



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 1, 2024

\$1m for ARC Justice to protect rights in the face of a changing climate

ARC Justice – a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating community legal centres in Bendigo and Shepparton – is set to receive \$1 million over the next four years to help expand its work into climate justice.

The funding is from the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner's *Strong Foundations* stream, which is designed to help community legal centres provide vital services in the long term.

ARC Justice chief executive officer Damian Stock said climate justice – which recognises the human rights implications of climate change and the unequal distribution of the burdens of climate impacts – was a growing area of focus for the organisation.

He described the funding as “game-changing”.

“It will accelerate the establishment of a climate justice portfolio within ARC, aligning the programs we developed in response to the devastating 2022 floods and furthering the co-ordination of the broader sector to enhance community climate resilience and response when future disasters happen,” Stock said.

“It will create new functions and capacity in the organisation to further our understanding of the impact of the climate crisis on access to justice and allow us to invest in capability building,” he said.

Victorian Legal Services Board CEO and Commissioner Fiona McLeay said the funding will provide the “flexibility and certainty” that’s needed to see long-term growth in access to justice.

“Strong Foundations grants are about building a solid base and creating the infrastructure that’s needed to run a community legal organisation effectively – and keep it running, even when there are significant stressors and circumstances change,” she said.

ARC Justice was one of eight community organisations to share in \$7 million.

About the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner

The Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner are independent statutory authorities responsible for the regulation of the legal profession in Victoria.

About ARC Justice

ARC Justice is a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice based in Bendigo and the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre based in Shepparton. ARC provides legal and tenancy support services across 13 local government areas in central and northern Victoria, with a team of 54 staff working to advocate for and uphold the rights of rural and regional Victorians.

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