

HOLISTIC SOCIO-LEGAL PRACTICE CLINIC FINALIST FOR AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S LAW AWARD

Canberra Community Law's Socio-Legal Practice Clinic is a finalist in the 2017 Australian Human Rights Commission's Law Award. Canberra Community Law's Executive Director, Genevieve Bolton is honoured that the Socio-Legal Practice Clinic has been recognised for its innovative and important work which builds on the Centre's social work pilot program and is a testament to the hard working staff who have contributed to its establishment.

"The Clinic is an innovative collaboration between philanthropic organisations and Canberra Community Law. It is an intensive, early intervention service that uniquely combines legal assistance and social work advocacy to address the multifaceted challenges faced by vulnerable individuals and families in the community,"

Ms Bolton said:

"What is special is that this model of service requires an unprecedented degree of collaboration between social work and legal professionals in order to deliver better, more holistic outcomes for some of our clients who are most in need."

"The Clinic's primary focus is on preventing women and children affected by domestic or family violence from being evicted or being made homeless. Approximately two thirds of its clients have been assisted to access housing or to avoid eviction," Ms Bolton said.

"We appreciate the strong and long-standing support that we have received from our partners – the Snow Foundation and the Clayton Utz Foundation."

At its launch in May 2016 last year, Andrew Leece, Director of the Snow Foundation, acknowledged the importance of the Clinic in addressing community need for collaborative legal and social work services stating, "When your home is on the line and you have nowhere else to go for you or your children – it becomes painfully clear that the clinic is a critical service, a last hope, for some in our community." David Hillard from the Clayton Utz Foundation applauded Canberra Community Law for being "one of Australia's most innovative and effective community legal centres."

A recent, independent evaluation by Karl Manning and Joanne Clarke found that the Clinic represented a "best practice approach."

"It is my personal view that this model represents the way of the future for holistic, respectful and client focused services that provide access to justice for disadvantaged people who have so often been locked out and pushed down in the past," said Karl Manning.

The Law Award is sponsored by the Law Council of Australia. The Law Award is awarded to an individual or an organisation with a track record in promoting and advancing human rights in Australia through the practice of law.

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More about CCL: CCL is the oldest and largest community legal centre in the ACT. It provides free legal assistance for people on low incomes with legal problems related to public housing tenancy, Centrelink and disability discrimination. CCL also operates Street Law, which is a specialist legal service for people who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Website: www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au

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Canberra Community Law acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land on which we work in the ACT and surrounding region and pay our respect to the Ngunnawal elders past, present and future for they hold the stories, traditions, and the cultures of their people. We are grateful that we share this land and express our sorrow for the costs of this sharing to Australia's First Peoples. We will continue to acknowledge the legacy of our history and strive in our goals to empower our community through social justice. We hope that our efforts will contribute to a realisation of equity, justice and partnership with traditional custodians of this land.