



WOMEN'S LEGAL
SERVICE VICTORIA

Annual Report 2010

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Vision

Fair and just outcomes for all women who are experiencing relationship breakdown or violence by improving access to the legal system.

Values

We are **RESPONSIVE**
We are **PROFESSIONAL**
We are **PROGRESSIVE**
We work with **INTEGRITY**

Mission

WLSV will be a leading legal service specialising in assisting women and their children who are experiencing relationship breakdown or violence through the provision of:

- Information
- Advice and/or referral
- Representation
- Influence
- Education

Funding

Women's Legal Service Victoria is funded by the Indigenous Justice and Legal Assistance Division, Attorney General's Department – Canberra and Victoria Legal Aid.

WLSV Services

Option 1

Legal advice line

Phone **03 9642 0877**
1800 133 302 freecall for country callers
Monday 10.00am – 1.00pm
Tuesday 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Wednesday 2.00pm – 5.00pm
Thursday 6.30pm – 8.30pm

Please Note: The Legal Advice Line is for women in Victoria who need legal advice, information or referral – irrespective of income or assets. Interpreter services are available. Women should telephone the Legal Advice Line before attending WLSV's Face to Face Advice because WLSV Lawyers may be able to provide the appropriate legal information, advice or referral over the telephone.

Option 2

Face to Face Legal Advice

Level 3
43 Hardware Lane
Melbourne 3000
Phone **03 9642 0877**
Every Thursday 9.30am – 12 noon

Option 3

Advice & Representation at Melbourne Magistrates' Court

Level 6
233 William Street
Melbourne 3000
(cnr Lonsdale Street)
Phone **03 9642 0877**
Monday to Friday 9.30am – 1pm

Option 4

Casework Services

- WLSV takes on approximately 400 cases a year, focusing on issues arising from RELATIONSHIP BREAKDOWN and VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, including: family law, de facto relationships, family violence – intervention orders.
- WLSV focuses on areas of law where women are, or could potentially be disadvantaged (in family law, for example, where separation often reduces women's financial circumstances) and where women's access to justice and legal support is limited.

A Brief History

In 1981 a public meeting was held in Melbourne to discuss how to make the law and legal system recognise women and their needs.

Six months later Women's Legal Resource Group (WLRG) was formed. It was located in Women's Liberation House and was staffed by volunteers. The service was funded by donations and provided free telephone legal advice and a referral service.

In 1984 WLRG received a grant from the Legal Aid Commission to expand the telephone legal advice and referral service. A dedicated team of volunteers participated in law reform campaigns and produced publications. Throughout the 1980s up to the mid-90s WLRG operated under a collective model and was located in West Melbourne and Fitzroy.

In 1996, as a result of the Access to Justice Inquiry and Equality Before the Law Report, additional funding was made available under the Justice Statement. It was part of an initiative to establish women's legal services in each state. Funding was also made available to auspice Indigenous women's

legal programs across Australia. This was a time of significant change for WLRG.

In an attempt to establish a statewide focus, WLRG relocated into the CBD and with the additional funding WLRG expanded, developing an outreach service in the western suburbs and in rural areas. Additional staff were employed to expand the telephone advice line, offer face-to-face legal advice, manage casework and conduct community education programs.

On 1 August 2000, at a special general meeting, Women's Legal Resource Group changed its name and became Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) and moved from a collective to a governance structure. A new constitution was adopted and board members were elected.

In 2001 and 2002 the WLSV board worked with stakeholders to develop a clearer direction for the organisation. A decision was made to restructure WLSV, enabling the organisation to become a more specialised service, developing expertise in the areas of law relating to 'relationship breakdown and violence against women'.

“In 2009/10 Women's Legal Service Victoria continues to provide a first rate specialist service focusing on 'relationship breakdown and violence against women' issues, responding effectively to women in need.”

As a result of the restructure, a more casework-focused service emerged, one where casework directly informs which law reform and legal education issues are prioritised.

On 9 August 2005 Women's Legal Service Victoria opened a separately incorporated 'sibling' organisation, Family Law Legal Service (FLLS). FLLS provides Duty Lawyer services to both men and women at the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court. During 2009/2010 FLLS also commenced providing legally assisted family dispute resolution to parties attending the Melbourne Family Relationship Centre.

In 2009/10 Women's Legal Service Victoria continues to provide a first rate specialist service focusing on 'relationship breakdown and violence against women' issues, responding effectively to women in need. The organisation continues to be committed to the rights of all women, acknowledging that women are entitled to have equal access to a legal system which incorporates their needs and guarantees a fair and just outcome.

Board Members

Jennifer Dillon	Chair
Gesualda Li Rosi	Treasurer
Tali Bernard	Secretary
Lorna Gelbert	Public Officer
Jo Hastings	Member
Dorothy Gibbs	Member
Leanne Miller	Member
Anne Lyon	Member
Libby Maynard	Member

WLSV Staff

Gillian Dallwitz	Chief Executive Officer until April 2010
Joanna Fletcher	Chief Executive Officer from April 2010
Leanne Sinclair	Principal Lawyer
Gwen Yeoh	Lawyer
Carol Mellords	Lawyer
Kate Langham	Lawyer
Geraldine Joyce	Lawyer
Abigail Sullivan	Lawyer
Brenna Powney	Lawyer
Henrietta Dewar	Lawyer
Danielle Wisniak	Legal Advice Line Supervisor/Lawyer
Zione Walker-Nthenda	Law Reform and Policy Lawyer
Eila Pourasgheri	Lawyer – Law Reform, Education and Practice
Mary Louise Hatch	Legal Educator/Lawyer
Allyson Foster	Legal Educator
Sue de Silva	Finance Officer
Rebecca Carbone	Office Administrator until February 2010
Samantha Watson	Office Administrator/Project Manager from February 2010
Angela Borg	Administrative Assistant

Report from the Chair

A couple of years ago I opened my report by contemplating the White Queen's capacity to imagine six impossible things before breakfast! This year (fearing I had indeed strayed behind the Looking Glass) I have from time to time had some sympathy for a more modern Queen in her annus horribilis...

But, as always, Women's has demonstrated that adverse events will only make us stronger and in reward, our year has had some outstanding successes.

Principal amongst those was of course the granting of recurrent funding to our sister organisation Family Law Legal Service (FLLS). The grant is a proper recognition of the pivotal work of the organisation's lawyers in providing effective alternative duty lawyer services in every major Family Law jurisdiction. Well done to all at Flossie - may increased stability allow us to grow and grow.

Following upon a year dominated by strategic planning in 2009, and in anticipation of the uncertain financial climate ahead, this year the Board moved to carefully examine its potential for external fund raising, resulting in the short term appointment of an expert fund raising/business development consultant Alun Evans. The exercise proved an important

one for us, focusing our minds and our energies on the commercial aspects of running and funding an organisation such as Women's. It also allowed us, through a wide process of consultation, to determine the outsider's view – an extremely interesting perspective as it turned out. As so often can be the case, the merit may yet prove to be in the journey rather than the destination, but the Board continues to believe that when our story is well told, the business community will recognise and reward us commensurately!

In policy and legislation, family violence continued, quite rightly, to hold the spotlight this year. During the first term of the Labor government, the so-called "shared parenting" amendments were also closely examined (arising out of concerns that they had been too hastily cobbled together at the behest of aggressive politicking) resulting in 3 major enquiries the conclusions of which have led us to hope that a more equitable raft of reforms will follow.

A hostile senate and in particular one Senator's ill-judged stance has prevented Government from completing a Courts' merger. This seems to have slipped off the political radar at the moment, so regrettably the two major Federal Courts overseeing the Family Law Act may continue to limp forward, under resourced, imperfectly

structured and with differing sets of Rules, to the ultimate disadvantage of practitioners and parties alike.

Those reviews however also provided an opportunity for our organisation to enter into a partnership with FLLS and the Melbourne Family Relationship Centre to provide legal information and advice to parties attending that service. WLSV also commenced its engagement in a pilot program with FLLS

“ In policy and legislation, family violence continued, quite rightly, to hold the spotlight this year. The so-called “shared parenting” amendments were also closely examined leading us to hope that a more equitable raft of reforms will follow.”

and VLA Roundtable Dispute Management to provide better outcomes for parties engaging in mediation. For those of us familiar with the peculiar disadvantages often faced by unsupported women in dispute resolution, these efforts to equalise the playing field are welcome indeed.

WLSV, through Board member Dorothy Gibbs, continued to hold a valuable presence in ongoing negotiations relating

Report from the Chair continued...

to the Multi Business Agreement affecting staff in community legal centres. Dorothy's longstanding expertise in labour relations is a constant benefit to us all.

After many many fulfilling years at WLSV and FLLS, our CEO Gill Dallwitz resigned in April 2010 leaving a void that proved difficult to fill. I would like most sincerely to thank Board members Lorna Gelbert and Dorothy Gibbs for their participation in the recruitment (and re-recruitment!) process to find a new CEO. I would also like to thank the General Manager of Mercury Executive Recruitment, Lyn Gunnell for her expertise and her patience, not to mention her genuine concern for the organisation's wellbeing. It's been a great relationship thank you Lyn and one which I anticipate will continue to benefit Women's Legal Service Victoria. Further, thank you to Deb Bryant, CEO of Women's Domestic Violence Crisis Service for her valuable insights into the role and for putting in the hours on the interview panel. To all of you - I was tremendously grateful for your combined skills, knowledge and abilities and perhaps even more for your senses of humour!! We did get there in the end...

I am of course delighted to confirm that Joanna Fletcher has now been engaged as CEO of WLSV and FLLS, a relationship

which I anticipate will deliver enormous benefit to the organisations and I hope will also bring joy and fulfilment to Joanna personally. Joanna has always been fundamental to our valued place in the sector and continues to be a highly esteemed voice in the setting of good policy for women. I know I speak for both the Staff and the Board when I say welcome to Joanna in her new role and emphasize how much we look forward to our future in her hands.

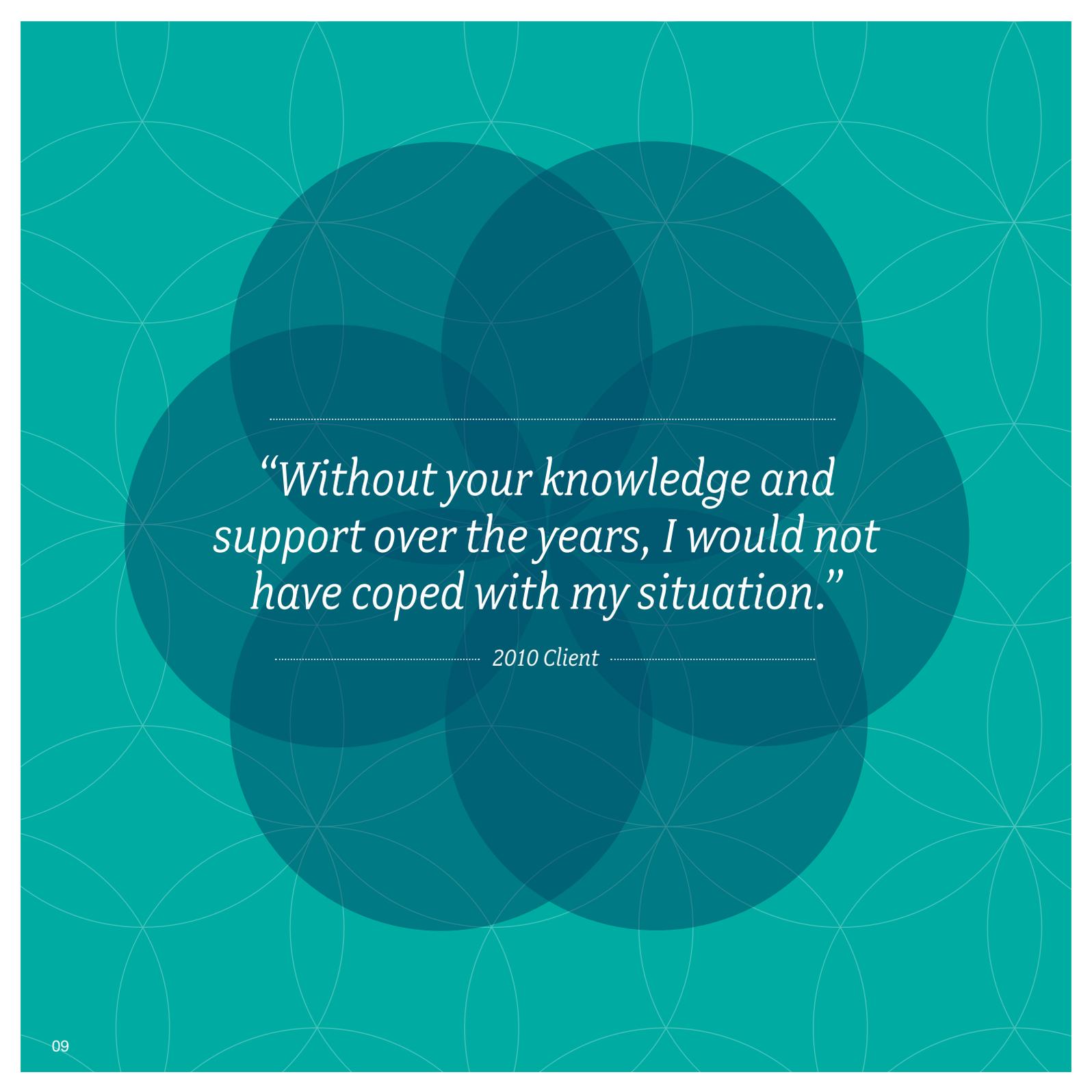
During the course of the past year we also lost more "living legends" at Women's – Rebecca Carbone left after 7 fantastic years of juggling all the moving parts to commence her own business, our long-serving Finance Officer Sue De Silva finally called it quits, family lawyer Mary Louise Hatch has moved to another role after two long stretches with WLSV. Change comes hard in tight-knit, high stress organisations, but as always we're thrilled to retain the fantastic people who remain with us, doing what they do best for the women of Victoria. Of course, we also have the benefit of our new faces and skills and the return of some of our new mothers!!

This year, the Board will also lose one of its much-loved women. Few of us can adequately contemplate what Jo Hastings

has dealt with this year. May you and your family come to a certain peace Jo and may the Foundation you have set up to remember your beautiful Katrina bring you joy and satisfaction. The Board thanks you for your commitment and your special skills – you will remain in our hearts and we'll look forward to the catch up's.

The year ahead will see the Board of WLSV contemplate, amongst many other important things, its service delivery – perhaps new regions, new Courts, new partnerships? – the numbers of women requiring our assistance does not diminish, nor does our commitment to performance. As always (and I anticipate for the last time as Chair) I offer heartfelt thanks to the women on the Board who find time for the work, the laughter and the camaraderie. I congratulate our staff on another year spent dealing with the chaos that surrounds relationship breakdown in such a professional and competent manner. It's a joy to be part of it all...

Jennifer Dillon
Chair



“Without your knowledge and support over the years, I would not have coped with my situation.”

2010 Client

Chief Executive Officer's Report

2010 has been a time of significant change at WLSV.

For myself, although I have had a nearly 10 year association with the organisation, assuming the mantle of Chief Executive Officer has caused me to reflect deeply on the organisation – all that it has been and all that it can be. I will be continuing to do that with the assistance of the Board, staff and other significant stakeholders over the coming months and I expect to be able to write next year about our shared vision for the future. But for today, I would like to add to the tributes made by our Chair, in her report, to those who have moved on from WLSV this year, to our new staff and to all who remain and have made 2009/2010 such a success, despite the significant changes.

Gillian Dallwitz, resigned after over ten years as WLSV's Chief Executive Officer. Gill saw the organisation through the big transition from a collective to a governance model and well beyond – identifying and taking on many other challenges and opportunities that saw the organisation grow and develop significantly and build its reputation for excellence in the areas of relationship breakdown and violence against women. I was very privileged to be managed and mentored by Gill over many of those years in my previous roles at WLSV and I am extremely grateful to be taking on the

challenge of management in an organisation which has been so well nurtured and guided for so long. I will always remember and cherish Gill's compassionate leadership and her total commitment to WLSV and every individual staff member.

2010 also saw the departure of two other long term WLSV staff members – Rebecca Carbone, our Office Administrator for over seven years and Sue De Silva, our Finance Officer for over ten years. As well as being a knowledgeable and effective administrator, Bec was a very significant part of the 'life and soul' of WLSV, always cheerful and positive, regardless of the sometimes challenging circumstances that arise on the 'front desk' at an organisation such as ours. Sue often seemed to have the Midas touch with our finances, making the dollars stretch further and last longer than we expected – always a good surprise to have!

We also farewelled legal educator, Mary Louise Hatch. Amongst many other training activities, Mary Louise did a fabulous job, together with Allyson Foster, in developing and delivering a training program for lawyers and family dispute resolution practitioners to support new partnerships between legal services and family relationship centres.

It is a testament to the organisation and to the resilience and commitment of all its staff that everyone has managed these

significant changes so well and continued to work together in the supportive way that is one of the great hallmarks of the service. Of course the new staff members we have welcomed – Samantha Watson as Office Administrator/Project Manager and Lisa Welburn-Brown as Finance Officer, as well as two new lawyers Henrietta Dewar and Abby Sullivan – have also made a big contribution to easing these transitions. Thank you to all of these new staff members for taking on your roles with such enthusiasm and for, so quickly, joining in the collaborative spirit of the organisation.

As can be seen from the remainder of this annual report, 2009/2010 has actually been a year in which, despite our significant staffing changes, WLSV has extended itself into new areas. These include the comprehensive training program for lawyers and family dispute resolution practitioners mentioned above, entering into two new partnerships, together with the Family Law Legal Service, to provide legal assistance to parties participating in mediation as well as utilising our Case Study Bank for significant law reform and campaigning activities.

A huge thank you to all staff - both paid and voluntary - and Board members for their continued dedication to WLSV!

Joanna Fletcher
Chief Executive Officer

Principal Lawyer's Report

An experienced family law practitioner once described to me that practicing in family law was like flicking between channels on the television, as each client has a different story, a different perspective and an individual history to tell. This could not be truer.

Over the past year, we have focussed on these individual stories of women and their experiences of the family law system in the development of our Case Study Bank, a project that I have found great pleasure in working on. Only time will tell us all the ways in which being able to capture, highlight and draw upon the true accounts of our clients, will be able to assist WLSV in finding new ways to change the law and support women who have endured relationship breakdown and family violence.

There is never a dull moment at WLSV, and we take care to build and maintain our positive relationships with other organisations. This year we continued to expand the breadth and reach of WLSV by working in partnership with both Family Law Legal Service and Victoria Legal Aid's Roundtable Dispute Management program (RDM) on a pilot program to provide legal advice during family law mediations. At the end of the 9 month pilot, everyone involved agreed it was an overwhelming success, with the outcome being that we were able to assist families to resolve their family

law disputes in a non-adversarial forum. In recognition of this success, we have recently learned that Legal Aid will provide funding to continue the program – a very welcome decision!

Using the knowledge gained from the RDM pilot, WLSV has also partnered with Family Law Legal Service to provide legally assisted family dispute resolution at the Melbourne Family Relationship Centre. This initiative has been funded by the Attorney General's Department, and thus far has been a very successful enterprise for all involved.

The WLSV casework team has continued to deliver quality core services, and we have assisted an ever increasing number of women to resolve their family law and Intervention Order matters through our duty lawyer service at the Magistrates' Court at Melbourne and our advice services and legal casework.

At the end of another productive and exciting year, I wish to acknowledge that the success of these and the many other projects at WLSV is only possible because of the support of our highly professional and dedicated staff and Board which enable WLSV to reach new and exciting heights.

Leanne Sinclair
Principal Lawyer

Legal Educator's Report

Introduction

2009/2010 was a year of change for the Legal Education team which saw the departure of Ilana Faviel, who has gone on to become a mother of a beautiful daughter and my return from maternity leave. In spite of these changes the WLSV legal education team (made up of myself, Eila Pourasgheri and Mary Louise Hatch) continued to respond to demands for legal education and training in the community.

“Providing legal education... not only raises the standard of legal knowledge in the community but also raises the profile of WLSV and the work that we do.”

This year WLSV completed nearly 80 legal education sessions. As in previous years WLSV's legal education program was delivered to a wide range of audiences across the community. We delivered legal education and professional development to CASA counsellor/advocates, refuge workers, general practitioners, maternal and child health nurses, university students, state-wide telephone support staff, lawyers, mediators, family dispute resolution practitioners, family counsellors, psychologists, survivors of domestic

violence, police, lawyers and one Federal Magistrate. Providing legal education to these audiences not only raises the standard of legal knowledge in the community but also raises the profile of WLSV and the work that we do.

Family violence in the courts forum

In December WLSV held a forum for support workers on how the Magistrates' and the Family Courts deal with family violence. WLSV's legal education team delivered training on the Family Violence Protection Act and the Family Law Act. The participants were also able to hear from experts in the field, with Magistrate Cathy Lamble providing excellent information on how support workers can best support their clients in obtaining intervention orders. Barrister Renata Alexander's presentation provided practical tips for support workers assisting their clients through the Family Court. The forum gave participants the opportunity to listen and ask questions of both Magistrate Lamble and Dr Alexander and explore ways in which they could best support their clients through the court system.

The full day forum was attended by over 50 support workers and the evaluation feedback demonstrated that they greatly valued the training. We would like to thank



Legal Educator's Report

continued..

Magistrate Cathy Lamble and Barrister Renata Alexander for their insightful and entertaining presentations and their contribution to the success of the day. We would also like to thank the organisations that funded the forum, the Department of Human Services and the Victoria Law Foundation.

Family Relationship Centres & legal services partnership

This year also saw the roll out of the Federal Attorney General's "Building Better Partnerships" initiative. The initiative aims to enhance the legal support available to vulnerable clients undertaking family dispute resolution at Family Relationship Centres. This has provided a great opportunity for WLSV to build on its knowledge of family dispute resolution in all aspects of the service from legal practice to legal education. Not only has WLSV partnered with Family Law Legal Service, Melbourne Family Relationship Centre (FRC) and Victoria Legal Aid to provide Legally Assisted Dispute Resolution to FRC clients but WLSV also secured funding to develop and deliver an introductory professional development program for lawyers and family dispute resolution practitioners (FDRPs) to support the initiative.

The impetus for WLSV's funding proposal was based on observations in the report Enhancing Inter-Professional Relationships in a Changing Family Law System (Rhoades, Astor, Sanson & O'Connor) that "many practitioners have little collaborative contact with the other profession, and there are significant misunderstandings and tensions between the two groups." Further, anecdotal evidence suggested that some lawyers did not possess the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively assist and support FDRPs and ultimately, vulnerable clients. WLSV believed that these deficiencies posed a significant barrier to the establishment of successful partnerships between FRCs and legal services, potentially compromising the quality of services delivered to vulnerable clients. To address these shortcomings and support each professional group in inter-professional collaboration, WLSV designed a training program for both lawyers and FDRPs.

The program was successfully delivered to both lawyers and FDRPs in Victoria and Tasmania. It was a challenging but ultimately very rewarding project as Mary Louise Hatch and I came to grips with the key differences between these two valuable professions and where there was common

ground for successful collaboration. WLSV was very lucky to have the in house expertise of Mary Louise, who is not only a lawyer but also a FDRP, to lead the way.

Allyson Foster
Legal Educator



*“Thank you - that was the best
training I have been to in a long time”*

..... Legal Education Participant 2010

Law Reform & Policy Lawyer's Report

Introduction

Our submissions this year have primarily related to the intersection of family law and family violence. The key one being the on-line consultation and the written submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission on the intersection of the national and state legal frameworks for family violence.

I have focussed this year on consolidating the work done last year and on further developing key partnerships to place WLSV in the best position to better advocate for our client group. The key ways we have sought to do this are through:

Partnerships

WLSV has many strong links to government and other community organisations and fosters this through our various advisory and stakeholder roles in the many committees we regularly attend.

I was made co-convenor of the Violence against Women and Children Working Group at the Federation of Community Legal Centres and also the co-convenor and Meeting Chairperson of Women's Legal Services Australia (WLSA) for this year. I have also given presentations at the Family Violence Statewide Advisory Committee and the Department of Justice Stakeholder

Reference Group Meeting to demonstrate gaps and workshop solutions in the family violence jurisdiction.

Capacity Building

The development of our Case Study Bank has been a key component in our capacity building. Case studies have formed the corner stone of the presentations I have given at various committees and meetings, as well as being used for various campaigns as they demonstrate real life experiences of how the system is or isn't working for clients. I am really looking forward to being able to use the Case Study Bank and our improved data collection systems to assist us with our advocacy work, demonstrate our service delivery and highlight gaps for law reform.

Advocacy

We formed an alliance with the Public Interest Law Clearing House the Law Institute of Victoria (LIV), and the Victorian Bar Legal Assistance Scheme with funding from the Law Council of Australia to lobby for increased legal aid funding, in particular for family law matters. We used cases from our Case Study Bank to demonstrate the gaps and the problems faced by clients who were unable to access legal aid.

Law Reform & Policy Lawyer's Report

continued..

A rally took place in front of the County Court with former Chief Justice of the Family Court, Alastair Nicholson speaking as well as Caroline Counsel, the LIV President-elect and Robert Richter QC. The campaign culminated in the State government announcing an increase to legal aid funding on the morning of the rally with the Federal government doing the same sometime later. We are yet to analyse the details of the Commonwealth funding to confirm Victoria's per capita increase.

“ The campaign culminated in the State government announcing an increase to legal aid funding on the morning of the rally ”

Media

I was interviewed for the 7.30 report on the ABC in relation to the criminal trial of Deanne Bridgland, a family violence victim who was prosecuted when she withdrew her statement. The matter cannot be further commented upon as it is under appeal. However the case highlighted some gaps in the criminal jurisdiction with regards to family violence and we are currently having further discussions with relevant state agencies about possible improvements to the system.

Associations

This year we are acting as hosts of the WLSA Network day which occurs just prior to the National Association of Community Legal Centres Conference (NACLCC Conference). Jill Singer (Walkley award winner) is kindly providing a presentation to WLSA members on working with the media. Her support is much appreciated. Eila and I will also be presenting at the NACLCC Conference on our Case Study Bank development and process as an invaluable tool for the sector.

Appreciation

Eila & I have really consolidated the law reform team and all submissions and major projects are undertaken jointly. I thank Eila for her collaborative style and many brilliant ideas.

I would also like to thank all the staff who have been phenomenal in writing and providing case studies and attending our many workshops in spite of their very heavy workloads. Their advice, suggestions and input have made the Case Study Bank the success that it is.

Zione Walker-Nthenda

Law Reform and Policy Lawyer



*“Thank you for believing me
and supporting me... Your knowledge,
experience, patience and empathy
gave me strength.”*

..... 2010 Client

Volunteers

Legal Advice Line Volunteers

**Volunteers work on the
Legal Advice Line service
from 6.30pm to 8.30pm
every Tuesday & Thursday**

Andrea Motbey
Agata Wierzbowski
Akane Kanai
Amanda Lee
Amelia Beech
Annette Esposito
Annmarie Farrell
Betty Trimcevski
Kelly Bui
Caitlin Tierney
Carly Wilson
Carolyn Welsh
Caroline Paterson
Celia Laragy
Christine Lai
Dao Bui Nguyen
Dilshari Corea
Deborah Polites
Deborah Randa
Dianne Donati
Diana Hogan
Eve Bodsworth
Eleanor Fletcher
Elizabeth Hall
Emma Gerber
Emma O'Neill
Emmalaura Messer

Farzeen Alam
Fiona Batten
Gemma-Jane Cooper
Hannah Sycamore
Hannah Hodges
Isolde Lueckenhausen
Jana Homatopoulos
Jane Bentley
Jasreen Pandher
Jeanne Gorman
Jessica Campbell
Jessica May
Jillian Williams
Julie Andritsos
Katherine Lockey
Kelly Bui
Kelly Lucas
Keleigh Robinson
Kirsten Morrison
Kirsty McIntyre
Lily Hardman
Lisa Pryles
Louise Dorian
Louise Martin
Loredana Gibson
Marguerite Darmody
Maria Chouridis
Marita Wilson
Melanie Wong
Meribah Rose
Natasha Cecic
Nerida Mulvey
Niresha Mudalige

Pamela Khoo
Regan Richards
Rachel Fletcher
Serina McDuff
Susan McClellan
Stephanie Reid
Susan Rawling
Susanna Kirpichnikov
Sarah Lean
Sarah Metcalfe
Sarah Wainwright
Simone Driscoll
Tamara Kay
Tanya Lavan
Zara Durnan

Legal Volunteers

**Day volunteers assist WLSV legal
staff between 9am & 5pm weekday**

Anna Kutner
Dee Le
Donna Muntz
Emma Robbins
Imparani Tisserverasinghe
Merinda Stewart
Nita Nagendran
Samantha McKay
Shantini Iyngkaran
Sara Phung
Sarah Crouch



Volunteers
continued...

Administrative Volunteers

Kathy Fawcett
Rose Storey

Student Placements

Abigail Sullivan
Alexandra Nguyen
Ashleigh Wall
Breigh Smith
Candice Stokes
Carly Fuller
Hanh Ha
Ilana Madjar
Janine Perry
Jean Maloney
Jessica Fay
Kate Stary
Marisa Money
Robin Robinson
Sally Szmerling
Samantha Burris
Susan McLellan
Tatyana-Aspen Abdul Rahman
Valerie Cookson

**Thank You/Legal Assistance
& Other Assistance**

Thank you to the following
organisations or people who have
so generously assisted WLSV's clients,
and WLSV, in the past twelve months.

Legal Assistance

Amanda Wynne
Andrea Lawrence
Angela Cranenburgh
Anita Spitzer
Bruno Kiernan
Caroline Counsel
Colin King
Daniela Hannan
David Faran
David Laidlaw
Esther James
Evelyn Goldberg
Georgina Coghlan
Helen Dellidis
Holding Redlich
Irene Bolger
Kath Devine
Kathy Raccanello
Kaye McNaught
Kim Southey
Kylea Campana
Louise Dorian
Mary Baczynski

Mary Sevdalis
Michael Stanton
Minal Vohra
Munya Andrews
Natalie Vogel
Neale James
Neil Collins
Paul Ehrlich
Paul Hannan
Robert Allen
Robyn Wheeler
Rohan Holt
Roona Nida
Ruth Hamnett
Sarah Keating
Susan Einsiedel
Tom Hutching
Tony Vriends
Valentina Stoilkovska
Vass Theohoropoulou
Zoltan Friedman

Other Assistance

The Age
Espresso Hub
Peter Rowland
Public Interest Law
Clearing House

Numbers

TOTAL NUMBER OF
CLIENTS ASSISTED
(not counting multiple contacts)

2850

TOP FIVE TYPES OF LEGAL WORK UNDERTAKEN

Advice activities	3460
Information activities	2207
Cases closed	1015
Cases with court representation	706
Non-casework projects (law reform & legal education)	221

TOP TEN PROBLEM TYPES

Family or domestic violence orders	927
Child contact or contact orders	543
Property in marriage	440
Property de facto	144
Sexual assault and related offences	125
Employment other	111
Intervention orders - stalking	81
Child residency	72
Other civil	49
Injuries compensation	27

TOP TEN OCCURRENCES OF COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Australia	1179
China	70
India	57
England	50
New Zealand	40
Philippines	33
Vietnam	30
Sri Lanka	25
Somalia	18
Thailand	16
Turkey	16

Auditor's report



J L COLLYER & PARTNERS
ACCOUNTANTS & AUDITORS

Suite 1
187-189 Coleman Parade
Geelong Waterfront VIC 3150
PO Box 340
Geelong Waterfront VIC 3150
Phone: 03 9600 0211
Fac: 03 9601 5497
Email: brad@collyerpartners.com.au

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the members of WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA Report on the Financial Report

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of **WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA** comprising the balance sheet as at 30th June 2010, and the income statement, statement of changes in equity and cash flow statement for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The management of **WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA** is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report and has determined that the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, which form part of the financial report are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The management's responsibility also includes designing, implementing and maintaining internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used, as described in Note 1, are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. These Auditing Standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial report is free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial report. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgement, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report on order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the directors, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Management's financial reporting requirement. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit, we have complied with the relevant independence requirements.

Auditor's Opinion

In our opinion the financial report of **WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA**

- (a) gives a true and fair view of **WOMEN'S LEGAL SERVICE VICTORIA's** financial position as at 30th June 2010 and of its performance for the year ended on that date in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1; and
- (b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards to the extent described in Note 1.


Janet Collyer
J L COLLYER & PARTNERS

6th August 2010

DIRECTORS
JANET L. COLLYER FCPA
LIONEL R. ARNOLD CA B.BUS
RAELENE LAJ CPA B.COM



LIABILITY LIMITED BY A SCHEME APPROVED
UNDER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS LEGISLATION

Balance Sheet

as at 30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Equity		
Capital Replacement Reserve	90,000	90,000
Retained Earnings	165,429	288,300
Total Equity	255,429	378,300
Represented by:		
Current Assets		
Petty Cash	313	313
Cash at Bank - Cheque A/C	102,429	138,224
Cash at Bank - Cash Management	193,197	244,737
Cash at Bank - Term Deposits	202,711	191,293
Cash at Bank - Payroll Security A/C	25,000	25,000
	523,650	599,567
Non-Current Assets		
Computer Equipment	1,600	1,600
	1,600	1,600
Office Furniture & Equipment	153,183	145,293
Less Accumulated Depreciation	113,468	107,846
	39,715	37,447
	41,315	39,047
Total Assets	564,965	638,614
Current Liabilities		
Other Creditors	28,590	23,326
Provision for 'to make good' premises	12,000	12,000
Provision for Staff Entitlements	94,030	85,478
GST Payable	17,488	20,571
Future Contingency Fund	25,000	25,000
Income in Advance	132,428	93,939
	309,536	260,314
Total Liabilities	309,536	260,314
Net Assets	255,429	378,300

Income Statement

for the year ended
30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Income		
Interest Received	20,753	27,804
Costs Recovered and Retained	2,173	7,889
Reimbursement – Wages	90,328	131,790
Reimbursement – Rent	24,000	24,000
Community Legal Education	26,064	33,588
Donations	1,231	2,510
CLC Recurrent Grant	1,003,385	735,313
Other Commonwealth Grant	-	270,000
Other Grant	77,765	55,251
	1,245,699	1,288,145
Expenditure		
Audit Fees	3,130	3,812
Bank Charges	219	421
BDM Salary expenses/ salary / incidentals	42,954	-
Cleaning	4,860	4,814
Conferences and Seminar Costs	8,404	2,233
Depreciation	5,621	5,786
Disbursements	87	2,394
FLLS Costs	250,000	250,000
Filing Fees	41	40
Holiday Pay	12,330	(3,194)
Insurance	1,751	5,905
Leasing Charges	2,136	2,294
Library	4,766	4,321
Light & Power	3,294	3,101
Long Service Leave	11,838	10,170
Memberships	10,720	3,725
Planning & Programming	48,646	39,496
Practising Certificates	2,722	2,812
Postage	2,556	2,088
Printing & Stationery	9,129	8,538
Publicity	5,101	4,170
Rent	64,426	60,824

Income
Statement
for the year ended
30 June 2010
continued...

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Repairs & Maintenance - Capital Equipment	5,064	2,527
Salaries	744,534	678,840
Security Costs	891	404
Staff Recruitment	11,753	4,155
Staff Amenities	10,306	13,264
Structural Maintenance	1,270	-
Sundry Expenses	3,368	3,106
Superannuation Contributions	63,688	59,621
Telephone	14,445	15,168
Training	8,021	15,127
Travel & Accommodation	8,825	5,454
Workcover	2,720	-
	1,369,616	1,211,416
Operating Profit/(Loss)	(123,917)	76,729

Cash Flow Statement

as at 30 June 2010

	2010 \$	2009 \$
Cash flows from Operating Activities		
Receipts from Government Grants - recurrent	1,003,385	1,005,313
Receipts from Government Grants - non-recurrent	6,161	55,251
Receipts from Other Sources	253,889	168,206
Interest received	20,753	27,804
Payments to suppliers and employees	(1,352,215)	(1,149,334)
Net cash provided by/(used in) operating activities	(68,027)	107,240
Cash flows from Investment Activities		
Proceeds from sale of plant and equipment	-	-
Payments for purchase of plant and equipment	(7,890)	(1,635)
Net cash provided by/(used in) investment activities	(7,890)	(1,635)
Cash flows from Financing Activities		
Proceeds from Borrowings	-	-
Repayment of Borrowings	-	-
Net cash provided by/(used in) financing activities	-	-
Net Increase/(Decrease) in Cash Held	(75,917)	105,605
Cash at the Beginning of the Reporting Period	599,567	493,962
Cash at the End of the Reporting Period	523,650	599,567

Notes to the Statement of Cash Flows

1. Reconciliation of Cash

Cash on Hand	313	313
Cash at Bank	295,626	382,961
Other (specify): Term Deposits	227,711	216,293
	523,650	599,567

2. Reconciliation of Net Cash Used in Operating Activities to Operating Result

Operating Result	(123,917)	76,730
Depreciation	5,622	5,786
Increase/(Decrease) in Provisions/Reserves	8,552	57,006
(Increase)/Decrease in Current Receivables	-	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Creditors	2,181	(710)
Other (specify): Prior Year Adjustment	1,046	-
Increase/(Decrease) in Deposits in Advance	38,489	31,572
Net Cash provided by/(used in) Operating Activities	(68,027)	107,240

Case Study

Elizabeth's relationship with Sebastian began in April 2004. The following year their first child, Amber, was born.

Throughout the relationship, Sebastian was physically and emotionally abusive towards Elizabeth. They separated briefly in March 2006 but reconciled in June that same year. Elizabeth and Sebastian finally separated in October 2006, following a serious incident of family violence where Sebastian attempted to strangle Elizabeth.

In early 2007, Elizabeth fled Australia to England with Amber to escape her violent ex-partner. She was pregnant at the time. Sebastian soon commenced Hague Convention proceedings to have her returned to Australia. Elizabeth gave birth to their second child, Ruby, in July 2008.

Elizabeth and the children remained undetected in England for 2 years until English authorities located her. She was forced to return to Australia with the children. As Elizabeth and the children were not deemed to "reside" in Australia she was not entitled to Centrelink payments or assistance from Legal Aid. Elizabeth and the children had no money, nowhere to live and were dependent on charity food parcels to survive. She was forced to

vacate crisis accommodation as she could not pay the rent. She was not eligible to be housed in a refuge as there had not been recent family violence. In emergency housing for extended periods of time, Elizabeth and the two young children were exposed to further violence and drug use.

Having been subjected to years of abuse, having fled Australia and been forcibly returned, being homeless and unable to support herself and the children, Elizabeth became depressed. Twice she was admitted to a psychiatric ward.

In the meantime, with Elizabeth and the children back in Australia, Sebastian made no attempt to spend time with, or communicate with, Amber or Ruby. Sebastian's apparent lack of interest in the children reinforced Elizabeth's beliefs that Sebastian had used the Hague Convention proceedings as a way of controlling and punishing her.

Elizabeth sought urgent assistance from Women's Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) in September 2009. WLSV were able to assist Elizabeth with her matter and initiated court proceedings on her behalf seeking orders to enable her to return to England with the children.

After lengthy proceedings and negotiations with Sebastian, it became clear that he would be willing to allow Elizabeth to relocate back to England with the children, provided that he was no longer required to pay child support. WLSV referred Elizabeth to a private practitioner with expertise in child support matters, who assisted her with the necessary documents to enable Sebastian's child support obligations to be waived. The private practitioner assisted Elizabeth on a pro bono basis.

In the meantime, the Family Court proceedings initiated by WLSV, were resolved by agreement. Elizabeth and the children were allowed to relocate to England on a permanent basis. The orders provided for the children to spend time with the father, with such time to be agreed between the parties.

Without the assistance of WLSV, Elizabeth would have had to initiate proceedings herself, negotiate directly with her ex partner and represent herself in Court. This would have been extremely difficult for Elizabeth in light of her health issues, and the lack of emotional and financial support available to her and the children.