



**MOONEE VALLEY
LEGAL SERVICE**

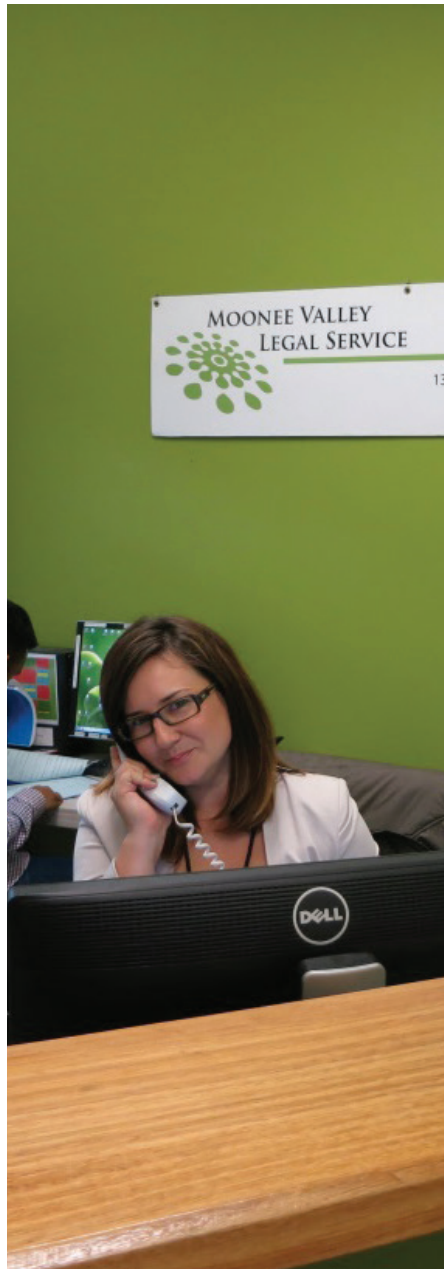
Annual Report
2015/2016

SOCIAL JUSTICE

AND

EQUALITY

FOR ALL



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OUR

SERVICE

OUR VISION

Social justice and equality for all

OUR MISSION

The provision of high quality, culturally appropriate legal services, community education and advocacy to our diverse community

WE VALUE

Empowerment and respect for all members of our community

High quality responsive legal services

The involvement of community members and volunteers

Ethnic and cultural diversity

Working in partnership with our community to achieve our vision



Location and Hours

13a Wingate Avenue
Ascot Vale VIC 3032
P: 03 9376 7929
F: 03 9376 9748
Email: admin@mvl.org.au
Web: www.mvl.org.au

Day Service (by appointment)

Monday - Friday
9.00am - 5.00pm

Night Service (drop-in clinic)

Mondays
6.30pm - 8.30pm



Our Catchment

MVLS provides services to the entire City of Moonee Valley, including:

- Aberfeldie
- Airport West
- Ascot Vale
- Avondale Heights
- Essendon
- Essendon North
- Essendon West
- Flemington
- Keilor East
- Moonee Ponds
- Niddrie
- Strathmore
- Strathmore Heights
- Travancore



Outreach Services

Avondale Heights Library and Learning Centre
69 - 79 Military Road
Avondale Heights VIC 3034
P: 03 9376 7929

Day Service (by appointment)

Every 2nd Monday
1.00pm - 4.00pm

NEW Outreaches

Flemington Community Centre (monthly)
Ascot Vale West Primary School (monthly)



>The City of Moonee Valley is home to **over 117,000 residents.**



>The Moonee Valley community is incredibly diverse with **32% of residents born overseas.**



>The City of Moonee Valley has the 2nd highest percentage of social housing dwellings in Victoria, with **8.9% of all housing being social housing.**

OUR

COMMUNITY

Moonee Valley Legal Service is located within the Wingate Avenue Community Centre in Ascot Vale and services the entire City of Moonee Valley community.



>Communities in Avondale Heights, East Keilor and Airport West, as well as residents in the public housing estates in Ascot Vale and Flemington, rate in the **1st Percentile in the SEIFA Index of socio-economic disadvantage.**



>Over 60% of residents in the public housing estate in Ascot Vale live on a **low income of under \$414 per week.**



>Moonee Valley Legal Service assists the **most disadvantaged within our community.**

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



Helene McNamara - Chairperson

Staff and volunteers at MVLS continue to deliver high quality services to meet assistance, compliance and funding requirements.

30th Anniversary Celebrations

A highlight this year was the 30th anniversary celebration of the Moonee Valley Legal Service (MVLS), which coincided with the 30th birthday of our partners at Wingate Avenue Community Centre (Wingate).

The MVLS event was held at the Moonee Ponds Court House and was hosted by the Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria. Attendees included the Mayor of the City of Moonee Valley, Cr. Andrea Curace, as well as Cr. Nicole Marshall, Cr. Jan Chantry, Cr Jim Cusack and Danny Pearson MP.

Speakers included founding member Justice Kevin Bell, now a Supreme Court judge, and early staffer Amanda George, who continues to advocate for women in

transition from prison to community. We were delighted to have Rod Quantock as our Master of Ceremonies who enjoyed playing Magistrate and calling a judge to the 'dock' to speak.

The speakers reminded us of past challenges in establishing legal centres which were designed to be accessible and affordable to the most disadvantaged people in our community. Securing funding and identifying and prioritising unmet needs are still key issues facing our service.

This was an incredibly vibrant and successful event and MVLS were proud to be a part of it. MVLS would like to thank Jan Thorpe and the Wingate Committee of Management for their ongoing support and collaboration.

Board of Management

The Board of Management wishes to thank Jenny O'Brien, who has now resigned, for her work as Treasurer. Thank you, also, to Ben Wyatt for covering this role in the interim. We are currently recruiting to fill the vacancy left by Jenny's resignation.

Governance

The Board of Management has recently undertaken governance training and participated in a strategic planning workshop to inform and update our goals and focusses. We aim to also review and update our Unmet Needs Report from 2013 and use this as a framework to identify and prioritise new casework and Community Legal Education target areas.

Challenges and Opportunities

The current funding environment means we need to be vigilant and pro-active in attracting and retaining funding from alternative sources to augment our profile, service delivery and core business.

The Federal Government has changed the focus and scope of how its funding is to be utilised and we face reductions in funding over the coming years.

In the face of this challenging environment MVLS continues to partner with other community legal centres and organisations to ensure efficient and targeted delivery of our services. MVLS also utilises our existing relationship and co-location with Wingate, which allows us to offer legal support in a non-stigmatising setting and a referral pathway between the two services. This has many benefits for our high needs client group.

Minister's Visit

In early December 2015 MVLS and Wingate were pleased to host a visit by the Hon. Fiona Richardson MP, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Family Violence, who affirmed the success of

our community service model. The 'hub' of services available to MVLS on site at Wingate is also highly regarded.

Summary

The staff and volunteers at MVLS continue to deliver high quality services to meet assistance targets, compliance and funding requirements. We value their ongoing commitment and contribution to a strong, highly skilled and stable workforce. We also thank our funders for their support and will continue to work closely with them to meet new demands.

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT



HELENE
MCNAMARA
Chairperson



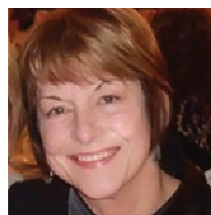
TONY ISAACS
Vice Chairperson



EMMANUEL
KEFALAS
Secretary



BEN WYATT
Treasurer



YVONNE
KERNAN



MARISSA DOSEN



JENNY O'BRIEN
Treasurer
(resigned)

MANAGER'S REPORT



Lauren Hills - Manager

In the past year MVLS has been incredibly busy providing holistic services to local community members who most need assistance.

Service Provision

Moonee Valley Legal Service has a long history of providing high quality legal advice and assistance and the past financial year was no exception.

Our advice and casework statistics were higher than in previous years, highlighting the ever-increasing demand for our services and the hard work undertaken by all of our staff.

This year we also implemented new outreaches at Flemington Community Centre and Ascot Vale West Primary School, ensuring that MVLS is accessible to our entire community.

New Family Violence Funding

Thanks to Victorian Government funding,

the Safe from Harm project has been extended for another two years. This has enabled the expansion of our outreach services to assist even more community members affected by family violence. We would like to thank the Legal Services Board for their initial funding of this project in 2013, without which this success would not have been possible.

Staffing

The willingness of our staff to adapt to change was demonstrated this year when our Principal Lawyer, Marguerite Bourke, took long service leave. We welcomed an experienced family lawyer, Tamara Kay, into the team, and Brendan Lacota stepped into the role of Acting Principal Lawyer. Brendan also assisted the team at Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) in their Community Legal Education division, which was an incredibly valuable experience for him. I am confident that MVLS is in great hands moving forward with our acting Manager, Jacki Holland, taking over the reigns as I go on parental leave.

Community Legal Education

Throughout the year our highly regarded legal education program delivered 47 legal education projects in collaboration with a variety of partners.

One of these projects involved working with the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT to mentor students applying design thinking to the resolution of complex legal issues. It was incredibly exciting to witness the development of innovative technological solutions to legal issues and we look forward to developing the work from this project in the coming year.

Partnerships and Projects

Our focus on collaboration allowed for the continuation of many other valuable partnerships including the Family Relationships Centre project and

the establishment of complimentary services and outreaches at our Ascot Vale office. Women's Health West and a Monash University social work student both commenced working at the centre partnered with our legal team to provide holistic services to our clients.

Our relationship with Wingate Avenue Community Centre continued to grow and strengthen as we worked together on a variety of projects to assist the hundreds of community members who access the Community Centre every day.

Thank You To Our Supporters

MVLS could not achieve all that it does without the support of our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners and supporters.

We would like to acknowledge our local State MPs Ben Carroll MP and Danny Pearson MP for their ongoing support as well as Moonee Valley City Council, who have provided invaluable support throughout the year.

We thank all of our project partners, particularly Wingate Avenue Community Centre, for their support and their tireless work to ensure that together we meet the needs of our local community.

Moving Forward

As we move into a new year we look forward to building and expanding upon the strong partnerships we have developed over the past year. And we will continue to strive towards providing high quality, effective and targeted services to those community members most in need within.

MVLS STAFF

LAUREN HILLS	Manager
JACKI HOLLAND	Project Worker and Acting Manager
MARGUERITE BOURKE	Principal Lawyer
BRENDAN LACOTA	CLE Lawyer and Acting Principal Lawyer
TAMARA KAY	Family Lawyer
GARY SULLIVAN	Lawyer
ELIZABETH BITAR	Family Violence Lawyer
LAUREN MCALPINE	Volunteers and Office Co-ordinator

PRINCIPAL LAWYER'S REPORT

With one quarter of Victorians having a serious legal problem each year, legal services such as ours are only able to address a fraction of the community's needs.

Brendan Lacota
- Acting Principal Lawyer

In last year's Annual Report we reflected upon the past 30 years of the Moonee Valley Legal Service. This year we look towards the next 30 years and how our service must adapt to a changing legal assistance landscape.

In January 2016 MVLS assisted its 10,000th client. Over its entire history our service has worked closely with the local community to provide generalist day and night services, clinics, outreaches and community legal education.

These services have improved access to justice for everyone in Moonee Valley; either by individual representation, law reform or systemic advocacy with an aim of improving accountability and government processes.

Despite the success of these services people continue to present with a variety of legal problems. Some problems are simple, but others can be increasingly complex. This can be due to the nature of the problem itself or, more commonly, attributable to the characteristics of the person experiencing the legal problem. As our lives become more complicated and heavily regulated we can only expect the complexity of these legal problems to increase.

With one quarter of Victorians having a serious legal problem each year, legal services such as ours are only able to address a fraction of the community's needs. As under-resourced legal services are stretched to assist more people, we face the difficult task of identifying those most in need of our assistance.

MVLS is improving the targeting of our services by working with 'problem noticers' (for example health professionals), by engaging directly with at risk communities and by developing partnerships with court and mediation services.

Whilst we must continue to identify those most in need we must also

CASE STUDY 1

Ahmed* – Homelessness, Addiction, Mental Illness and Fines

Ahmed came to MVLS with nearly 30 infringement warrants totalling over \$10,000, mostly for travelling on toll roads without an e-Tag when he was trying to visit his children after a family breakdown. Ahmed has struggled with schizophrenia for most of his life, had recently been admitted to hospital following a psychotic episode and was homeless after several unsuccessful attempts to enter into drug rehabilitation. With the assistance of Ahmed's mental health workers, MVLS obtained revocations of all of Ahmed's fines. Ahmed says that he is much happier now and doesn't worry about the Sheriff clamping his car.



Dominique Harris (Volunteer) and Tamara Kay (MVLS Family Lawyer) working on client files

ensure that there are alternatives available for people we can't assist. Technology and innovation have proven extremely helpful in this way. Our work on the Fastrack project with the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT is one example.

It is tempting to focus on simple cases, however we must be careful not to turn away complex cases simply because they are hard. These people are often most in

need, without any alternatives to navigate a difficult legal system.

MVLS is well positioned to navigate this complex landscape and we look forward to the challenges ahead.



Brendan Lacota - Acting Principal Lawyer



Liz Bitar - Family Violence Lawyer

CASE STUDY 2

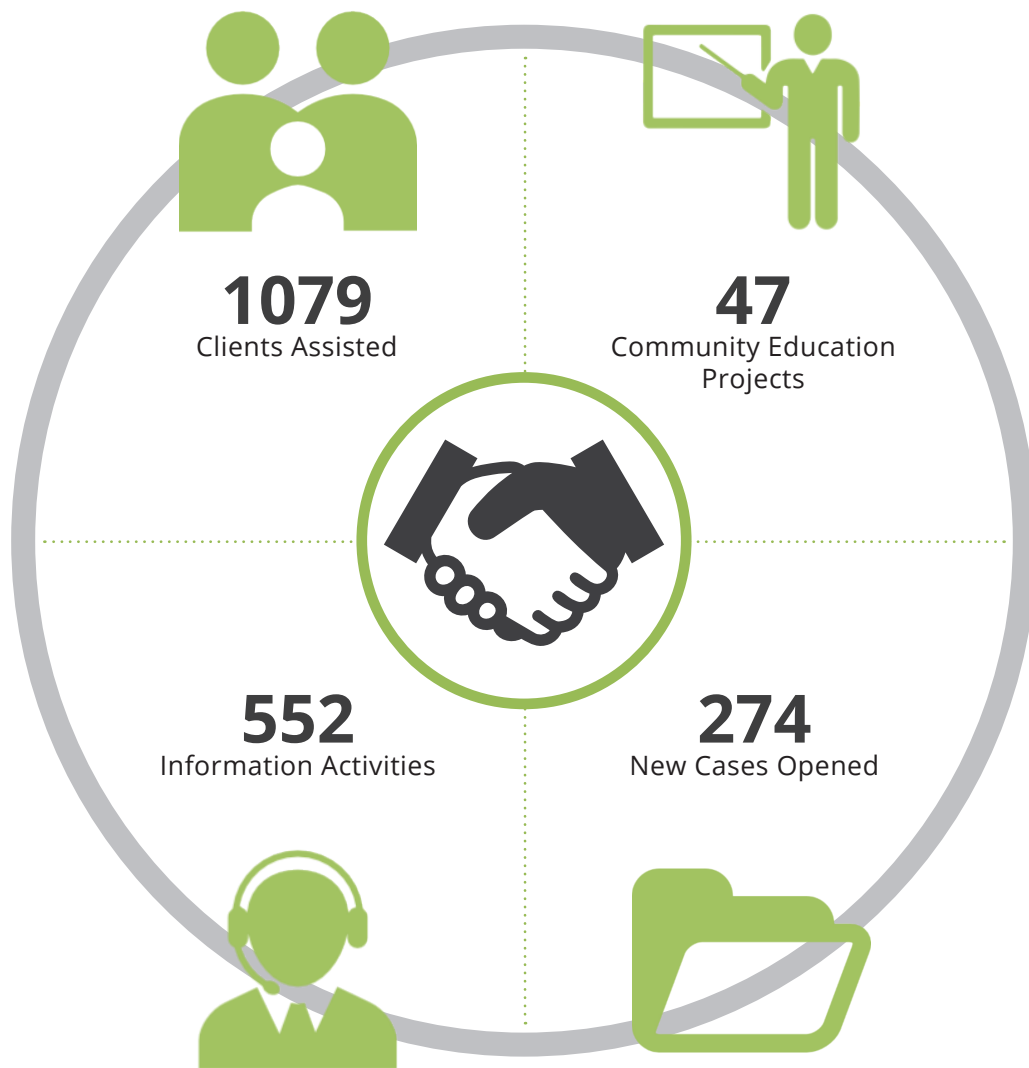
Gemma* and the education broker

After applying for jobs online Gemma received a call from someone claiming to be a job provider. They told Gemma she would struggle to get a job unless she did a management course. Gemma suffers from serious health issues and knew it was unlikely she could complete the course, but she was desperate for work and agreed to do the course anyway.

Gemma's health took a turn for the worse at the start of the year and she did not complete any course units. In July she received a tax notice that she owed over \$30,000 in FEE-Help debt when she had been told the course would only cost \$2,000.

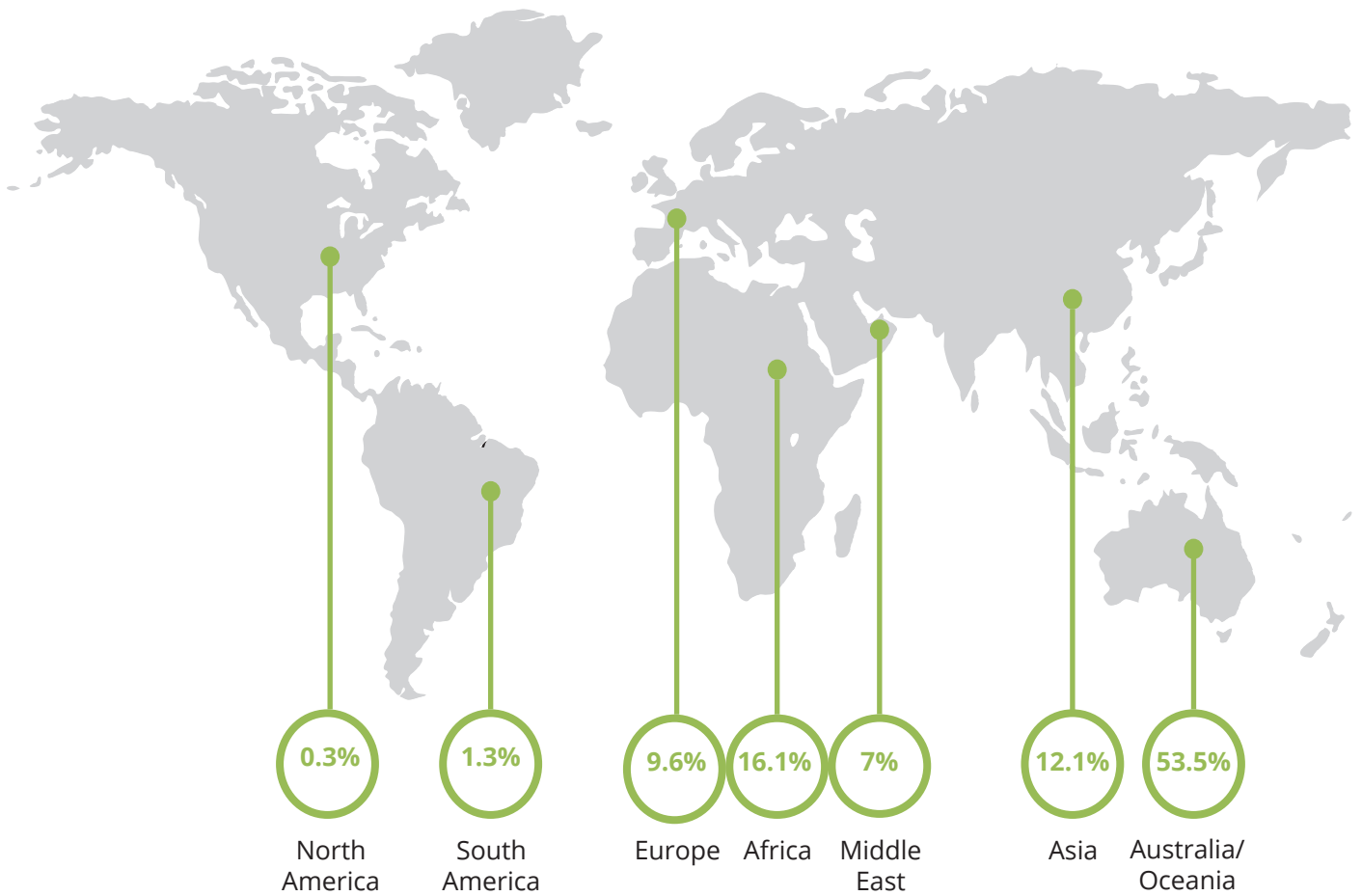
MVLS assisted Gemma to get a full debt remittance and the education broker is now under investigation by the ACCC for unconscionable conduct.

KEY FIGURES



Service Activities	2014/2015	2015/16
Clients Assisted	955	1079
Advices Provided	1112	1181
New Cases Opened	265	274
Information Activities	584	552
Community Legal Education Projects	57	47
Public Interest Cases	20	26

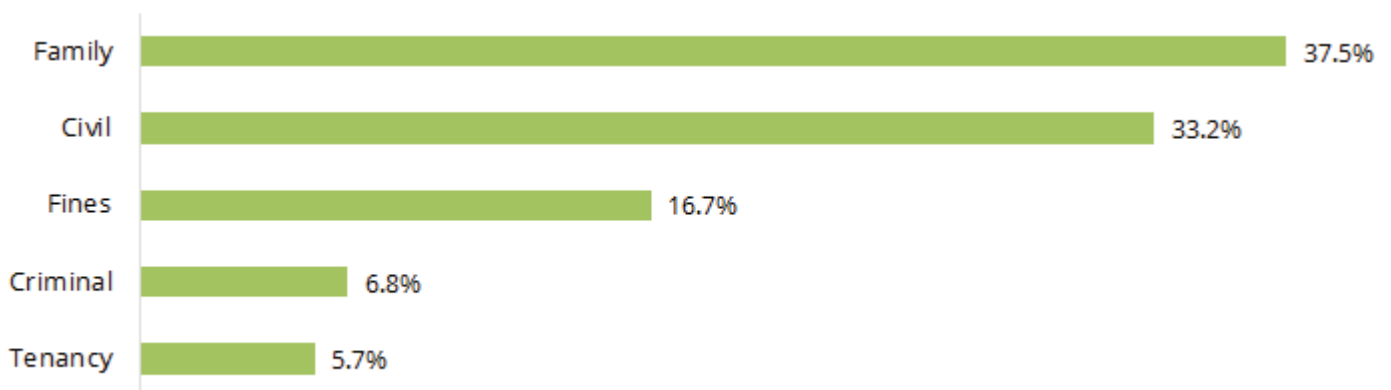
Clients' Continents of Birth



Client Sources of Income



Most Common Legal Matter Types



PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS

In the past year MVLS focussed on holistic and collaborative service provision to the entire community by expanding on existing partnerships and embarking on many exciting new ventures.

RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice

Fines remain a difficult problem for many of our clients. Working with the RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice and the Fastrack program, MVLS was proud to mentor 6 excellent students as they used design thinking to pursue solutions to the expanding number of fines issued to vulnerable Victorians.

With mentors from other services including community legal centres and Victoria Legal Aid, the two Fastrack student teams went on to win awards for best overall solution and most viable solution. The project partners continue to pursue avenues to implement these solutions.

Congratulations to both of these teams and to all of the Fastrack 2015 students. Fastrack 2016 commenced in June and we're excited to continue our involvement with the Centre for Innovative Justice at RMIT.

Moonee Valley City Council

The Moonee Valley City Council (MVCC) continues to be a strong supporter of MVLS. We work closely with MVCC on a variety of networks and committees, including the Community Safety and Young Peoples' networks. MVCC continues to provide invaluable support to the Safe from Harm project. To ensure our services are accessible to the entire Moonee Valley community, we also continue to partner with MVCC in the provision of outreach services at libraries and community centres.

Deakin University

MVLS offers Deakin University students the opportunity to learn practical legal skills and contribute their time and passion to the organisation. During their 15 days with us, students assist with casework, research and community legal education, developing their skills as they become familiar with all aspects of the work done by community legal centres.

In the past year we expanded and improved our induction processes to provide students with a more structured introduction to MVLS while ensuring high quality legal services are provided for our clients. We are grateful for

In the past year, MVLS has partnered with over 20 community legal centres, service providers and organisations, working collaboratively to address the issues affecting our local community in a holistic and meaningful way.



Yvonne Kernan and Tony Isaacs (MVLS Board Member and Vice Chairperson)



the continued support of Deakin University and their students.

Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria

After an increase in clients with neighbourhood disputes presenting at MVLS, we piloted hosting an outreach Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (DSCV) assessment officer to assist clients to resolve these disputes without legal assistance. This pilot revealed that most clients who contact MVLS about neighbourhood disputes have already been through the DSCV but require further legal advice. This led to the development of stronger referral pathways with the DSCV, and we continue to work together to ensure that clients are able to resolve disputes quickly and efficiently.

Victoria Police

MVLS continues its strong partnership with Victoria Police. This year we worked closely with the police to develop a multi-lingual postcard that provides referral information for Respondents to Intervention Orders. It is attached to every Intervention Order served within our catchment.

Family Relationships Centre

MVLS maintains an ongoing partnership with Northern Community Legal Centre and the Family Relationships Centre (FRC) in Broadmeadows, providing weekly education and legally assisted family dispute resolution services at the FRC.

This partnership has been running for 6 years and aims to reduce hostility between separated parents, reduce the negative impact on children and alleviate pressure on the Family Court by helping parents resolve their disputes. The value of legally assisted mediation to parents and children cannot be overstated and we look forward to continuing this service into the future.

HOLISTIC SERVICES

Women's Health West

This year Women's Health West commenced regular family violence worker outreach posts at MVLS. Women's Health West is a natural partner for MVLS — their commitment to equity and justice has cemented the success of this outreach. MVLS and Women's Health West have been able to provide timely cross-referrals via this service, which better assist victims of family violence. We look forward to continuing to build upon the success of this partnership into the future.

Monash Social Work Placement

In late 2015 MVLS partnered with Monash University to offer a placement position to one of their social work students. The student provided exceptional social support to MVLS clients as well as researching and documenting the current needs of the Ascot Vale Housing Estate. Client uptake of the social support service was incredibly high and demonstrated an ongoing need for social support services to be provided alongside the legal services at MVLS.

PARTNERSHIPS AND PROJECTS CONT...

SAFE FROM HARM PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS 2013 - 2015

233

Advices provided

118

Cases opened

540

Community workers
trained in dealing
with family violence
and providing referral
pathways

500+

Community members
provided with
community legal
education about
family violence

Safe From Harm

Funding from the Legal Services Board for the Safe from Harm project ended in 2015, however the results of the first two years of the project were overwhelmingly positive. An independent evaluation showed that there was a clear need to continue the work of the project in the long term and to increase its reach.

The Victorian Government responded to this need and generously provided funding for the project to extend its family violence work for a further two years. This has allowed the project to expand its catchment beyond residents of the Ascot Vale and Flemington housing estates to all residents of the greater City of Moonee Valley.

As part of this expansion, in 2016 MVLS established two new legal clinics at the Flemington Community Centre and Ascot Vale West Primary School, which assists parents who are experiencing family violence.

The project steering committee is constantly improving referral pathways and networks amongst service providers in the area. The invaluable inter-organisational networks originally established by the Moonee Valley City Council's Flemington Neighbourhood Renewal Project are also maintained by the committee. Through their meetings, project stakeholders and partners work together to address the issue of family violence in the community and provide valuable support for the project.

The number of clients accessing the service for family violence assistance continues to grow and we are committed to assisting our vulnerable clients as the project moves forward.



The Hon. Fiona Richardson MP, Danny Pearson MP, Lauren Hills (MVLS), Helene McNamara (MVLS Chairperson) and Yvonne Kernan (MVLS Board Member)

Wingate Avenue Community Centre

The co-location of MVLS within the Wingate Avenue Community Centre involves 30 years of collaboration and partnership with incredible benefits for both services. Located in the same building, our services are naturally aligned, with the shared aim of assisting the most disadvantaged residents in our community. In 2015 both services celebrated their 30th birthdays in style, bringing back memorabilia and memories of past success stories.

Co-location enables MVLS to work closely with Wingate on many community development projects, and provides ready access to the hundreds of community members visiting the centre each day. MVLS also works closely with other services operating at the Centre including maternal and child health, drug and alcohol counsellors, men's workers, and settlement support workers.

MVLS partnered with Wingate on the 'Being a Smart Consumer' financial literacy forums, the 'Bring Your Bills Day' event, and a gender equity consultation. MVLS also provided a number of education sessions to the adult English language students at Wingate on police powers and family violence and the law, opening the doors to our legal service in a friendly and supportive manner.

The location of so many different services at Wingate means that these residents can often get all of their issues attended to under the one roof. The partnership exemplifies what can be achieved via collaborative service provision. We look forward to another successful year ahead.

The partnership between MVLS and Wingate is a great example of what can be achieved with effective co-location and collaborative service provision.

Jan Thorpe
- Manager, Wingate Avenue
Community Centre



Cr. Jim Cusack, Jan Thorpe (Manager - Wingate Avenue Community Centre), Danny Pearson MP and The Hon. Daniel Andrews MP, Premier of Victoria, at the Wingate 30th Anniversary Celebrations



Liz Bitar and Lauren McAlpine (MVLS) at the Wingate 30th anniversary celebrations



Financial Literacy Forum run by MVLS at Wingate

COMMUNITY LEGAL EDUCATION

MVLS continued our strong focus on prevention and community development in the provision of our legal education projects.

Brendan Lacota
- CLE Lawyer and
Acting Principal Lawyer

Over the past year MVLS provided high quality, targeted community legal education to our local community and beyond, continuing our strong focus on prevention and community development in the provision of our legal education projects.

These projects included Cyber Safety education, which was delivered at Buckley Park College in conjunction with Victoria Police. This was a four-day program that asked Year 8 students to understand the law and risks associated with cyber-bullying, harassment and sexting. Using a case-study approach, students were required to critically analyse scenarios and discuss how the law might apply or what they should do to avoid risky behaviour.

MVLS also provided regular talks on parenting and family law, wills and estates, at various Moonee Valley libraries and the Family Relationships Centre.

We also raised awareness of our service by attending a variety of community events, including the Moonee Valley Festival, where we manned a stall and handed out legal information to the general community.

A supportive sector has always been a cornerstone of community legal centres. MVLS was proud to give back to the sector by assisting with the creation and presentation of the Infringements Working Group Professional Development Day in 2015. Over 100 community lawyers and financial counsellors attended the event and the materials developed have been made widely available to ensure that best practice in infringements work continues.

As we move into a new year, we aim to continue our strong core educational activities while turning our focus to developing new and innovative projects.



Brendan Lacota (MVLS) on a panel - Infringements Working Group Professional Development Day



Jacki Holland (MVLS), Danny Pearson MP, The Hon. Bill Shorten MP, Leader of the Opposition, and Helene McNamara (MVLS Chairperson) at the Moonee Valley Festival

MVLS IN THE MEDIA

Moonee Valley Legal Service maintained a strong presence in local news media over the past year. A variety of articles celebrated our successes and helped us to advocate for systemic change on behalf of our clients.



Cindy Frigo has won a two-year battle to have a gate removed that was blocking access to her meter box.

Picture: DAVID SMITH

Link It

TWO-YEAR FIGHT FOR ACCESS TO METER BOX

A SINGLE mother has urged others not to give up fighting for what's right after winning a two-year neighbourhood dispute. Cindy Frigo was unable to access the power switchboard on the side of her Airport West home because her neighbour, who lives directly behind her, put up a locked gate in December 2013.

In January last year,

Moonee Valley Leader reported Ms Frigo was unable to fight her case at the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal because she couldn't afford it and could not get a fee waiver, despite being a concession card holder.

She has since obtained a court order entitling her to an easement over her neighbour's driveway so that she can access the side of her

house with the help of Moonee Valley Legal Service.

The service was able to link Ms Frigo with pro bono legal representation through Justice Connect and access a fee waiver from VCAT.

Lawyer Brendan Lacota said there was no legal aid funding for civil cases – no matter what the personal circumstances were – and therefore people relied on

community legal centres or lawyers who worked pro bono.

"This case is a good example of where neighbourhood disputes can escalate really quickly and the cost can put justice out of reach for people," Mr Lacota said.

"Cindy had a strong case and it just required assistance to get it to trial.

"Part of the problem is even with a strong case, it

still requires a full day hearing and that's what puts it out of reach for people."

The tribunal ruled Ms Frigo and those she invited were entitled access to the driveway at all times.

"I pursued many different avenues and met great frustration and I knew it was something that wasn't right," Ms Frigo said.

"Don't give up when you know that you're in the right and you know it's basically ridiculous and nonsense."

Moonee Valley Leader, 6 June 2016

MOONEE VALLEY

Families can get legal help

SAFE FROM HARM PROJECT EXTENDS REACH

Link It

A LEGAL outreach service helping family violence victims from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds has been expanded across Moonee Valley.

The Safe from Harm project is now offering free legal advice at Ascot Vale West Primary School and Flemington Community Centre.

Moonee Valley Legal Services manager Lauren Hills said the project, which previously focused on the Kensington and Flemington areas, had been expanded thanks to extra funding.

"There's high incidents of family violence in culturally and linguistically diverse communities particularly in Ascot Vale and Flemington, and a lot of the services that are available are mainstream and not CALD-specific," Ms Hills said.

She said those people from new communities faced barriers including language, a lack of knowledge about the Australian legal system, a mistrust of police and differences in understanding what was considered family violence.

Community lawyer Elizabeth Bitar, who will be running the clinics, said they would offer other family law services for matters such as separation and divorce, parenting, custody situations and intervention orders.

Ms Bitar said victims from varied cultures often had a different understanding of what was considered a private matter and what should be something police needed to intervene in.

"Our focus is on legal education and education on what family violence is, because sometimes it might take a little bit longer than other groups for victims to come forward and seek assistance in the first place," Ms Bitar said.

Ascot Vale West Primary School principal Heather Carr said she viewed the school as part of the community and thought it was another way they could provide support to those who needed it.

"If parents have some issues that they need advice around, if they're struggling in some way, then that does affect the children because it's in their home," Ms Carr said.

The Safe from Harm project, which has been run in conjunction with Flemington Kensington Community Legal Centre, has helped 450 clients since it started, including more than 200 through school outreach.

A clinic will run at Flemington Community Centre on the last Wednesday of the month from 1.30-4.30pm.

Lawyer Elizabeth Bitar will be running the legal clinics.

Picture: DAVID SMITH



Moonee Valley Leader, 29 June 2016

2015/16 MEDIA

MVLS featured in the following articles over the year:

'Maribyrnong Council's new processing system causes delays in unpaid fine reminders'
- 19 Aug 2015, *Maribyrnong Leader*

'Legal Help is on the way'
- 21 Oct 2015, *Moonee Valley Leader*

'Financial advisers warn shoppers about Christmas credit card debt'
- 17 Nov 2015, *Moonee Valley Leader*

'Federal funding cuts to hurt vulnerable residents: lawyers say'
- 26 May 2016, *Moonee Valley Leader*

'Cindy Frigo wins two-year battle to use neighbour's driveway to access power meter'
- 6 June 2016, *Moonee Valley Leader*

'Community legal centres call on Maribyrnong Council to think beyond revenue raising'
- 21 June 2016, *Maribyrnong Leader*

'Families can get legal help'
- 29 June 2016, *Moonee Valley Leader*

VOLUNTEERS



Nathan Brehaut (MVLS Volunteer) and Lauren McAlpine (MVLS)

Thank You To Our Volunteers

Thank you to all of our Volunteers for their continued support and dedication to MVLS throughout the year. As a community legal centre we rely heavily on the work of our Volunteers, who help us with a variety of tasks from daily administration to legal advice and casework, community legal education projects and legal research. They are also an integral part of the Monday night-service, which we wouldn't be able to run without their extensive experience and dedication. The hard work of our night service Volunteers has greatly contributed to the significant increase in the number of clients attending our night service.



Greg Doran (MVLS Volunteer) is presented with an award by Justice Kevin Bell at the MVLS 30th anniversary celebrations.

Thank You To Greg Doran

This year at our 30th anniversary celebrations we thanked Greg Doran for his many years of service as a Volunteer with MVLS. Greg has been assisting us for over 27 years and his dedication and commitment to social justice is inspiring. Greg has helped many clients as a lawyer on the Monday night service and his contribution to MVLS cannot be overstated. Thank you again to Greg for his outstanding contribution and to all of our Volunteers for their dedication.

- Lauren McAlpine
Volunteers and Office Co-ordinator

2015 - 2016 VOLUNTEERS

MVLS would like to thank the following volunteers, who generously donated their time and skills to our service over the past year:

Helene McNamara	Hannah Scott	Joanna Pappa	Greg Doran
Tony Isaacs	Annette Cornish	Janus Santos	Jackie Garton
Emmanuel Kefalas	Angelica Pupillo	Olivia Walker	Mark Hird
Jenny O'Brien	Rachael Mckendrick	David Baldi	Angela Stoler
Ben Wyatt	Christine Nguyen	Sarah Gregory	Angela Panuccio-Gray
Yvonne Kernan	Dominique Harriss	Candace Guest	Anita Raj
Marissa Dosen	Cameron Dickson	Anthony Blazevic	Euan Flett
Erin Rooney	Tate De Silva	Olivia Blair	Turgut Ozcitti
Dylan Green	Bridget Renehan	Sarah Madden	Martin Stirling
Lachlan Morrow	Amy Fisher	Jarred Hoffman	Ilsa Kuiper
Lisa Patterson	Lucinda Sheehan	Guiseppe Spanti	Tess Micucci
Rodrigo Haddad	Franc Spanti	Nova Taylor	Andrea Steele
Tom Keighery	Marcus Brash	Jacki Holland	Leticia Rodrigues



Sarah Messina and Rochelle Seneviratna (MVLS Volunteers) assisting at a 'Bring Your Bills Day' held at Wingate Avenue Community Centre

VOLUNTEER TESTIMONIALS

MVLS strives to provide a valuable experience for all of our Volunteers, no matter what role they perform. Here is what some of our volunteers have said about volunteering at MVLS:

'I only have a few months left of my degree but it has definitely given me something to think about. All in all it has really been so insightful seeing how a Community Legal Centre operates and I really admire the work that the lawyers do there.'

MVLS has a dedicated team of
55 volunteers
who assist our service

'The staff at MVLS are extremely accommodating, with the lawyers encouraging us to sit in on client interviews and ask questions.'

'It really was a positive learning environment and I felt more confident each time I came in. It also made me consider my own career path and what I would like to do in my future.'

Our incredible volunteers donated
3294 hours
of time to MVLS in the past year

TREASURER'S REPORT



Ben Wyatt - Treasurer

Moonee Valley Legal Service is in a sound financial position with results for the 2015-2016 financial year showing a surplus of \$17,422 including \$10,000 to be carried into 2016-2017 from VLA funds to offset a maternity leave payment. The overall retained earnings as at 30 June 2016 amount to \$112,365.

Our core funding from Commonwealth Legal Service Program (CLSP) has been confirmed for the next year with a small increase against the current funding level. Proposed reductions to funding have been forecast to commence in the 2017-2018 financial year. This highlights the constant challenge our service faces in an environment of limited growth funding and the need to diversify and seek alternative sources of funding which include grants within the sector, philanthropic trusts, local council and other funding sources.

In the 2015-2016 financial year, CLSP funding totalled \$354,104 including the Family Relationship Funding. This program provides approximately 75% of funds through the State component managed by

Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) and 25% from the Commonwealth component. The balance of funding came from service generated income which includes grants, donations, Deakin University students, bank interest and small amounts through miscellaneous income.

The Legal Services Board (LSB) grant for the "Safe from Harm" project (a partnership with Flemington Kensington Community Legal Service) ceased in December 2015. We were fortunate to receive money from the Department of Justice to continue this valuable partnership project for the next two years as a key service addressing family violence.

Funds from the Family Relationship Centre (FRC) for this financial year were around \$30,000, which have successfully supported vulnerable families accessing our service over the past few years.

The control of a small budget with the major expense being staff costs has to be carefully managed to ensure our service is sustainable into the future. This financial year the income rose by \$38,174 against the expenses rise of \$30,949.

I look forward to another successful year ahead which always brings about change and new options for growth and further community development through legal education. We will continue to seek new project funding and partnership opportunities which assist us in extending our core business.

Ben Wyatt
Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc
ABN 99 238 552 414
Income and Expenditure Statement
For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016	2015
	\$	\$
Income		
Interest received	6,506	7,108
Sundry Income	2,501	3,838
Recurrent Grants VLA - Other		8,353
Donations Received	10,259	5,945
Deakin Students	16,200	7,800
VLA Recurrent Grants - Commonwealth	99,996	61,664
VLA Recurrent Grants - State	254,108	244,404
Family Relationship Funding		30,524
Grants - LSB	72,500	117,500
Department of justice	62,500	
Moonee Valley Council Grants	740	
Total income	525,310	487,136
Expenses		
Audit fees	1,250	1,077
Bank Fees And Charges	40	
Committee of Management/AGM	5,868	2,100
Comm Legal Education	1,818	2,725
Contract Worker	91,160	71,021
Depreciation - other	3,909	3,282
Filing Fees	109	106
Holiday pay	(3,245)	(2,467)
Insurance	1,535	1,428
Internet	579	550
Legal Services Board Grant	6,155	8,218
Library Resources	2,559	2,326
Long service leave	960	4,515
Membership	3,300	3,008
Minor Equipment	1,775	1,324
Office Events		20
Postage	901	1,282
Printing & stationery	4,367	3,317
Practising Certificates	1,680	1,308

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc

ABN 99 238 552 414

Income and Expenditure Statement

For the year ended 30 June 2016

	2016 \$	2015 \$
Programming & Planning	106	153
Rent	16,441	16,851
Repairs & maintenance	2,233	3,091
Salaries	318,467	309,593
Staff amenities	1,539	855
Staff Recruitment	260	150
Staff training	3,503	2,083
Storage Fees	709	709
Sundry expenses	52	356
Superannuation	29,666	28,667
Telephone	6,871	6,248
Travelling Expenses	1,586	1,703
Volunteers	936	898
Workcover	798	439
Total expenses	507,887	476,938
Surplus from ordinary activities before income tax	17,422	10,199
Income tax revenue relating to ordinary activities		
Surplus from ordinary activities after income tax	17,422	10,199
Surplus(loss) from VLA Grants funds after related income tax	(10,000)	
Net surplus attributable to the association	7,422	10,199
Total changes in equity of the association	7,422	10,199
Opening retained earnings	104,943	94,744
Net surplus attributable to the association	7,422	10,199
Closing retained earnings	112,365	104,943

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc

ABN 99 238 552 414

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2016

	Note	2016 \$	2015 \$
Assets			
Current Assets			
Cash assets	<u>2</u>	153,892	163,723
Other	<u>3</u>	68,498	66,336
Total Current Assets		<u>222,389</u>	<u>230,059</u>
Non-Current Assets			
Property, plant and equipment	<u>4</u>	11,733	14,073
Total Non-Current Assets		<u>11,733</u>	<u>14,073</u>
Total Assets		<u>234,122</u>	<u>244,132</u>
Liabilities			
Current Liabilities			
Payables	<u>5</u>	11,835	8,517
Current tax liabilities	<u>6</u>	7,362	4,627
Provisions	<u>7</u>	14,421	17,665
Other	<u>8</u>	76,532	97,732
Total Current Liabilities		<u>110,150</u>	<u>128,541</u>
Non-Current Liabilities			
Provisions	<u>7</u>	11,607	10,647
Total Non-Current Liabilities		<u>11,607</u>	<u>10,647</u>
Total Liabilities		<u>121,757</u>	<u>139,189</u>
Net Assets		<u>112,365</u>	<u>104,943</u>
Members' Funds			
Retained earnings		112,365	104,943
Total Members' Funds		<u>112,365</u>	<u>104,943</u>

FINANCIAL REPORTS

ASSUR
Audit & Assurance

Chartered Accountants
Registered Company Auditors

Director:
A.R Ager CA, BEc
Registered Company Auditor
Registered SMSF Auditor

Assur Pty. Ltd.
PO Box 987
Level 1, 189 Coleman Parade,
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M: +61 419 541 727
F: +61 (3) 9561 5497
E: tony.ager@optusnet.com.au

Authorised Audit Company
No. 453122

Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc

ABN 99 238 552 414

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

We have audited the accompanying financial report, being a special purpose financial report, of Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc (the association), which comprises the Statement by Members of the Board, Income and Expenditure Statement, Balance Sheet, notes comprising a summary of significant accounting policies, other explanatory notes and the Certificate by Members of the Board for the financial year ended 30 June 2016.

Board's Responsibility for the Financial Report

The board of Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report, and have determined that the basis of preparation described in Note 1 is appropriate to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and is appropriate to meet the needs of the members. The board's responsibilities also includes such internal control as the committee determine is necessary to enable the preparation and fair presentation of a financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the financial report based on our audit. We have conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those 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 association's preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in 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 association's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by the committee, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial report.

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

Opinion

In our opinion, the financial report gives a true and fair view of the financial position of Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc as at 30 June 2016 and its financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements, and the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc
ABN 99 238 552 414

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

Without modifying our opinion, we draw attention to Note 1 to the financial statements, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report has been prepared to assist Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc to meet the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose.

Signed on: *5th OCTOBER, 2016*

ASSUR PTY LTD.

ASSUR PTY LTD

(Formerly TST Audit & Assurance Pty Ltd)

Authorised Auditor Company Number: 453122

Chartered Accountants

Anthony Robert Ager

Anthony Robert Ager

Director - Audit & Assurance

Chartered Accountant

FINANCIAL REPORTS

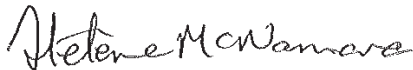
Moonee Valley Legal Service Inc
ABN 99 238 552 414

Certificate by Member of the Board
For the year ended 30 June 2016

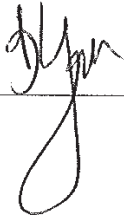
I, Helene McNamara of 41 Myrnong Crescent, Ascot Vale, Victoria, , and I, Ben Wyatt c/o Rigby and Cooke, 11/360 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, Victoria certify that:

- a. **We attended the annual general meeting of the association held on**
- b. **The financial statements for the year ended 30 June 2016 were submitted to the members of the association at its annual general meeting.**

Dated



Helene McNamara
Board Member



Ben Wyatt
Board Member

FUNDERS AND PARTNERS





MOONEE VALLEY LEGAL SERVICE

Annual Report
2015/16

MOONEE VALLEY LEGAL SERVICE
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Website: www.mvl.org.au

INC NO: A5484V ABN: 99 238 552 414