

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 5: CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash on Hand		600	600
Cash at Bank - Cheque Accounts		354,279	258,503
Cash at Bank - Term Deposits		1,246,880	1,181,041
<b>TOTAL CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS</b>		<b>1,601,759</b>	<b>1,440,144</b>

Cash and Cash Equivalents Represented by:

Operational Funds		651,123	539,358
Committed Funds - Unexpended Grants	16	950,636	900,786
		<b>1,601,759</b>	<b>1,440,144</b>

NOTE 6: PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT	2017 \$	2016 \$
Leasehold Improvements - at Cost	189,992	188,191
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(132,482)	(111,182)
	<b>57,510</b>	<b>77,009</b>
Plant & Equipment - at Cost	280,693	276,846
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(211,265)	(189,076)
	<b>69,428</b>	<b>87,770</b>

Leased Assets	8,000	19,937
Less: Accumulated Amortisation	(7,833)	(17,770)
	<b>167</b>	<b>2,167</b>
Motor Vehicles	7,121	7,121
Less: Accumulated Depreciation	(1,564)	(673)
	<b>5,557</b>	<b>6,448</b>

**TOTAL PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT** **132,662** **173,394**

Reconciliation's of the carrying amount of each class of asset at the beginning and end of the previous year and current financial year is set out below.

	Leasehold Improvements \$	Plant & Equipment \$	Leased Assets \$	Motor Vehicles \$	Total \$
<b>Balance as at 1 July 2015</b>	<b>98,206</b>	<b>86,004</b>	<b>4,168</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>188,378</b>
Additions	-	26,941	-	7,121	34,062
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and Amortisation (Note 4)	(21,197)	(25,175)	(2,001)	(673)	(49,046)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2016</b>	<b>77,009</b>	<b>87,770</b>	<b>2,167</b>	<b>6,448</b>	<b>173,394</b>
Additions	1,801	11,811	-	-	13,612
Disposals	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation and Amortisation (Note 4)	(21,300)	(30,153)	(2,000)	(891)	(54,344)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2017</b>	<b>57,510</b>	<b>69,428</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>5,557</b>	<b>132,662</b>

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 7: TRADE & OTHER PAYABLES

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
Trade Creditors	35,232	21,148
Net Amounts Payable to the ATO	59,930	48,955
Accrued Expenses	57,478	53,195
<b>TOTAL TRADE &amp; OTHER PAYABLES</b>	<b>152,640</b>	<b>123,298</b>

NOTE 8: PROVISIONS

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Employee Benefits (refer note 8a)	216,688	166,082
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Employee Benefits (refer note 8a)	37,290	20,080
<b>TOTAL PROVISIONS</b>	<b>253,978</b>	<b>186,162</b>

NOTE 8a: EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
Annual Leave	177,202	130,563
Long Service Leave - <i>nominal value</i>	39,486	35,519
	<b>216,688</b>	<b>166,082</b>
<b>Non-Current</b>		
Long Service Leave - <i>nominal present value</i>	37,290	20,080
<b>TOTAL EMPLOYEE BENEFITS</b>	<b>253,978</b>	<b>186,162</b>

Employee provisions represent amounts accrued for annual leave and long service leave. The current portion for this provision includes the total amount accrued for annual leave entitlements and the amounts accrued for long service leave entitlements that have vested due to employees having completed the required period of service. Based on past experience, the Company does not expect the full amount of annual leave or long service leave balances classified as current liabilities to be settled within the next 12 months. However, these amounts must be classified as current liabilities since the Company does not have an unconditional right to defer settlement of these amounts in the event employees wish to use their leave entitlement.

The non-current portion of the provision includes amounts accrued for long service leave entitlements that have not yet vested in relation to those employees who have not yet completed the required period of service.

NOTE 9: INTEREST BEARING LIABILITIES

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
<b>Current</b>		
- Finance Lease	209	2,334
<b>Non-Current</b>		
- Finance Lease	-	209
<b>TOTAL INTEREST BEARING LIABILITIES</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>2,543</b>

Interest bearing liabilities represented by the lease of a Photocopier:  
Copier 1: The lease repayments are \$209.10. The lease expires in July 2017.

ADVOCACY AND RIGHTS CENTRE LIMITED  
(A Company Limited By Guarantee)  
A.C.N. 082 541 240

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 10: KEY MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL COMPENSATION

(a) Directors' Remuneration

Income received or due and receivable by all directors of the Company from the Company and any related party corporations

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
Celia Adams	-	-
Barry Keane	-	-
Jennifer Wilson	-	-
Niall Hensey	-	-
Trevor Kuhle	-	-
Deb Allan	-	-
Baydon Widdicombe	-	-
Patrick Jennings	-	-
Tim Adam	-	-
Sally Smith	-	-
<b>Total Director's Remuneration</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(b) Related Party Transactions

There were no transactions with related parties during the year.

NOTE 11: REMUNERATION OF AUDITORS

	2017	2016
	\$	\$
Amounts received or due and receivable by auditors for:		
- auditing the accounts	4,730	4,730

NOTE 12: CONTINGENT LIABILITIES & CONTINGENT ASSETS

There are no known contingent liabilities or contingent assets for Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd. as at the date of this report.

NOTE 13: EVENTS AFTER THE BALANCE SHEET DATE

No matters or circumstances have arisen since the end of the financial year which significantly affected or may significantly affect the operations of the Company, the results of those operations, or the state of affairs of the Company in subsequent financial years.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 14: CASH FLOW INFORMATION

a). Reconciliation of cash

For the purpose of the Statement of Cash Flows, Cash and Cash Equivalents comprise the following at 30 June:

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
Cash at Bank	5	1,601,759	1,440,144
<b>Total Cash &amp; Cash Equivalents - Operational Funds</b>		<b>1,601,759</b>	<b>1,440,144</b>

b). Reconciliation of Cash flow from operations with net result

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Profit/(Loss) Attributable to the Company	45,625	(101,886)
Cash flows excluded from profit attributable to operating activities		
Non-cash flows in operating profit:		
Depreciation and Amortisation	54,344	49,046
Changes in assets and liabilities		
(Increase)/Decrease in Prepayments	9,834	(2,939)
(Increase)/Decrease in Bonds Paid	(18,773)	192
(Increase)/Decrease in Trade & Other Receivables	611	43,116
(Increase)/Decrease in Accrued Income	420	(721)
(Increase)/Decrease in Income in Advance	(11,000)	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Trade & Other Payables	29,342	(27,084)
Increase/(Decrease) in Provisions	67,816	12,014
<b>Net cash provided by operating activities</b>	<b>178,219</b>	<b>(28,262)</b>

NOTE 15: COMMITMENTS FOR EXPENDITURE

Apart from commitments disclosed at Note 9, there are no known capital commitments as at 30 June 2017.

Operating Lease Commitments

	2017 \$	2016 \$
Payable		
- Not later than 1 year	137,500	43,813
- Later than 1 but not later than 5 years	365,542	-
<b>Total operating leases</b>	<b>503,042</b>	<b>43,813</b>

The operating leases are represented by:

Lease of property at 165-171 Hargreaves St & 11 Hopeton Street, Bendigo, expiring May 2021.

Lease of property at Suites 3 & 4/98 Nixon St, Shepparton, expiring February 2020.

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2017

NOTE 16: UNEXPENDED GRANTS

The following funds were received during the financial year and have been brought to account as revenue. As at the end of each financial year, these amounts had not been expended. All unexpended funds are to be utilised in future financial periods.

	2017 \$	2016 \$
GV Grant	2,727	141,720
GV Grant (VLA-Rumbalara)	191,333	95,781
CLC	306,734	301,422
Clayton Utz AHAKF	-	71,885
Child Protection (VLA)	-	284,978
Justice	109,667	-
LSB Tipping the Scales	161,192	-
Partnership	40,000	-
Other Small Projects	138,983	5,000
	<b>950,636</b>	<b>900,786</b>

NOTE 17: MEMBERS' GUARANTEE

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd. is incorporated under the *Corporations Act 2001* and is a company limited by Guarantee. If it is wound up, the constitution states that each member is required to contribute a maximum of \$10 each towards meeting any outstanding obligations of the Company. At 30th June 2017, the number of members was 6.

NOTE 18: COMPANY DETAILS

The registered office of the Company is :

54 Mitchell Street  
Bendigo  
Victoria 3550

The principal place of business is:

54 Mitchell Street  
Bendigo  
Victoria 3550

NOTE 19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

**Financial Risk Management Objectives and Policies**

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd.'s principal financial instruments comprise deposits with banks, accounts receivable, accounts payable and interest bearing liabilities.

The totals for each category of financial instruments, measured in accordance with AASB 139 as detailed in the accounting policies to these financial statements, are as follows:

	Note	Carrying Amount 2017 \$	Carrying Amount 2016 \$
<b>Financial Assets</b>			
Cash and Cash Equivalents	(5)	1,601,759	1,440,144
Trade and Other Receivables		7,600	8,211
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>		<b>1,609,359</b>	<b>1,448,355</b>
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>			
At amortised cost			
Trade and Other Payables	(7)	92,170	74,343
Interest Bearing Liabilities	(9)	209	2,543
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>		<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,886</b>

**Specific Financial Risk Exposures and Management**

There have been no substantive changes in the types of risks the Company is exposed to, how these risks arise or the Company's objectives, policies and processes for managing or measuring the risks from the previous period.

**(a) Credit risk**

Exposure to credit risk relating to financial assets arises from the potential non-performance by counterparties of contract obligations that could lead to a financial loss to Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd.

The Company does not have any material credit risk exposures.

*Credit risk exposures*

The maximum exposure to credit risk, by class of recognised financial assets at the end of the reporting period is equivalent to the carrying value and classification of those financial assets (net of any provisions) as presented in the Statement of Financial Position.

Trade and other receivables that are neither past due or impaired are considered to be of high credit quality.

The Company has no significant concentration of credit risk exposure to any single counterparty or group of counterparties.

NOTE 19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Continued)

**(b) Liquidity Risk**

Liquidity risk arises from the possibility that the Company might encounter difficulty in settling its debts or otherwise meeting its obligations related to financial liabilities. Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd. manages this risk through the following mechanisms:

- preparing forward-looking cash flow analysis in relation to its operational, investing and financing activities; and
- only investing surplus cash with major financial institutions.

The table below discloses the contractual maturity analysis for the Company's financial liabilities.

**Financial liability and financial assets maturity analysis**

	Within 1 Year		1 to 5 Years		Over 5 Years		Total	
	2017 \$	2016 \$	2017 \$	2016 \$	2017 \$	2016 \$	2017 \$	2016 \$
<b>Financial Liabilities due for payment</b>								
Trade and Other Payables	92,170	74,343	-	-	-	-	92,170	74,343
Interest Bearing Liabilities	209	2,334	-	209	-	-	209	2,543
<b>Total contractual outflows</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,677</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,886</b>
<b>Total expected outflows</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,677</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,886</b>
<b>Financial Assets - Cash flow realisable</b>								
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,601,759	1,440,144	-	-	-	-	1,601,759	1,440,144
Trade & Other Receivables	7,600	8,211	-	-	-	-	7,600	8,211
<b>Total anticipated inflows</b>	<b>1,609,359</b>	<b>1,448,355</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,609,359</b>	<b>1,448,355</b>
<b>Net (outflow)/inflow on financial instruments</b>	<b>1,516,980</b>	<b>1,371,678</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(209)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,516,980</b>	<b>1,371,469</b>

NOTE 19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Continued)

(c) Market Risk

(i) Interest rate risk

The financial assets of the Company is not exposed to any significant interest rate risk since cash balances are maintained at various fixed interest rates.

Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates. Interest rate risk arises from interest bearing financial assets and liabilities that are used. The interest rate exposure on the debt portfolio is managed by appropriate budgeting strategies and by managing in accordance with target maturity profiles.

(ii) Price risk

Price risk relates to the risk that the fair value of future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices.

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd. is exposed to insignificant foreign currency risk and other price risks.

Sensitivity analysis

The following table illustrates sensitivities to the Company's exposure to changes in interest rates. The table indicates the impact on how profit at the end of the reporting period would have been affected by changes in the relevant risk variable that management considers reasonably possible. These sensitivities assume that the movement in a particular variable is independent of other variables.

- A parallel shift of + 1% and -2% in market interest rates (AUD).

	Profit \$	Equity \$
<b>Year ended 30 June 2017</b>		
+1% in interest rates	16,018	16,018
-2% in interest rates	(32,035)	(32,035)
<b>Year ended 30 June 2016</b>		
+1% in interest rates	14,401	14,401
-2% in interest rates	(28,803)	(28,803)

No sensitivity analysis has been performed on foreign exchange risk as the company is not exposed to foreign currency fluctuations.

NOTE 19. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS (Continued)

Net Fair Values

Fair value estimation

The fair values of financial assets and liabilities are presented in the following table and can be compared to their carrying values as presented in the Statement of Financial Position. Fair values are those amounts at which an asset be exchanged, or a liability settled, between knowledgeable, willing parties in an arm's length transaction.

Differences between fair values and carrying values of financial instruments with fixed interest rates are due to the change in discount rates being applied by the market since their initial recognition by the Company. Most of these instruments which re carried at amortised cost (i.e. trade receivables, loan liabilities) are to be held until maturity and therefore the net fair value figures calculated bear little relevance to the Company.

Net Fair Value

	Net Carrying Amount 2017 \$	Net Fair Value 2017 \$	Net Carrying Amount 2016 \$	Net Fair Value 2016 \$
<b>Financial Assets</b>				
Cash and Cash Equivalents	1,601,759	1,601,759	1,440,144	1,440,144
Trade and Other Receivables	7,600	7,600	8,211	8,211
<b>Total Financial Assets</b>	<b>1,609,359</b>	<b>1,609,359</b>	<b>1,448,355</b>	<b>1,448,355</b>
<b>Financial Liabilities</b>				
Trade & Other Payables	92,170	92,170	74,343	74,343
Interest Bearing Liabilities	209	209	2,543	2,543
<b>Total Financial Liabilities</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>92,379</b>	<b>76,886</b>	<b>76,886</b>



justice

Advocacy and Rights Centre Ltd, trading as **ARC Justice**  
[www.arcjustice.org.au](http://www.arcjustice.org.au)

### BENDIGO OFFICE

(Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre,  
Housing Justice)  
171 Hargreaves Street, Bendigo  
Monday–Friday 9am–5pm

### SHEPPARTON OFFICE

(Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre)  
Suite 3, 98 Nixon Street, Shepparton  
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