

Resources, Support & Training for CLC Workers Doing Community Legal Education

You are not alone!

There is a wealth of experience and expertise within the CLC sector and beyond in relation to community legal education (CLE) and associated issues.

The sharing of ideas and resources, providing support and working collaboratively is second nature to the sector.

Tap into the goodwill and generosity of CLCs and other related organisations.

This information sheet will give you a few ideas of where to turn.

CLC Networks

Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc – your peak body!

Suite 11, 1st Floor

54 Victoria St

Carlton South

Victoria, 3053.

P: (03) 9652 1500

E: administration@fclc.org.au

W: www.communitylaw.org.au

- Federation Secretariat staff have a broad knowledge and understanding of the activities of Victorian CLCs and issues relevant to them. The Secretariat is a great starting place for information and contacts. Secretariat staff are also involved in organising training for CLC workers and committee members
- Federation website provides up to date information about CLCs, news, events, issues and Federation activities.
- *Federation Toolkit* is located within the Federation website. It aims to contain a wide range of on-line resources for CLCs, including resources for CLE. The *Toolkit* is located in the intranet section of the Federation website. Member centres are issued a user name and password with which they can access the intranet.
- Community Development and Legal Education Working Group is a Federation working group whose membership consists of CLE workers from Victorian CLCs and Victoria Legal Aid. The group meets regularly to discuss and act on relevant issues, share information and resources, work on joint

projects and act as a liaison point for external bodies interested in CLE. Contact the Working Group convenor via the Federation Secretariat.

Generalist and specialist centres

A full listing of all Victorian centres is produced and updated regularly by the Federation, see www.communitylaw.org.au. Most centres are active in CLE work. Significant experience and expertise exists across the sector.

Individual centres have undertaken many CLE activities and have produced numerous CLE publications and other products. If you are exploring a particular CLE issue or initiative, the chances are that another centre has worked on something similar.

Don't 'reinvent the wheel', ask around, check with the Community Development and Legal Education Working Group or the Federation Secretariat, check centre websites, ask questions via Federation meetings or the bulletin board system (BBS).

National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) – your national peak!

P: (02) 9264 9595

E: naclc@clc.net.au

W: www.naclc.org.au

The NACLC is the national CLC peak body and plays a similar role to the Victorian Federation but on a national level.

- National CLE Network – coordination and sharing of information and initiatives on a national level.
- Community Legal Centres Bulletin Board System (BBS) – CLCs from across Australia can link into the BBS. It is basically an intranet service hosted by the NACLC. The BBS provides the opportunity for centres and individual workers to communicate quickly and easily with other CLCs. The BBS houses folders/sections which deal with specific issues or that host specific CLC networks.

NACLC has recently undertaken some work to explore the possible roles, such as keeping far more sophisticated websites to support their clearing house function that NACLC and state CLC associations may have in:

- collecting and collating information about CLE, law reform and sector development initiatives and activities undertaken by CLCs;
- sharing knowledge and skills;
- capturing and disseminating information about best practice;
- avoiding replication and duplication of those activities and initiatives; and
- maximising the capacity of centres to leverage and build on past experience and expertise. (Muddagouni, 2009).

Keep an eye on the NACLC website, the BBS and publications for more information.

National & state CLC conferences

National conferences are held on an annual basis. As well as being an excellent forum for networking, the conferences always have workshops and displays relating to CLE. Contact the NACLC for more details.

State conferences are held on a less regular basis, but when held usually provide forums for CLE workers and issues. Smaller events, such as the Community Development and CLE Mini Conference held in June 2009 and training sessions and forums are run from time to time. Contact the Federation Secretariat for more details.

Other Sources of Support

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA)

350 Queen St
Melbourne, 3000.
P: (03) 9269 0120
W: www.vla.vic.gov.au

VLA has a CLE section which employs a number of staff. VLA staff at times participate in the Community Development and Legal Education Working Group and have worked collaboratively with CLCs on a range of projects.

- Publications – VLA produces a wide range of legal education publications, some in conjunction with CLCs. Most centres display VLA publications in waiting areas, and use them to complement information and advice services and in CLE activities.
 - » A list of publications is available on the VLA website. Many of the publications are available in electronic form. Check with the VLA CLE section regarding ordering bulk copies.
- VLA Library – VLA has an extensive legal and related library. Library staff are very helpful in assisting with reference requests, including by telephone 9269 0232, or email library@vla.vic.gov.au. The library catalogue is available on line via the VLA website.
- VLA Community Legal Service Program staff may be able to provide information and assistance in relation to some of the “Practicalities – Accountability and Compliance” aspects of CLE work, and also have an overview of initiatives and activities across Victorian centres.

Victoria Law Foundation (VLF)

Level 5, 43 Hardware Lane
Melbourne, 3000.
P: 9604 8100
E: contact@victorialawfoundation.org.au
W: www.victorialawfoundation.org.au

The Foundation is an important source of funding for CLE projects. It also produces a range of legal education resources in-house, runs seminars and forums and undertakes a range of other functions.

VLF employs staff with a wide range of skills, including publishing and marketing. They are generous in sharing their knowledge and expertise.

VLF launched the **Victoria Law website** in late 2009. The website is a

“user-friendly, ‘one-stop’ portal to community legal education material, and to information about legal agencies and services”

HOPE, 2009.

The website is targeted at the Victorian general community, legal sector agencies and community service agencies. Website users are able to search the site by topic; by language and topic; or by legal agencies and resources. Where possible, publications in languages other than English will be available on the website.

CLCs and other relevant organisations are able to upload their publications to the *Victoria Law* website. VLF provides training on uploading to contributing organisations. VLF also administers and moderates the website.

The website provides a great opportunity for CLCs to promote their CLE publications and increase access to them. The website is also a tool that centres may use to check on what has been produced previously. This will enhance co-operation and avoid duplication.

Law Institute of Victoria

470 Bourke St
 Melbourne, 3000.
 P: (03) 9607 9311
 E: lawinstitute@liv.asn.au
 W: www.liv.asn.au

The Institute offers a wide range of services to members and the public. The library, bookshop, research service and publications may be useful to CLE workers.

Other Organisations

Look around, there is a wealth of relevant material, resources and contacts. Organisations and government departments such as the Office of the Public Advocate and Consumer Affairs Victoria have developed resources that may be useful to CLE workers.

And don't forget other CLCs, check out their websites or use the BBS to find out what is around.

Training

What and how much do you need to know in order to deliver CLE?

Does being legally trained or being employed in a CLE role necessarily mean that you have the knowledge and skills required to design, deliver and evaluate CLC activities and projects?

Are you clear about the limits to the CLE role and of how it relates to the centre's legal practice and direct legal services provision? How do the centre's legal team support and resource CLE workers and activities?

A range of training opportunities are available for CLC workers who undertake CLE as all or part of their role. Some of them are even free!

- Federation of Community Legal Centres offers a range of training activities throughout the year;
- Victoria Legal Aid offers CLC workers access to its in-house professional training and development program;
- The Victoria Law Foundation, Law Institute of Victoria, Victorian Council of Social Services and other organisations offer training opportunities on a regular basis;
- National and State CLC conferences;
- Learn from other CLCs – peer support, mentoring, information sharing and skills development; and
- The Certificate IV in Training and Assessment is a basic training qualification – offered by TAFE institutes and private providers.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hope, K. (2009) Email – *Victoria Law* website – invitation to participate in new CLE portal (14 September 2009), Victoria Law Foundation, Melbourne
- Muddagouni, R. (2009) Interview, National Association of Community Legal Centres