



SPRINGVALE MONASH LEGAL SERVICE
INCORPORATED



ANNUAL REPORT 2005 / 2006

Statement of Purpose

SMLS aims to empower and support members of our community to use the law and legal system to protect and advance their rights and broaden and advance their awareness of their responsibilities.

Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc.

A139997D
ABN 96 206 448 228

5 Osborne Avenue
Springvale VIC 3171

Telephone: (03) 9562 3144
Facsimile: (03) 9562 4534
Email: smls@law.monash.edu.au
Website: www.smls.com.au

Hours of Operation

9am – 5pm Monday to Friday
7pm – 10pm Monday to Thursday

Drop-in Service

9am – 12:30pm Monday to Friday
7pm – 9:30pm Monday to Thursday

Services Provided

Generalist
Child Support
Litigation Advocate
Intervention Order Support Scheme (IOSS) - Dandenong Magistrates' Court
Victims of Crime Assistance (Sexual Assault)
Community Development (CD) and Law Reform

Table of Contents

01	Statement of Purpose and Organisation Details
02	Table of Contents
03	Staff, Volunteers and Students
06	Acknowledgements
07	Statistics
08	Director's Report <i>Helen Yandell</i>
11	Legal Practice Manager's Report <i>Vanessa Sweeney</i>
12	SMLS/SECASA Joint Clinic Report <i>Meghan Butterfield</i>
16	Community Development (CD) Report <i>Dave Taylor</i>
20	CD Group Success Story <i>David & Margaret Kaufmann</i>
22	Intervention Order Support Scheme (IOSS) Report <i>Felicity Purcell</i>
23	Child Support Report <i>Val Stoilkovska</i>
25	Litigation Advocate Report <i>Sharona Frid</i>
25	Pro Bono Partner- Wisewoulds <i>Sharona Frid</i>
26	Volunteer Program <i>Felicity Purcell</i>
27	Lawyers Practice Manual Report <i>Sue Campbell</i>

Staff, Volunteers and Students

Board of Directors

Erik Abbenhuys (Treasurer)
Sue Campbell
Andrew Crockett
Adrian Evans
Natalie Greenberg (Vice Chairperson)
Anna Hall*
Andrew Halphen
Ross Hyams*
Margrit Kaufmann

Bronwyn Naylor
John O'Sullivan (Chairperson)
Emily Slade (Chairperson)*
David Starvaggi
Vanessa Sweeney (Staff Rep)
Chris Thwaites
Cam Truong
Helen Yandell

Lawyers' Practice Manual (Vic) Editors

Sue Campbell
Andrew Crockett
Adrian Evans
Elizabeth Lanyon*
Maryanne Noone

Meghan Butterfield
Judith Dickson
Ross Hyams
Sandra McCullough
Kate Seear

Staff

Director
Ross Hyams*
Helen Yandell

Legal Practice Manager
Vanessa Sweeney

Finance/Administration Manager
Judy Taylor

Locum Finance/Administration Manager
Rick Taylor

Professional Practice Supervisor
Gail Bowden
Alan Ray*

Locum Professional Practice Supervisor
Natalie Greenberg*
David Starvaggi

Child Support Solicitor
Val Stoilkovska

Child Support Worker
Nat Goharpey
Mary Rahilly*

Civil Litigation Advocate
Sharona Frid

Community Development Worker
Dave Taylor

SMLS/SECASA Joint Legal Clinic Supervisor
Meghan Butterfield
Kate Seear

IOSS and Volunteer Program Coordinator
Felicity Purcell
Edith Tsang*

IT Worker
Chris Speck

Administrative Worker
Angela Apostolou
Sue Ball

Casual Administrative Worker
James Brown
Rebecca Coonan
Ben Desailly
Ahmed Ebdah*
Julia Franco*

Casual Administrative Worker
Marissa Mazitelli
Janerose Okello*
Kate Richards*
Jessie Taylor*

Professional Practice Students

Nicoletta-Stephanie Alexander
Barry Apelbaum
Michelle Baldini
Genevieve Barnes
Amelia Beech
Rajat Bhattacharya
Martin Bortz
Katherine Bowshell
Andrew Brennan
Kathleen Brenner
David Brett
Allana Burrone
Mark Cannon
Anthony Capone
Rebekah Chadwick
Priscilla Chan
John Dang
Erin Dempsey
Mihirini De Zoysa
Briana Eastaugh
Aaron Elbourne
Megan Fitzgerald
Estelle Frawley
Melissa Kate George
Ariella Gery
Pauline Giliberto
Tammy Giouzeppos

Aylin Girgin
Elise Gourlay
Janine Hill-Buxton
Melanie Hodge
Brendan Hodgson
Wen Di Huang
Christopher Hurley
Simonne Kaplan
Brett Katz
Shaun Keogh
Sherene Khalil
Kartina Lana
Angela Liaskos
Stephen Linklater
Sharyn Mittelman
Adel Mohamed
Bianca Moleta
Nadia Morales
Samala Nancarrow
Silvana Nastasi
Chris Nisiforou
Liza Pearce
Zoe Potter
Jade Press
Julia Prior
Cara Raisin
Deborah Rea

Elisa Rothschild
Nimna Rupasinghe
Blake Sabo
Edwina Scott
Kristin Shergold
Singithi Silva
Juliet Sironi
Christopher Speck
Selina Sui
Nadege Todorov
Ariane Turek
Patrick Verhoeven
Anh Anh Vuong
Nicole Wilson
Adam Zammit
Larry Zhou
Noa Zur

SMLS/SECASA Joint Clinic Volunteers

Woni Ardi
Margaret Austin
James Brown
Meghan Butterfield
Fiona Calvert
Steve de Klerk*

Rebecca Dunlop*
Jill Dyson
Edwina Fenton
Rachel Fletcher*
Michelle Gage
Kay Kalaitzidis

Lea Lewin*
Melanie Lowe
Jessica Malin
Felicity Purcell
Kate Seear

IOSS Volunteers

Sharyn Davis
Peter Davison*
Trish Dobson
James Gorton
Lisa Gross
Rohan Hamilton*

Neill Hutton
Anthony Krohn
Kelvin Legg
Sue MacGregor
Sylvia Maramis*
Kaye McNaught

Philip Skehan*
Anita Spitzer*
Frank Tallarida*
Tony Thomas
Tim Tyler*

Evening Service Volunteers

Masih Ahmadi*	Ursula Donovan*	Michaela Moloney
Miranda Airey-Branson	Rebecca Dunlop	Amanda Mudarth
Christine Albanis*	Ari Esmerian	David Mullett
Guy Albeck	Wendy Fauvel	Eliza Newson*
Angel Aleksov*	Kylie Fitzpatrick	Peter North
Ian Alger*	Hubert Fong	Peter O'Connor
Anu Ambikaipalan	Justin Foster*	John O'Sullivan
Sophie B Andrew	Natalie Goharpey*	Andrew Pinchin
Kristel Anderson*	Ashley Goldman*	Malvina Predecki*
Nicholas Andreou*	Tal Gory	Sonia Parisi Rosse
Barry Apelbaum	Michael Gregurek*	Caroline Reynolds-Chesney
Annette Au-Yeung	Bill Grimshaw	Carly Robertson
Craig Benjamin*	David Hack*	Michelle Scott*
Patrick Bourke	Rebecca Hanley	Michael Seelig
Michael Brown	Francis Hardingham*	Amit Sharma*
Thanh Bui	Jared Heath	Liam Shiels
Tina Bui*	Leonie Heaton	David Siaw
Vicki Butler*	Janine Hill-Buxton	Fiona Skepper
Nick Carstein	Sarah Hincliffe*	Cara Somerville
Jeremy Cass*	Emma Hughes	Jim Stavris
Elizabeth Chackola*	Louise Jarrett	Sharon Tay*
Anitha Chakravarthi*	Alexandra Karagounis	Leang Thai
Sandy Chan*	Daniel Kavan*	Chynna Thay
Ellie Chew*	Rebecca Keller*	Cam Truong
Min-Joon Chew*	Lee Kimonides	Melissa Tso*
Natasha Chiam	Damian Knowles*	Dominik Unkovic*
Desmond Chiam	Helena Konstantopoulos*	Sokha Um
Emily Clark	Alex Lam	Kieta van der Meulen
Dianna Comelli*	Ellen Laskaridis	Laura Vines
Adam Cooke	Rachel Lawson	Marilyn Wai*
Troy Costantino	Winston Lay	Candice Walker*
Anne Cramer	Desmond Lee	Matthew Weatherson*
Maria-Pina Cusmano*	Joanne Lee*	Stefanie Wendler-Canning*
Mymy Dang*	Korina Leoncio	Jermayne Williams*
Andrea David*	Alexander Lew*	Dominic Yau
Peter Davison*	Charles Ling*	Doris Sam Yue
Megan Deacon*	Steve Linklater	Dominica Yuen
Loren Deligiorgis*	Freda Mandikos	Karen Zhang
Melissa De Silva*	Simone Marrocco	Adriana Zuccala*
Peter Ditchfield	Danie Matta	

* Retired during 2005 / 2006

Acknowledgments

SMLS acknowledges and thanks the following individuals and organisations that supported us in various ways during 2005/06:

- Professor Arie Freiberg, Janet White and Marcus Spencer of Monash University Law Faculty for their ongoing support of the Professional Practice Program at SMLS.
- Associate Professor Adrian Evans for his work as Convenor of Legal Practice Programs at the Monash Law Faculty.
- Kathy Buxton and the Monash Law Faculty IT team for their support and assistance.
- Dr Bronwyn Naylor of the Monash Law Faculty for her excellent work with our Community Development students in the Corrections CD group and for her support when acting Convenor of the Monash Law School Legal Practice Programs.
- Dr Guy Powles for his invaluable advice and counsel in relation to our Pasifika Youth Support Project and other CD projects.
- The City of Greater Dandenong for provision of our premises, including maintenance and security.
- Matthew Maher, Kathy McCarthy and all the staff of Wisewoulds Lawyers, our pro bono partner. Their support included taking files on (often very complicated matters), providing written opinions and providing a night-time ring-in advice service to our volunteers.
- Our Board of Directors for their untiring commitment and support.
- Our volunteers for their generous contribution of time to provide a night-time advice service for our clients.
- The Professional Practice students for the youthful enthusiasm, energy and zeal which they bring to SMLS year after year.
- David Starvaggi and other members of the Bar for providing their services at "mates' rates" to needy SMLS clients.
- Anna Hall and the staff of Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB) for their cooperation and support in service delivery to our (often mutual) clients.
- Andrea Nelson of Law Institute of Victoria for playing an integral role in organising the joint LIV/SMLS CPD seminar entitled: 'Coronial Process'.
- Matthew Albert of the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program for assisting in the development of the legal seminars conducted at all SAIL campuses.
- Spase Velanovski from the Centre of Culture, Ethnicity and Health for providing insight and assistance to our CD project, 'Interpreting in the Health Sector'.
- Bec Coonan, our longest serving 'casual' admin worker, for her creative and hard work on the layout of this report and for designing an excellent front cover!

SMLS Statistics

Clients

Total Number of Clients 3,960

Legal Advice

Total Number of Legal Advices Provided 2,607

Casework

Total Cases Open During Period (Open & New) 2,313

Total Cases Closed During Period 1,152

Non-Casework Projects

Community Legal Education 8

Law Reform 12

Springvale Monash Legal Service Inc. gratefully acknowledges the following organisations for their funding support during 2005/2006:

Commonwealth Government

Generalist Community Legal Centre \$94,935

Civil Litigation Project \$75,471

Child Support Scheme Project \$103,288

State Government

Generalist Community Legal Centre \$108,475

Monash University

Professional Practice Program \$136,841

Donkey Wheel Fund

\$12,000

Freehills

\$1,250

Monash University also provided a full time and a part time solicitor, two part time administration assistants and other operational support.

City of Greater Dandenong provided premises, including maintenance and security.

Director's Report

Helen Yandell
Director

JULY-NOVEMBER 2005

Ross Hyams started the year as Director, having been in the job for 5 years. He finished in this role in November 2005, having made an extraordinary contribution to the operations of SMLS over that time.

Flowers in the Desert Conference: Clinical Legal Education, Ethical Awareness and Community Service

Monash University and Northumbria University, UK, were the hosts of the Third International Journal of Clinical Legal Education and the Eighth Australian Clinical Legal Education Conference held in Melbourne from 12 to 15 July 2005. SMLS staff were incredibly involved in this conference which played a significant role in bringing together justice educators, clinical legal educators, non-government organisations, community legal centres, legal aid lawyers and legal ethicists from around the world. Delegates came from around Australia, the UK, USA, Nigeria, Japan, Norway and South Africa.

By uniting educational leaders, the conference helped to expand the impact of clinical legal education operating in a multi-disciplinary ethical framework and re-invigorated legal education and client service amongst its participants. During the conference, we grappled with many of the challenges and opportunities that are facing clinical legal education today. It was an insightful and valuable conference for all participants.

About 30 participants in the conference came to SMLS for a tour

and afternoon tea on the last day of the conference and appeared to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Clinical Exchange Program with Northumbria University

During August, SMLS hosted Paul Henderson from Northumbria University as part of our clinical exchange program. Paul became a Friday morning session student and interviewed and ran files for a month.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on 28 September. Kate Hamond, the resigning Legal Ombudsman, was the guest speaker.



SMLS Directors at the AGM: Cam Truong, Andrew Crockett and John O'Sullivan



Judy Taylor, James Chol (SCAAB), Rick Taylor and Vanessa Sweeney at the AGM



AGM Guest Speaker Kate Hammond and Professor Sue Campbell

Victoria Law Foundation Pro Bono Conference

On 18 October, Ross presented a workshop with Kathy McCarthy of Wisewoulds entitled "Accessing Pro Bono Resources".

NOVEMBER 2005- MARCH 2006

A new Director had not been appointed when Ross moved to the Law Faculty in November. Fortunately, Judy Taylor and Vanessa Sweeney agreed to provide interim management and were well supported by all SMLS staff and locum staff – Nat Greenberg, David Starvaggi and Rick Taylor. Thanks to all these people for putting in an extra effort during this period with the result that, despite our staffing shortages, the Legal Service still managed to operate in an effective manner and some new initiatives were developed.

SMLS/SCAAB Joint Migration Clinic

Anna Hall, Director of SCAAB and Dave Taylor of SMLS began planning a joint venture to establish a migration clinic. These plans came to fruition with the commencement of the South Eastern Migration Assistance Service (SEMAS) in July 2006.

We hope that other opportunities for cooperative ventures will arise in the future.

Commercial/Consumer/Civil Thursday Night Advice Session

On the initiative of Cam Truong, Thursday night volunteer session supervisor, our Thursday night volunteers trialled a specialist advice session providing consumer/civil/commercial advice to individuals and small businesses unable to afford to pay, with meritorious ongoing cases being referred to Wisewoulds on a pro bono basis.



Sarah Wall and Janet White from Monash Law Faculty with former SMLS Director, Ross Hyams at the AGM

SMLS/SECASA Joint Clinic

On 10 October, SMLS and SECASA celebrated the 10 year anniversary of this very successful joint venture. It was a great event.

Lecture at Monash Caulfield

On 11 October, Ross presented a lecture to social work students entitled "Access to Justice", which focused on the work of CLCs.

Dandenong Court Placement Program

Talks commenced with Dandenong Magistrates' Court staff with a view to establish a program for students to attend Dandenong Magistrates' Court and work within the Court with agencies such as VLA.

Staffing

Edith Tsang, IOSS and Volunteer Coordinator, left SMLS in early January. She was a hard worker and a great asset to the Legal Service. We were lucky to find an excellent replacement amongst our SMLS graduates in Felicity Purcell. She is an ex-Professional Practice and Advanced Professional Practice student and continues to volunteer with the SMLS/SECASA Joint Clinic.

Jessie Taylor, another great ex-Professional Practice and Advanced Professional Practice recruit, consulted and advised with the Sudanese CD Group during this period. In addition, she successfully sought funding to produce a documentary entitled: 'We will be remembered for this'. This film will aim to raise community awareness of refugee and migration law and policy and will be completed during the second half of 2006.

New Website

Chris Speck, Summer Semester Professional Practice student, was set the assignment to design a new and distinctive SMLS website that could be easily managed without the use of expert assistance. The result was excellent and so, after completing Professional Practice, Chris was appointed as IT Worker with a brief to keep SMLS IT operational, functional and effective.

MARCH-JUNE 2006

I commenced as Director in March 2006. I have received a very warm welcome to all aspects of this very diverse and extensive community legal service. Having come from another much smaller community legal centre, I understood the operations of a CLC and the special relationship CLC have with their local communities. Getting my head around the specialist programs such as Child Support, Civil Litigation Advocate, the SECASA clinic and the Legal Practice Manual has required some effort.

To add to the complexity, there are 24 Prof Prac and 4 APP students a semester to get to know and to offer support to. SMLS is a dynamic workplace where all staff, students and volunteers add their unique contribution and skills to our service for the benefit of our clients.

I have spent these few months getting to know as many of the volunteers and community organisations with which we work and I look forward to expanding on this.



Monash Law Faculty Visit: Associate Professor Adrian Evans, SMLS Director Helen Yandell and Professor Mark Davison

Legal Practice Manager's Report

Vanessa Sweeney
Legal Practice Manager

The past year at the Legal Service has been particularly hard and exhausting for me personally. Over a period of ten months, staff and students at the Legal Service have had to cope with being understaffed by one to two supervising solicitors. I have "just" managed to survive the past year thanks to the wonderful staff, students, and volunteers at the Legal Service and thanks to a very understanding and considerate husband.

Special thanks must go to Gail Bowden and David Starvaggi who have done an exceptional job in picking up the extra workload and slaving away tirelessly without ever complaining.

Despite all of the above, the team at the Legal Service has rallied together to ensure that the Legal Service operated in an effective and professional manner.

Seventy-one students have passed through the doors at the Legal Service over the last year. Students have worked diligently on their files and have achieved many great results. The majority of these students have also participated in our student appearance program and have provided positive feedback in relation to the experience. Client numbers over the last year have been strong, with many students carrying file loads of 15 to 20. Clients have been very gracious in receiving our assistance and on numerous occasions students have been very lucky to receive small gifts of appreciation.

Now that we are once again fully staffed, I hope that the Legal service will be able to get back into the routine that hasn't existed here for some time. I for one look forward to a much quieter, but still productive, 2006 -2007.



David Starvaggi, locum Professional Practice Supervisor (centre back) with Second Semester 2006 students: Adam Zammit, Samala Nancarrow, Nimna Rupasinghe and Brett Katz

SMLS/SECASA Joint Clinic Report

Meghan Butterfield
Joint Clinic Supervisor

As most would know, the Joint Clinical Legal Service is a marriage between the Springvale Monash Legal Service (SMLS) and the South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA). We are a specialist clinic which acts exclusively for victims of sexual abuse and their families who are referred to us by the counsellors at SECASA. We operate out of the SMLS on Monday nights.

The Clinic turned 10 this year!!! The Clinic was started in 1995, as the brain child of Carolyn Worth, head of SECASA and Adrian Evans, who was Coordinator of SMLS at that time (and now works at the Monash Law Faculty). When the clinic was started, it operated out of the SECASA building in East Bentleigh (next to the Monash Medical Centre) and was staffed by four final year Monash Law students as volunteers. I am happy to say that I was one of the four students who first volunteered with the clinic, having completed Professional Practice the year before.

When the clinic commenced, Advanced Professional Practice was not offered as a subject and hence, the clinic relied on volunteers alone. The first supervisor was Jo Kerr who, at the time, was a junior solicitor working at North Melbourne Legal Service (and who now works for Victoria Legal Aid).

In 1998, the clinic was moved to the SMLS building and was incorporated into the Advanced Professional Practice (APP) course.

In celebration of the Clinic's tenth birthday, some bottles of bubbly were cracked open and a soiree was held at SMLS in October 2005. The night was a

wonderful success, being attended by approximately 50 people including past and present volunteers and students of the clinic, past supervisors, many counsellors from SECASA, members of the Law Faculty who have been involved in the clinic, and various members of the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit (SOCA Unit) of the Police Force, with whom the clinic has worked closely over its ten year life. A couple of the clinic's favourite barristers came along too. It was just wonderful to see some of the old faces and a terrific reflection on the clinic that so many of the old contributors turned up to join in the celebrations. Arie Freiberg, Adrian Evans and Carolyn Worth all spoke most favourably about the contribution made by the service to the Monash student community and to the clients for whom the clinic acts.



SECASA director Carolyn Worth with Professor Arie Freiberg and Associate Professor Adrian Evans, Monash Law Faculty

This year was characterized by growth and change for our service. We have seen the arrival and departure of some wonderful students and have been lucky enough to have some exceptionally

conscientious and dedicated volunteers join our ranks.

The year started with the surprise departure of our much loved co-supervisor, Kara Ward. Regrettably for the clinic, Kara decided to move to Byron Bay to pursue surfing and the hippy life. She ultimately took a job for the Legal Aid Commission in New South Wales, based in Lismore and, I think, initially found that she had to work harder than she ever had in Victoria. Not quite the relaxed sea change she was hoping for! I tried to supervise the service flying solo for a few months but this became increasingly difficult given the constant growth in file and staff numbers. In October 2005, Kate Seear came on board as a co-supervisor with the clinic. Kate brought with her wide experience from working with female victims at the Women's Legal Service and invaluable experience in supervising students from her role as Professional Practice supervisor at the Monash-Oakleigh Legal Service. Kate slipped into the role perfectly and hit the ground running. She now supervises at the clinic every second Monday night and takes care of all file reviews for the APP students.

Second semester 2005 brought an influx of new APP students to the clinic. We were joined by Woni Ardi, James Brown, Rebecca Dunlop and Krystelle Hsu. All students were of a high calibre and they did some terrific work during their APP semester. We were lucky enough to hang onto Woni Ardi and James Brown as volunteers after the APP semester finished. In fact, Woni and James are still volunteering with us which means, thus far, they have been volunteering with the clinic for over 8 months. Woni and James have been amazing volunteers, extremely sympathetic to the plight of victims, diligent, hardworking and extremely conscientious. This year, Woni has commenced her Articles with Allens but still attends regularly on Monday nights to keep up her file load. All this whilst

running a household and being a Mum to three gorgeous children. She is a wonder woman!



Former clinic supervisors: Fran Hogan, Rachael Fitzpatrick, Meg Butterfield, Fay Gertner, Sarah Porritt and Jo Kerr

James is one of the most diligent workers with whom I have had the pleasure of working at the clinic. He is renowned by the barristers we regularly brief for providing the most thorough briefs and I know that Effi Lagos always finds it a pleasure to take a brief in a matter prepared by James. James was unfortunate to have a matter listed before a rather unsympathetic Magistrate recently and the case did not proceed as well as we would have liked. The result certainly did not do justice to the unrelenting effort and preparation James put into the claim.

Summer semester 2005 brought Kate Bowshell, Fiona Calvert, Ravi Cooray and Rachel Fletcher to join us as APP students. All but Kate Bowshell stayed on as volunteers after their semester finished and, in fact, Fiona Calvert and Rachel Fletcher remain at the service as volunteers to this day. Fiona has stayed on despite commencing (and almost completing) Leo Cussen which is a terrific effort. She has also been involved with a long running, disturbing case which involves a male client with an intellectual disability who was the victim of sexual

abuse at the hands of his mother for years during his childhood and adolescence. The case has presented a number of problems, all of which Fiona has worked hard to solve. The matter will shortly be listed for hearing and we are hopeful of a successful outcome which will be wonderful for our client and a much deserved reward to Fiona for her hard work and dedication. Rachel has secured Articles with Slater & Gordon for 2007 but, despite this, we would love her to stay on with us as she has been a wonderful worker.

In February 2006, Steve De Klerk and Kelvin Reidy joined the clinic as volunteers. Kelvin stayed for a short time only but Steve has continued to the present day. Steve had been on the staff at SECASA on a casual basis and hence, was armed with a good understanding of the phenomenon of sexual abuse. He has been involved in a case in which we are acting for a woman who was married to a convicted paedophile who was one of Mr Baldy's associates. The case is interesting from a legal perspective and, I know, has been a challenging one for Steve to grapple with at times, given the disturbing nature of the subject matter. Steve has shown a genuine commitment to see this difficult case to its conclusion for which, I believe, he should be commended.



10th Anniversary Celebrations: Michelle Gage, Nerrida Mitchell, Bree Lamprell, Margaret Austin and Debbie Jefferson

First semester 2006 heralded the arrival of Jill Dyson, Kay Kalaitzidis and Angie Liaskos as APP students. Again, all students were wonderfully committed, bright and hard working. Jill Dyson was a fantastic addition to the clinic as, although she came into the clinic as a final year law student, she had been employed by the Victoria Police in the Sexual Offences Unit for thirteen years. She brought a different perspective which assisted us in the preparation of our matters. If you thought Police were unsympathetic to the problems faced by victims, you need to meet Jill as she totally dispels this perception. Jill managed to do a wonderful job with the clinic whilst working and studying full time and raising four children. Another wonder woman amongst us!! We are lucky to have Kay and Jill staying on as volunteers and I know they will continue to do some amazing work for victims of sexual abuse.

Second semester 2006 has brought Janine Hill-Buxton, Megan Fitzgerald, Bianca Moleta and Nicole Wilson to the clinic as APP students. Although these students have only recently started with us, they seem very keen and we are looking forward to having them with us for a semester and hopefully, beyond.

No report would be complete without mention of the amazing, ongoing service of our long term volunteers. The clinic now enjoys the services of some very experienced volunteers who have been with us for over a year and, in some cases, up to three years. I am talking of course about Michelle Gage (who has been with us three years), Margaret Austin, Felicity Purcell, Melanie Lowe and Lea Lewin. Lea recently left us to have her second child (she has since given birth to a beautiful baby boy, Orlan). When Lea started with us, she was childless! We are very sorry to see Lea go as she has been an exceptional volunteer. She came to us over two years ago as a qualified lawyer and patent attorney with no experience acting for victims of crime.

When she left us, she was a very competent practitioner in relation to Victims of Crime Assistance Tribunal (VOCAT) applications.

Thankfully, there is no sign of Michelle, Margaret, Felicity or Melanie leaving us! I find their commitment to the clinic to be astounding. They come in each Monday night, motivated by nothing but dedication to their clients. This is truly commendable and without volunteers as dedicated as these women, the clinic would cease to function. Not only are they hardworking but they are delightful to work with. It is a pleasure to come in to SMLS on Monday nights to see these familiar faces.

The clinic continues to act for victims of sexual offences in a wide array of matters however; approximately 85 per cent of our cases involve VOCAT claims. We have had some terrific results before the Tribunal, particularly in 2005. However, recently, the results have not been as good as we would like which we put down to a shift in culture or attitude by the Tribunal, particularly regarding claims under section 8(3) for "other expenses to assist the victims with his/her recovery". We will persist in making these claims in the hope that the Tribunal's attitude may alter toward these claims.

I am taking twelve months off as supervisor of the clinic and I will be replaced as of August 2006 by Gayathri Paramasivam. Gayathri will be ably assisted by Kate Seear. Gayathri has had extensive VOCAT experience from her time at the Women's Legal Service and certainly knows her way around a VOCAT application! I am very confident that the

clinic will be in capable hands in my absence and that Gayathri will be a well received member of our SECASA team.



10th Anniversary Celebrations: Victoria Campbell, Effie Lagos, Meghan Butterfield and Kate Harry

The clinic enjoys a close relationship with the counsellors at SECASA who refer clients to us in increasing numbers. I believe the counsellors value the service we provide to their clients and I am very proud of what we have created with the Joint Clinical Legal Service. We hit 100 active files this month and currently, we have 18 staff members who keep our clinic running. The success of the clinic is self perpetuating. Part of the reason our volunteers stay on is that there is a great level of morale and camaraderie within our group. There is a genuine feeling of cooperation and we all know that we are working towards a common goal – to assist needy and deserving victims of heinous crimes.

Community Development (CD) Report

Dave Taylor
Community Development Worker

In the last year, the structure of the CD program has undergone some change. In order to better respond to the community need, we have taken on more projects, but reduced the student numbers of each CD group. This has been a rather daring move but, giving the law students a broader scope of projects to work on, ensures that they will find a project which is better attuned to their personal and professional interests. As has been the case with this program in the past, the good will and dedication of the law students is the life blood of the CD program at SMLS.

Things have been hectic for our CD program. We have engaged in numerous projects, of varying sizes. We have formed a number of informal partnerships, and have consulted with many organisations. Often, our projects require a multi-disciplinary approach, and so these partnerships better enable SMLS to effectively respond to the community. Further, this is augmented by a continuing involvement in numerous networks and working parties, as well as the Federation of Community Legal Centres' Police Issues Working Group.

An outline of CD groups and major projects can be found below.

Medical Issues CD Group

It has been an eventful and invigorating year for this CD group.

In the past, this group has centred on issues relating to police training and the impact of the coronial process on community safety. Our work has developed from consultation with the family of a young man, who suffered from a mental illness and was fatally shot by

police a number of years ago. While the overall theme of the group has remained the same, the group has now taken an interest in the mental health service response to crisis situations. We have subsequently been conducting a number of focus groups and qualitative unstructured consultations with various mental health service providers to determine their diagnosis of the mental health system as a whole. This has assisted us in producing a community education brochure outlining services available to individuals suffering from a mental illness.

We have continued to support and promote the *Memphis Model*, through the media, at conferences and to other relevant stakeholders. The *Memphis Model* is a style of policing currently practiced in Memphis, USA, whereby the police adopt a non-confrontational approach when working with individuals suffering from mental illness. This approach is augmented by increased police training. We are happy to report that *Police Training and Mental Illness – A Time for Change* produced considerable interest within the community, and assisted in prompting the Mental Illness Fellowship Victoria to take an interest in this style of policing, and visit Memphis. Subsequently, Major Sam Cochrane, founder of the *Memphis Model*, recently visited Victoria and presented to a large audience, including Commissioner Nixon. It is our understanding that discussions have commenced exploring the feasibility of including some of the concepts of the *Memphis Model* in the training regime for Victoria Police.

Coronial Process

This CD group commenced mid 2005 with the goal of elevating the significance of

the Coronial Process, and lending support to the Coroner's power to make recommendations from coronial inquiries to prevent repeat tragedies. We also examined practice in the Coroner's Court, working to promote a method of practice which assisted the aims of the court as well as protecting the rights of those involved with the court. We presented to the Victorian Parliamentary Law Reform Committee (VPLRC) and also worked with the Law Institute of Victoria to prepare an advanced Continuing Professional Development seminar on the Coronial Process. The seminar was well attended and, due to inquiries from the audience, went well over the designated time. We would like to thank the following individuals for taking the time from their busy schedule to present at this seminar:

- Graeme Johnstone, State Coroner, Victoria
- Dr Ian Freckelton
- Ross Ray, QC
- Professor David Ransom



CPD seminar presenters: Dr Ian Freckelton, Ross Ray QC, Graeme Johnstone State Coroner Victoria and Prof David Ransom

Diversion

The Diversion CD group commenced in response to issues identified at our Diversion Forum held in August 2004, as well as the need to raise community awareness about the benefits of the Criminal Justice Diversion Program

(Diversion). This was largely identified through our ongoing work in the Pasifika project (see below).

This project involved students consulting with relevant stakeholders and members of the legal community to obtain their perception of the Diversion program. This included police, solicitors, Diversion Coordinators and Magistrates. From these consultations, the students prepared a discussion paper on diversion, which will be printed later this year. Professor Freiberg, Dean of Law, Monash University, has commended the work of the students and kindly prepared a preface.

Drug Diversion CD Group

This small short term CD group was initiated over the summer, prompted by early research conducted in the Diversion CD group. The students examined the concept of Therapeutic Jurisprudence, a concept inherent in the design of Diversion, and also the pilot Drug Court in Dandenong. The students prepared a presentation on the various treatment methods available in the community provided by the Department of Justice. This included offender development programs currently running in Victoria's prisons. They also examined how substance abuse is represented in the media, as well as co-morbidity.

In February 2006, three fairly nervous students successfully presented their findings at the Victorian Alcohol and Drug Association (VAADA) Conference.

Sudanese CD Program

This group commenced in December 2005 as a response to the needs of rapidly growing Sudanese communities, not only in the City of Greater Dandenong, but also throughout other regions in Melbourne. As many members of this growing community are newly arrived from Sudan, it is understandable that they may be unaware of some aspects of the

law. Through consultations with the Sudanese Australian Integrated Learning (SAIL) Program, we identified that some of these people have only minimal knowledge of emergency services, generic service provision, family violence laws and motor vehicle regulations.

In response to this, SMLS students have prepared a series of presentations, with accompanying brochures, on:

- Responsible car ownership, registration and insurance;
- Emergency services; and
- Family violence and intervention orders.

Due to language and literacy issues, the presentations and brochures consist largely of pictures to depict the legal information for the Sudanese participants.

Armed with our presentations and a bundle of brochures, the students presented to newly arrived Sudanese refugees at all SAIL campuses across the metropolitan area. We also presented at the Oakleigh Migrant Resource Centre and Noble Park AMES. Members from the audience indicated to us that they found the presentations useful; this was supported by the fact that the participants often had queries throughout the presentations.

This was very exciting for the students, as they were exposed to a unique demographic within the community which greatly broadened and challenged their perception and application of legal skills. The impact of the presentations varied greatly depending on a number of factors, including access to interpreters, the age, gender and number of participants. Obviously, some subject matter incited considerable debate, and it became evident that there are noteworthy differences between western legal systems and customary South Sudanese law. These differences are particularly

evident with regard to the structure and related mores of Sudan, including views on marriage, police, judiciary, as well as some aspects of consumer service provision.

SMLS will continue to deliver the presentations to groups as requested.

Youth Access to Justice – ongoing CLE

This project, which commenced last year, was largely driven by law students. Throughout the first six months, students presented relevant youth legal issues to over 300 local school students, in both years 9 and 10. Throughout this year, I have conducted the presentations to a proportionate number of local school students, as well as to participants in the *Clean Slate Program*.

The content of the program includes:

- Rights and responsibilities
- Police
- Courts
- Police cautions and Diversion
- Substance abuse
- Debt
- Fines (the PERIN Court)
- Theft
- Assault

And more!

The primary goal of the program is to ensure that young people know what their options are if they encounter a legal problem. We attempt to demystify, and enable young people to better negotiate through the pitfalls of our legal system and, importantly, ensure that they are aware of services which can assist them.

Interpreting in the Health Sector

In late November 2005, SMLS formed a partnership with the Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (CEH) to prepare a discussion paper on Interpreting in the

Health Sector¹. CEH has recently completed a qualitative research project (*Language Services in Victoria's Health System: Perspectives of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Consumers*), which consulted various consumers of the health system originating from Iraq, Italy, Sudan and Vietnam.

Interpreting services within the community have received renewed interest, with the burgeoning numbers of people who either speak English as a second language, or are not fluent in English at all. Interpreting services provide the bridge between the numerous services available and linguistically diverse people. All individuals have a right to various community services, as well as appropriate medical treatment. It is both cost effective and socially responsible to ensure that interpreting in the health sector is maintained at the highest level. It is important to ensure that interpreters are provided with appropriate training in areas such as medical terminology, and compensated for the crucial work they do for the community. It is equally important to ensure that all Australians can make informed decisions with regard to medical treatment. Accountable and transparent language service provision will go a long way in fulfilling this goal. The Victorian government has already identified many of these issues, and have responded appropriately in a number of ways. For example, they have implemented the Victorian Interpreter Card.

SMLS intends to produce a discussion paper comparing interpreting services within the health sector with interpreting services operating in other areas, including legal services and local government. We will also explore interpreting services within the context of

¹ We use the term 'health sector' to describe a loosely organised group of non-contracted interpreters who regularly work within medical settings. There is not a structured interpreting service specifically for the health sector in Victoria.

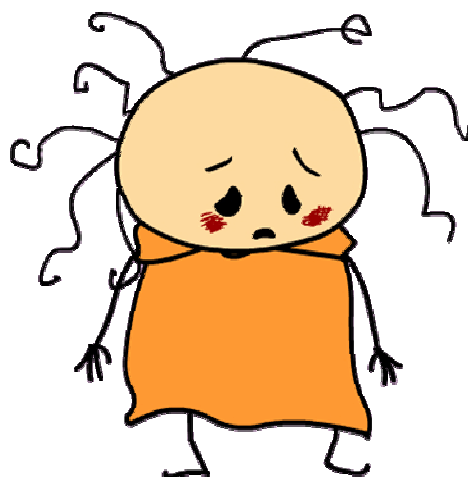
human rights. It is anticipated that this paper will complement the paper produced by CEH.

Child Neglect CD Project

This project involved creating a 30 second community service announcement educating the community on child neglect. The ideology driving this project is that child neglect is pervasive and often subtle. We note that there are many parenting practices which amount to child neglect but which the parent or guardian do not view as being inimical to the child. With this in mind, we endeavoured to inform the community of child neglect and promote appropriate services.

The format of this project has changed throughout the last year. This is primarily due to the fact that I have only minimal experience in creating 30 second TV community service announcements, derived primarily from watching TV ... Still, with kind and sagely advice from Liz Burke at Open Channel, we were able to locate a skilled animator, Kirrily Schell, who has put hours into this project and created a fantastic and emotive community service announcement.

The community service announcement promotes both *Kids Help Line* and *Parentline* and is currently being aired on channels 7 and 9, and can be located on our website at www.smls.com.au.



A CD Group Success Story

Margrit & David Kaufmann

In January 2002 our son Mark was shot and killed by the Victorian police. He suffered from a mental illness.

When Ross Hyams, past director of SMLS and Professional Practice supervisor, heard of this tragedy he offered his help and the help of SMLS should we want it.

Some months later we approached Ross and he suggested that the 'Community Development Program' would be able to look into the various issues raised by the shooting.

It was clear that on the night Mark was shot, the various services put into place to protect individuals in our society, did not work for Mark.

1. Police training on how to deal with a crisis involving people with a mental illness was totally inadequate.
2. The Crisis Assessment and Treatment (CAT) teams, a service provided by Mental Health, were totally useless, as they did not attend, let alone provide any other assistance.

There is a 'protocol' between these two services, yet neither of them followed it. At the inquest into Mark's death the 2 government agencies above were champions in pushing the blame for Mark's death into each others lap.

- The CAT team was said not to be an emergency (crisis?) service.
- The police said that dealing with the mentally ill people was not their job.

We ask:

Where does that leave the carers faced with a mentally ill person experiencing a crisis?

Ringling the CAT team was useless, and ringling the police was a fateful mistake ...

We talked to the students and told them "Mark's story" and shared experiences we had with the system which failed our son. This police shooting has generated many research topics for the CD groups run at first by Stratos Hatziefstratiou and then by Dave Taylor.

Dave Taylor and his students of the past 2 years are looking for solutions to these and other problems, such as problems with the coronial system, that came to light as time progressed with Mark's case.

One major achievement by a CD group was the finding of an alternate way of dealing with the mentally ill by police and the mental health system, which is practiced in Memphis USA, "the Memphis model".

This was researched in depth and then compared to our police methods and a comprehensive report titled: *Police Training and Mental Illness – A Time for Change*, was published by SMLS. This report was presented to numerous people interested in improving the system. Dave, 2 students and ourselves also presented this report to the *Victorian Parliament Law Reform Committee*.

In addition, at the inquest into Mark's death this report was mentioned and added to the Coronial findings.

How fantastic, that this lobbying for better police training has now been taken up by *The Victorian Mental Illness Fellowship* who recently brought out the founder of the "Memphis model" to talk to police and interested parties all over Australia.

As mentioned above, the CD groups also looked at the Coronial system. There are big problems in the system and Dave Taylor and his groups addressed the issues and presented them to the *Victorian Parliament Law Reform Committee* which last year was taking submissions from interested parties to their *Inquiry into the Review of the Coronial System*.

Therefore, these 2 examples alone show how very important the work of the CD groups can be and what positive and far reaching consequences their work can have.

They can bring issues to the attention of the public at large and they can have an input in law reform.

We would like to thank all the students involved, as well as SMLS generally for all the great work they have achieved and the support they have given to us. It is good to see, that there may be some lasting, positive flow-on effect that comes out of the shooting of our son.

It is important that organisations such as SMLS take up the fight for change, for justice, when the victims may well want to do it themselves, but they find themselves unable to fight as they are exhausted. This work may well help to prevent further shootings by police of people with mental illness and therefore save others from what we have had to endure.

Intervention Order Support Scheme (IOSS) Report

Felicity Purcell
IOSS & Volunteer Co-ordinator

A recent article in *The Age* (6/8/06) chronicled the experience of a young woman applying for an Intervention Order at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court. Steps have been taken to make the court system more accessible and clear improvements are evident, however, the process of applying for an order is a harrowing experience for many.

A policy of "zero tolerance" towards family violence is taken by the courts and the police but the problem is endemic. It is estimated that by the end of 2006 more than 27,000 intervention orders will have been granted. An increase of approximately 2,000 on average figures for the past few years.

IOSS is an important component of the support services available to court users. The scheme is an onsite advisory service which began operations at the Dandenong Magistrates' Court in 1994. A roster of volunteer solicitors and barristers provide free advice to intervention order applicants.

Clients are advised of their available legal options and are also given information regarding court procedure. Where appropriate, volunteers negotiate on the client's behalf to arrange a pre-hearing settlement with the other party.

As detailed above, IOSS has been operating for over 10 years but there has never been a formal review of the scheme. To this end, a Community Development project was initiated. One

of the group's major tasks was to conduct a review of the current scheme. The students were involved in developing and administering a questionnaire to gauge client satisfaction. It is hoped that the data gathered can be used to canvass ideas for expansion and possible improvement.

The feedback was extremely positive: 94% of surveyed clients reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service provided. We also sought their views on ideas for expansion. Clients were provided with a list of possible options; these included legal advice prior to the hearing, court representation, discussion of the outcome, legal advice regarding related criminal matters and follow up post hearing. Clients were asked for their views on each of these options and were also asked to nominate which option they would most like implemented. 67% of clients nominated court representation as their preferred option, while 16% nominated legal advice prior to the hearing. There are plans in place to implement the suggestions for change including the need for greater court representation.

Intervention orders are by no means a panacea, the protection they offer in real terms is limited. Granting an order is a reactive solution; family violence must be recognised as a societal problem. There are no easy solutions but greater community awareness is a catalyst for change.

Child Support Report: *Changes to affect level of financial support for children in single parent families.*

Val Stoilkovska
Child Support Solicitor

Many of our single parent clients will be negatively affected by the recent package of 'reforms' introduced by the Government. The result for almost all of these families will be a combined reduction in income from child support and government benefits.

The package of laws affecting child support clients are:

- Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – Initial Measures) Bill 2006;
- Welfare to Work Reforms; and
- *Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006.*

As it is not possible to cover all the changes in the present article, I will outline only some of the key changes.

Brief background to current changes

- **2003:** House of Representatives Committee on Family and Community Affairs report on child custody - 'Every Picture Tells a Story', recommends that a Ministerial taskforce be established to examine child support.
- **2004:** Recommendation accepted by the Government and taskforce set up.
- **2005:** Taskforce produces report, 'In the Best Interest of Children' – makes some 30 recommendations.
- **2006:** Child Support Legislation Amendment (Reform of the Child Support Scheme – Initial Measures) Bill

2006 comes into effect (changes to be introduced in three stages with first stage commencing on 1 July 2006).

Some key changes

- Changes to the formula used to calculate child support payments (from 1 July 2008). The new formula takes into account the combined income of both parents, gives substantial reductions in payments to non-resident parents for any contact with children over 14% and uses the minimalist cost of children's table (Lovering) to assess level of payments.
- Earning capacity which could previously be deemed will now be easier to reduce.
- Minimum child support payments lifted from \$260 per annum to \$320 per annum to be (CPI) indexed annually.
- Cap on high income reduced from \$139,347 to \$104,702 after which no further child support is payable.
- The amount of credit to be given to non-agency payments increased from 25% to 30%.

Welfare to Work Reforms

The Welfare to Work changes also came into effect on 1 July 2006 and make significant changes to the social security system.

Effect on single parent families

From 1 July 2006, single parents requiring income support and whose youngest child turns eight, will have to claim at the lower rate of Newstart allowance instead of the previous Parenting Payment (single).

Harsher income and assets tests will apply and there will be longer waiting periods of up to 13 weeks for both income support and child support payments.

In addition, a parent whose youngest child turns six, will have to undertake or look for part time work of at least 15 hours per week and such requirement will extend even over the Christmas period. In very limited situations, people can seek an exemption.

Less support will be given to single parents in obtaining tertiary or other longer term professional qualifications.

Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006

The Act commenced on 1 July 2006 and makes some of the following changes:

- Inserts into the Family Law Act an underlying (rebuttable) presumption of equal parental responsibility;
- 'Makes provision for a staged commencement of the requirement for people to attend a dispute resolution process before applying for a parenting order'; and
- Amends the existing definition of family violence to provide an

objective test even if inappropriate in such circumstances.

The lack of consultation by the Government for both the child support and the welfare to work changes is indicative of its determination to implement these changes despite informed protests from welfare and community legal groups on the detrimental effect that such changes will have on those people who are already struggling.

The new laws will force many people to turn to welfare agencies to make up for the drop in their level of income. In terms of our services, it will place an even greater demand on workers to carry out welfare duties and referrals in addition to legal ones for clients with increasingly multi-faceted needs.

The reasons being given for some of the changes are:

- Greater emphasis on shared parental responsibility;
- Increase in work-force participation of single parents; and
- Emphasis in government policy of treating both parents as potential labour force participants.¹

The Government however has failed to adequately take into account the effect that these changes will have on single parent households and their children. In attempting to address the perceived imbalance between the parties, the Government has swung the pendulum too far in favour of non resident parents.

1. Paper presented by Chantel Veldhoen at CLC State Conference held in Melbourne, June 2006.

Civil Litigation Advocate Report

Sharona Frid
Civil Litigation Advocate

As the civil litigation lawyer attached to SMLS, I am referred many types of cases from the vast world of civil law. It is impossible to be expert in anything and everything ... car accidents, personal injury claims, contract disputes, employment law, consumer complaints, nuisance etc etc etc. The list goes on and

it is often that I encounter situations that I have previously not come across.

With the support of Wisewoulds, I feel that I can tackle almost any problem, with an assurance that the assistance we give the clients can be of high quality.

Pro Bono Partner – Wisewoulds

Sharona Frid
Civil Litigation Advocate

For the past year or two, Wisewoulds has offered its assistance to our service on a pro bono basis. We have found its advice and assistance invaluable.

Cases can be referred to Wisewoulds for advice only or, where appropriate, the firm runs them to trial, most often without recovering any of the costs it has clocked up. Sometimes, I seek its assistance simply in drafting court documents, such as complicated statements of claim.

Throughout this period, Wisewoulds has helped in all sorts of cases, including aiding workers to get their entitled wages and superannuation, taxi drivers to get the insurance cover their bosses have

refused to claim and many individuals to get out of or minimise all sorts of troubled situations.

Last year, Wisewoulds ran an appeal at the Supreme Court on behalf of one of our clients and won. It also ran a Magistrates' Court case early this year and won that, too.

Wisewoulds also provides a night-time advice line three times per week, so that students and volunteers at SMLS can phone in for help.

We wish to thank the staff at Wisewoulds for their support and assistance.

Volunteer Program

Felicity Purcell

IOSS & Volunteer Coordinator

Thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of our volunteers, this program continues to run efficiently. The contribution volunteers make to the lifeblood of SMLS cannot be underestimated.

Research indicates a large growth in philanthropic activity in Australian society. It is estimated that gifts of money, goods and services to non-profit organizations now exceeds \$11 billion dollars per year. Many would argue that giving your time by volunteering is the most valuable donation possible. The government and policy makers are increasingly aware of the significant economic contribution made by volunteers.



Wednesday Night Volunteers

The proportion of Australians who volunteer is rising. In 1995, the ABS estimated the volunteer rate to be 24%

and the total hours volunteered, 512 million. In 2000, the figures had risen to a rate of 31% and a total of 704 million hours. The most recent figures confirm this upward trend. Of adult Australians, 41% volunteered in the year to January 2005, giving an estimated 836 million hours. The average figures were 132 hours per year per volunteer.

We are lucky enough at Springvale to have a dedicated band of over 100 volunteers - supervisors, caseworkers and receptionists. The responsibilities and duties of each volunteer vary and all make a valuable contribution. As the first point of contact, the receptionists play an important role in welcoming clients to the service. The caseworkers and supervisors work in tandem to ascertain the legal question and provide timely and practical advice. Each volunteer brings their own skills and experiences – this diversity of backgrounds ensures the volunteer program is vibrant and dynamic.

As a community legal centre, SMLS plays an important role in ensuring access to justice; the volunteer program is an essential component of this. The service provided to clients on a daily basis is a vital community resource. On behalf of the board, staff and the 1000s of clients helped each year, I would like to thank the volunteers for their hard work and dedication.

Lawyers Practice Manual (Vic)

Sue Campbell
Editor

The past year saw the twentieth anniversary of the publication of the Lawyers Practice Manual – an occasion that was celebrated at the National and International Clinical Legal Education conference in July.

Looking back it amazes us that the LPM has been going for 20 years. It has grown from an initial 20 odd chapters to nearly fifty and the total number of voluntary contributors is probably twice that many. In this it reflects the spirit of Springvale Monash Legal Service – beginning as a small group of volunteers and growing, despite obstacles, to a fully professional organisation which has never lost its original ethos of service to the community.

The LPM allows many of our former students to continue to contribute to the community through their contributions as authors and editors.

In the past year we said farewell and thankyou to one of our editors, Dr Elizabeth Lanyon, whose expertise and contacts in the world of commercial law had added a valuable dimension to the operation. Fortunately Elizabeth remains as co-author of one of the chapters.

In her place we were delighted to recruit two of our former students, Kate Seear and Meghan Butterfield, both well known around 5 Osborne Avenue. Kate and Meghan have added new energy when some of the older editors might have been approaching burn-out. They both instantly grasped the essence of being an editor, which is the ability to ring up a complete stranger and talk them into writing a new chapter!!

One of the ways in which the LPM reflects the legal centre spirit is in the sharing of chapters among our comrades in other States. There are now Lawyers Practice Manuals in four states, NSW, Victoria, Queensland and the most recent version, Western Australia, produced by our friends at Southern Communities Advice and Legal Education Service (SCALES) (and a South Australian version is in the pipeline). As the extent of Federal law increases, the scope for sharing a chapter on an area of Federal law and practice grows. When we were first asked by our publisher, LBC, if the NSW Red Book could publish one of our chapters, we immediately agreed, on a royalty-free basis – as one legal centre to another.

The highlight of the year in terms of new chapters has been the publication of a chapter on *Applications for Refugee Status* – an area of great importance and ever-changing complexity. In addition we have published updates to at least 26 chapters. As the law continues to change, the need for the LPM remains.

