



**PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – March 23, 2026**

## **Legal heavyweight calls out violence against women at Bendigo event**

“Violence against women is the most prevalent human rights violation in Australia and around the world.”

That was the confronting message from international human rights lawyer and activist Jennifer Robinson, who spoke to more than 200 people at Bendigo’s Capital Theatre on Saturday night as part of ARC Justice’s Talking Justice event.

Robinson didn’t hold back in her criticism of how women are treated in the justice system, particularly those who’ve experienced sexual assault or family violence.

“The statistics are shocking,” she said. She warned that the legal system is often used against the very people it should protect. “The legal system that should protect us from violence can be used to silence us about violence,” she said in her 30-minute keynote address.

Robinson said speaking out remains critical to driving change. “We can’t tackle violence against women if we can’t speak about it. And by breaking the silence about it, we can create change.”

Her address also turned to climate change, with a blunt assessment of government inaction. “Climate change is not a future problem. We have already caused irreparable damage to the climate system. It’s well past the time for our governments to act with the urgency we need.”

Robinson outlined the legal consequences of a recent landmark international case she worked on, which confirmed countries have binding obligations to protect the climate system.

ARC Justice CEO Damian Stock said the event showed why these conversations matter, particularly in regional communities. “Too often these issues are framed as distant or abstract. They’re not,” he said.

“We see the impact of family violence, housing stress and climate disasters every day across our region. Bringing these conversations to Bendigo matters because this is where people are living the reality of these systems.”

Stock said the strong turnout reflected a clear appetite for deeper public discussion about justice, accountability and access to legal support. “The law should work for people. Events like this give people a chance to understand the issues, question the system and think about how change happens.”

The audience of lawyers, advocates and students contributed questions to a wide-ranging Q&A, curated by MC Karen Percy, that explored access to justice, the “missing middle” of legal assistance and the growing pressure on regional communities facing climate and housing challenges.

### **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 close to 70 staff.

### **ARC Justice media contact**

Erin Delahunty  
ARC Justice Communications Lead  
0460 778-751  
[erin.delahunty@arcjustice.org.au](mailto:erin.delahunty@arcjustice.org.au)