

Media Release

23 October 2019

Over \$5m in funding announced to improve Victorians' access to legal services

Providing women experiencing family violence with support during pregnancy and birth, and breaking the cycle of disadvantage for vulnerable young people are just some of the innovative new projects awarded funding under the Victorian Legal Services Board's 2019 grant's program.

Attorney-General Jill Hennessey will today announce the 15 grant recipients who receive a share in over \$5 million in funding for programs that help ordinary and vulnerable Victorians deal with issues such as youth disadvantage, family violence, disability support and accessing simple and affordable legal advice.

This year's grant recipients focussed on projects that explored new ways of doing things. The *Designing Justice Differently; Using human-centred design and technology* theme encouraged innovation that used human-centred design to interrupt, streamline or change legal services and the justice system.

Some of the key projects funded under this year's grants include:

- **Women's Legal Services Victoria** 'Supporting women experiencing family violence during pregnancy' partnership with Monash Health – where women experiencing family violence and who are at risk of legal intervention are supported during pregnancy and their hospital stay, with the aim of mother and baby remaining together after birth
- **Darebin Community Legal Centre's** 'Women Transforming Justice program' – which will provide support for women who come into contact with the criminal justice system and ultimately aims to reduce the number who end up on remand; and
- **WEstJustice's Youth Law** – 'Breaking Cycles of Disadvantage for Young People' – which aims to influence change on a large scale by highlighting the inadequacies within the justice system and providing legal services for vulnerable young people.

Since 2007 the Victorian Legal Services Board's grants program has provided over \$40 million funding to legal and community organisations to improve access to justice for all Victorians, support policy research and law reform and develop education programs for consumers and legal professionals.

The Victorian Legal Services Board is an independent statutory authority responsible for regulation of the legal profession in Victoria. The grant's program is funded through the Public Purpose Fund, administered by the Board.

Quotes attributable to the Victorian Legal Services Board CEO and Commissioner, Fiona McLeay

"Our grant recipients are looking to disrupt and innovate legal services and the justice system so they can better meet the needs of Victorians across the state."

"These projects will make a real difference in the lives of some of our most vulnerable people by providing innovative new ways to get access to legal services when they need it the most."