



Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service

Family Lawyer Project Casework Guidelines

Ballarat & Grampians Community Legal Service (BGCLS) is a not-for-profit Community Legal Service which provides free and accessible legal assistance to people in the Central Highlands and Wimmera regions of Victoria in accordance with these guidelines.

Advice services are provided to a broad section of the community in a wide range of family law and related areas (outlined below), with no set eligibility criteria.

Casework services are more limited, both in terms of legal matters and the range of people who will be assisted in accordance with the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services (NPA). Casework for Family Law Property matters will be prioritised for clients who have small or negative asset pools.

The Family Lawyer Project also provides a Duty Lawyer Service for the Ballarat sitting of the Federal Circuit Court. There is no set eligibility criteria for this service.

Clients who qualify for legal aid or have the means to pay will be provided with appropriate referrals after the first interview. If a client does not have means to pay or qualify for legal aid, as above, BGCLS will if possible, assist the client.

BGCLS will consider whether other services (legal as well as non-legal) may be relevant to a client's needs and make referrals to these services where appropriate.

The NPA sets out a definition of Priority Clients. Priority clients are those recognized whose capacity to resolve legal problems may be compromised by circumstances of vulnerability and/or disadvantage.

Priority Clients:

- Children and young people;
- Indigenous Australians;
- Older people (aged over 65);
- People experiencing, or at risk of, family violence;
- People experience, or at risk of, homelessness;
- Prisoners;
- People residing in rural or remote areas;
- People who are culturally and linguistically diverse;
- People with a disability or mental illness;
- People with low education levels; and
- Single parents

This list of priority clients is for guidance only and is not exhaustive. The NPA also provides a benchmark of 90% of casework being for clients who experience financial disadvantage.

BGCLS should deliver timely intervention services to resolve clients' legal problems sooner or prevent them from arising altogether.

PROBLEM TYPE	ASSISTANCE PROVIDED	WHERE TO REFER
<i>Adoption</i>	Referral	Private Lawyer Child & Family Services
<i>Change of Name</i>	Advice and Representation	Private Lawyer
<i>Child Protection</i>	Legal advice and referral	Victoria Legal Aid Private Lawyer Other CLC
<i>Child Support</i>	Legal advice and referral	Child Support Agency Victoria Legal Aid Private Lawyer Other CLC
<i>Family Law - Children</i>	Advice and Representation	Victoria Legal Aid Family Relationship Centre Relationships Australia Private Lawyer Other CLC
<i>Family Law - Property</i>	Advice and Representation.	Family Relationship Centre Relationships Australia Private Lawyer Other CLC
<i>Family Law – Divorce/Separation</i>	Advice and Representation	Private Lawyer Federal Circuit Court website (DIY) Other CLC
<i>Family Violence</i>	Advice and Representation and duty lawyer service	Victoria Legal Aid Private Lawyer WRISC Berry Street Other CLC
<i>Victims of Crime (VOCAT)</i>	Advice and Representation	Private Lawyer Victims Assistance program-Centacare Other CLC