



PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 21

ARC Justice connects with Premier, key leaders at Parliament House

Last week ARC Justice – which incorporates the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice, a specialist renter support program based in Bendigo, and the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre based in Shepparton – spent three days at Parliament House in Melbourne as part of the Community Legal Centre exhibition.

The event saw senior ARC staff, including CEO Damian Stock, Director of Legal Practice Rebecca Edwards, Director of Strategy and Impact Kate Clohesy and Managing Lawyer (Civil Justice) Carolyn Davey meet face-to-face with leaders from across the political spectrum to discuss ARC's work.

ARC representatives met with Premier Jacinta Allan, Deputy Premier Ben Carroll, Attorney-General Jaclyn Symes, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly Maree Edwards, Health Minister Mary-Anne Thomas, Regional Development and Skills and TAFE Minister Gayle Tierney, as well as Member for Northern Victoria Gaele Broad and Member for Shepparton Kim O'Keefe.

Stock said conversations focused on the essential work ARC Justice does as a rights-based organisation dedicated to supporting rural and regional Victorians. "We took the chance to raise a breath of issues with ministers and members who represent the geographical area ARC Justice covers," he said.

"This included the growing demand for tenancy support services, especially from disadvantaged groups such as migrants, low-income families, older Australians and First Nations people, to the pressure our dedicated family violence legal service and duty lawyer services are under, to the importance of community legal education."

The role the community legal sector can play in climate justice, which recognises the human rights implications of climate change and the unequal distribution of the burdens of climate impacts, was also a key topic, Stock said.

"We need decision-makers to understand the long tail of legal need – things like insurance disputes, tenancy issues and family law challenges – that persist months and years after climate disasters such as the 2022 floods that hit 12 of the 13 local government areas ARC serves.

"As climate disasters escalate in frequency and severity, it's crucial we receive ongoing support from governments at all levels to enhance our response and ensure people know and can exercise their legal rights," Stock said.

Stock said he hoped the Community Legal Centre exhibition – facilitated by the Federation of Community Legal Centres – would become a biennial event. "It was a brilliant way to connect with MPs and ministers to showcase our work."

About ARC Justice

ARC Justice is a rights-based, for-purpose organisation incorporating the Loddon Campaspe Community Legal Centre and Housing Justice, a specialist renter support program 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 more than 60 staff working to advocate for and uphold the rights of rural and regional Victorians.

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