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Legal innovation boosted by \$1.1 million in Legal Services Board Grants

Attorney-General Rob Hulls yesterday announced \$1.1 million of grants for innovative legal projects in Victoria. The grants are the first to be distributed through the Legal Services Board Grants Program. They focus on improving laws and legal services, enhancing access to justice and better informing consumers of legal services.

The Victorian Federation of Community Legal Centres welcomed the announcement. 14 of the 26 grants are for community legal centre projects including:

- Identifying and responding to the legal needs of women in the City of Yarra at risk of becoming homeless (Fitzroy Legal Service)
- Self-help kits and legal education on environmental law (Environment Defenders Office)
- Enhancing online access to community law (Federation of Community Legal Centres).
- Education and workshops on human rights for disadvantaged young people (Youthlaw)
- A study of “advance directives” with a view to recommending changes in law and practice (Mental Health Legal Centre)
- A pilot legal service to two prisons researching the legal needs of prisoners (Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre)
- Education and outreach legal assistance in areas of acute unmet legal need (Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre)
- Media law training and tools for community radio broadcasters (Communications Law Centre)
- An evaluation of the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) and its impact on the development of the access to justice sector (PILCH)
- Documenting the legal system’s response to women experiencing violence and/or family breakdown (Women’s Legal Service Victoria)
- A mentor and legal advisor on insurance law and dispute resolution to assist community legal centres, financial counsellors and their clients (West Heidelberg Community Legal Service)
- Establishing a policy development and advocacy focus for the Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service Victoria (AFVPLS)
- Improving legal advice, advocacy and representation services to asylum seekers in the community and in detention (Asylum Seeker Resource Centre)
- Providing legal information to the Victorian disability arts sector (Arts Law Centre and Arts Access Victoria)

“The Legal Services Board Grants Program is an exciting initiative that will deliver important improvements to Victoria’s justice system,” said Federation Chairperson Brendan Sydes. “We welcome the announcement of these diverse and worthwhile projects. The strong representation of community legal centre projects in this first grants round is a testament to the innovation and expertise of legal centres in addressing disadvantage and promoting social inclusion.”

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