We are pleased to announce that the Legal Services Board provided $2.6 million in funding to nine projects through the 2014 Major Grants round.

The Board set a priority theme of ‘Legal and Health Partnerships’ for the 2014 round. Nine programs were successful in receiving funding: eight programs seek to build partnerships between community legal services and a variety of health settings, and one program aims to increase assistance and support for bereaved families through the coronial process.

Below is an overview of the successful programs which will provide services to vulnerable people including new mothers, young people, older Victorians and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities. Each alliance will be funded for between two to three years.

- **Justice Connect ($340,000 over 3 years)**
  Justice and Health Come Together in North West Melbourne

- **inTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence ($377,000 over 3 years)**
  inLanguage, inCulture, inTouch: Integrated model of support for CALD women experiencing family violence

- **Yarra Ranges Community Legal Centre ($323,000 over 2 years)**
  Preventing and Responding to Family Violence Within the Maternal and Child Health Context

- **Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre ($480,000 over 3 years)**
  Therapeutic Justice in the Goulburn Valley

- **West Heidelberg Community Legal Service ($222,000 over 2 years)**
  “You’ll never know if you never go: improving housing and health outcomes for tenants by understanding and addressing barriers to VCAT attendance”.

- **Federation of Community Legal Centres (Victoria) Inc. ($100,000 over 1 year)**
  Wanting justice: Helping families through the coronial process after a family violence death

- **The First Step Program ($147,000 over 1 year)**
  First Step Legal Service Development Project

- **Community West Inc. ($351,000 over 2 years)**
  The Mortgage Wellbeing Service

- **Federation University Australia ($260,000 over 2 years)**
  Central Highland Advocacy Health Alliance – Improving legal, health and wellbeing outcomes for disadvantaged young people.

More information on each of these successful grants recipients can be found on the [Grants page of the Board website](#).
WHAT'S HAPPENING

Legal and Health Grants

On 24 September 2014, a meeting was held to bring together all the projects funded in the 2014 Major Grants Round. The Board set a priority theme for the 2014 Major Grants round, which was the issue of Legal and Health Partnerships. Research has shown that people are often affected by both health and legal issues together especially when they are experiencing disadvantage. The integration of legal and health services, also known as Medical Legal Partnerships in the USA or as Advocacy Health Alliances in Australia, can provide a way to identify legal issues early and work to prevent the escalation of legal and health problems.

This model integrates legal assistance as an integral element of the health care team. It requires the development of a sophisticated partnership between the legal and health professions and their organisations to jointly address the health and social circumstances which often manifest in the form of legal needs. This way of working can lead to more efficient and effective outcomes for clients through changed practices and policies.

‘Legal and health issues often arise simultaneously, especially for people experiencing disadvantage such as financial stress, family violence, homelessness or the impacts of substance abuse’, The Chair of the Legal Services Board, Fiona Bennett said.

‘These new services will make available much needed legal assistance to clients in a convenient, safe and timely manner,’ Ms Bennett said. Among the nine funded projects, over 20 geographic areas are targeted including regional area such as Banyule, Cardinia, Pyrenees and Hepburn Shire. Targeted groups range from young people to senior Victorians to multicultural and socio-disadvantaged groups.

Report on overseas experiences on Legal & Health Alliances

Linda Gyorki, Senior Project Manager & Lawyer, Inner Melbourne Community Legal, was fortunate to receive a Churchill Fellowship to study Advocacy Health Alliances in 3 countries. Her report– Breaking down the silos: Overcoming the Practical and Ethical Barriers of Integrating Legal Assistance into a Health Setting, is now available.

‘It is hoped that this report will act as a catalyst for the establishment of partnerships between legal services and health-care institutions in increasingly diverse contexts.’ Linda Gyorki.

Detail of the report can be obtained from the Churchill Trust website.
PROJECTS IN THE MEDIA

Justice and Health Come Together in North West Melbourne is a program focussing on elder abuse and other legal issues confronted by seniors in Melbourne’s west. The project received funding in the 2014 Major Grants round which will allow a lawyer from Justice Connect’s Seniors Law program to be placed in the office of Footscray health organisation, CoHealth.

The Maribyrnong and Hobsons Bay Star Weekly published an article on the project: ‘Footscray: Legal help offered for west’s seniors’ (22 October 2014).

Acting on the Warning Signs, a partnership between Inner Melbourne Community Legal and the Royal Women’s Hospital, is the pioneering Advocacy-Health Alliance to reduce violence against women. Funded in 2011 and 2013, the project aimed to empower and protect women by providing legal assistance and training within the hospital setting.

The project gained media attention with an article published in The Age: ‘Royal Women’s Hospital service offering legal advice to domestic violence victims could expand’ (28 September 2014). The article was also featured on The Citizen, a website published by the Centre for Advancing Journalism within the University of Melbourne.

‘It [the project] is giving women who might otherwise be too fearful to come forward access to free advice under the cloak of routine medical appointments’.

‘… abused women are more likely to disclose violence to health professionals than they are to lawyers’.

Safe from Harm Family Violence Prevention Program, a partnership between Moonee Valley Legal Service and Flemington and Kensington Community Legal Centre, is a two-year project funded in 2013. The project seeks to address barriers for reporting family violence unique to new arrivals and refugees and was launched in February 2014.

The Herald Sun article ‘New Moonee Valley communities at the centre of domestic violence concerns’ (17 September 2014) quoted Tess La Fontaine, Women’s Health West family violence outreach co-ordinator:

‘We’ve experienced a 54 per cent increase of police referrals over the past 12 months and there’s no indication of that slowing.’

The article also quoted Moonee Valley Legal Centre manager Libby Cunningham:

‘The most important thing is building the trust and building up relationship with these different cultural communities and to enable them to understand the choices that they’re making’

Two other articles also featured the Safe from Harm project: The Moonee Valley Leader’s ‘Two Moonee Valley legal centres launch a family violence prevention program’ (3 February 2014) and The Weekly Review’s ‘Help to be safe from harm’ (13 August, 2014, page 13).
OUTCOMES OF EXISTING PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH THE GRANTS PROGRAM

 Acting on the Warning Signs is the pioneering Advocacy-Health Alliance partnership between Inner Melbourne Community Legal and the Royal Women’s Hospital, originally funded in 2011 to reduce violence against women. The evaluation of the first stage of the project has been undertaken by Melbourne University and the report is now available. Findings indicate that the project has built capacity, confidence and willingness of health professionals to identify and act on signs of family violence and established a strong organisational foundation at the hospital to address violence against women.


In 2014 Trust for Nature completed two reports funded by the Victorian Legal Services Board examining environmental markets.

- **Shining a Light on Law and Markets in Private Land Conservation**: Insights and Issues from Victorian Landowners
- **Land-Based Environmental Markets and the Law**: the evolving legal landscape underpinning ecosystem services markets in Victoria

The project partnered with Victoria Naturally Alliance and aims to gain a better understanding of market-based mechanisms to promote private land conservation as well as addressing a perceived information gap in understanding the legal and financial aspects from a landowner’s perspective.

For details of the report and project, please visit the Trust for Nature website.
A two-year project involving Victoria’s migrant communities has found it is often difficult for first generation Australians to get the legal help they need to help prevent family violence. To help overcome this problem, Victoria Legal Aid has launched a new training package for organisations which help migrants settle in Victoria. The training package was developed through Victoria Legal Aid’s Settled and Safe Project, which worked with community organisations in Dandenong, Morwell, Shepparton, Ringwood and Melbourne. The project was funded from the Legal Services Board Grants Program and has involved communities from Iraq, South Sudan, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, India and Burma. The training package includes stories tailored to specific communities, using different family contexts and scenarios to unpack sensitive issues around family violence, parenting and separation, and child protection.

For detail of the program, please visit the Victoria Legal Aid website.

Being at Court for the Final Hearing of a family law case can be overwhelming. In order to provide some of the basic information you need to know about how a day is likely to proceed and what you need to do, Court Network has produced A Resource Booklet as part of an enhanced program at the Family Law Courts. Court Network provides information, support and referral service to people when they are at Court. This booklet supports an expanded service for people who are attending a Final Hearing of a family law dispute, but who don’t have a lawyer. This service, funded through a 2013 Major Grant, provides more intensive support and for longer than the regular Court Network services.

For detail of the booklet, please visit the Court Network website.
There has been growing awareness in the Australian legal profession since 2007 that lawyers are more likely than the general population to experience depression and anxiety. In late 2011, the LIV obtained funding for the Legal Services Board Grants program for the Mental Health and the Legal Profession project in order to: (1) operate a pilot health and wellbeing service providing independent and confidential services for lawyers; (2) undertake a literature review on lawyer personality traits and the susceptibilities toward particular forms of psychological distress; and (3) scope out options for an ongoing lawyers' health program.

Following a period of research and consultation, the project has now come to an end and the LIV launched a report on the findings on 9 September 2014. The mental health report sets out detailed proposals for the introduction of a preventative health and wellbeing strategy for the Victorian legal community.

For details of the full report, please visit the Law Institute of Victoria website.

NEXT GRANT ROUND
Guidelines and application forms for the next funding round will be available in December. Keep an eye on the website or go on our mailing list. Applications will close on March 6 2015.

FURTHER INFORMATION
Grant recipients are encouraged to let us know about any news or upcoming events relating to their projects, so that we can include them in future issues of this bulletin. You can email your news to the Grants Team at grants@lsbc.vic.gov.au

To access the most up-to-date information about the Legal Services Board Grants Program, please visit our website at www.lsb.vic.gov.au/Grants

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