

# Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service



## Annual Report 01/02



**Definition of artwork:**

The hands represent strength and helping one another. The centre of the left hand represents standing strong for your culture, with the symbol of the Aboriginal flag. The centre of the right hand represents mediation. The circle on the outside represents the circulation in and around the community.

The artwork on the cover and throughout the report is illustrated by Vera Cooper. Taken from the 'Be Strong Use Your Rights' VALS Community Legal Education Kit.

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The full name of Service and contact address, phone number, fax number & email address.

**Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Cooperative Limited**

**6 Alexandra Parade Fitzroy, Victoria, 3065**

**Phone: 03 9419 3888**

**Fax: 03 9419 6024**

**Email: [vals@vals.org.au](mailto:vals@vals.org.au)**

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# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

This report focuses on the 2001/2002 year. However, due to the delay in finalising this report there will be some mention of important events which have occurred in the 2002/2003 year also.

The past year has provided the Board of Directors and staff of VALS with a number of challenges and we have been somewhat fortunate to have been able to meet those challenges to a great degree.

The immediate and pressing challenge has been our inability to recruit a Chief Executive Officer, with repeated attempts failing to attract suitable applicants. The staff must be commended for continuing to carry out their duties in a timely, efficient and professional manner in the absence of a CEO. The respective Executive Officers have provided great assistance to the Board and staff during this time.

We were fortunate in securing some additional funding from ATSIC and this resulted in a wage increase for the staff. The increase, though modest, was timely but does not totally eliminate the disproportionate gap when comparing the wage rates to other like Services. Like the majority of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, we face the constant problem of comparative wage justice for our employees and ensuring that they are adequately remunerated. This is not an easy task and there are no quick-fix solutions, but the Board will persist with its attempts to secure additional funding. We note with great interest the recently published Office of Evaluation (ATSIC) report – "Evaluation of the Legal and Preventative Services Program" which states in part – "ATSIC needs to seriously address the high workloads, staff turnover and dissatisfaction of ATSILS staff with their working conditions and remuneration". The report compares Aboriginal Legal Service costs with Legal Aid costs. If Legal Aid provided a similar service it would cost \$25,605,598 more than the present Aboriginal Legal Services budget of \$38 million according to the evaluation. The report forcefully argues that the ATSIC administrative arms enthusiasm for an expansion of tendering is not supported by the findings of this report.

Again, like the other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services, VALS has not seen a substantial increase in its base funding for a number of years. This is despite an increasing demand on our services. The government apparently overlook the significant increase in the Indigenous population which has occurred over the last decade. The comparatively high proportion of young people in the Indigenous population also means there are many people at an age when high levels of offending occur which also places pressure on Aboriginal Legal Services. We have

attempted to meet these demands through prudent management of our material and financial resources but we are faced with these challenges on a daily basis.

We have participated in a project conducted by the Law Council of Australia – "Erosion of Legal Representation and Rights". Hopefully, the data gathered during the project will assist us in formulating our arguments for the provision of additional funding.

VALS has succeeded in obtaining Commonwealth Attorney Generals Department and Victoria Legal Aid support for the secondment of a Family lawyer to VALS from Victoria Legal Aid. This is effectively a Commonwealth Government funded position which Victoria Legal Aid who administer State and Commonwealth Legal Aid money have allowed us to access.

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service was also successful in obtaining funds from the Department Justice to employ an Indigenous Women's project worker to build on the work of the Indigenous Women Justice Forum which has been resourced by VALS since 2001.

Victoria Aboriginal Legal Service has continued its involvement in the initiatives of the Aboriginal Justice Agreement and has made submissions about the Koori Court, Access to Legal Representation Review, the Community Justice Panel Review and the Parliamentary Inquiry into Inhalation of Volatile Substances (Chroming Inquiry).

## CLIENT SERVICE OFFICERS

The unit is staffed by ten client service officers six of whom are based in non-metro offices and the other four staff at the Fitzroy office.

The Metropolitan Client Service Officers staff an on-call roster and respond to notifications from Victoria Police (via Criminal Records Unit) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people being detained in custody.

During the year several of the Client Service Officers were involved in Regional Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committees around Victoria. David Atkinson and Wayne Bell received inaugural community justice awards from the State Attorney Rob Hulls.

Justin Downing completed a leadership course during the year and Bradley Boon attended a conference in Adelaide about Drug and Alcohol issues. The Client Service Officers are to be congratulated for their hard work during a challenging year.





1. Rob Hulls, Michael Bell, Wayne Bell & Sergeant Rod Horwell (CSO's receiving inaugural community justice awards from the State Attorney, 2002 Indigenous Community Justice Awards @ the Victorian Justice Ceremonies)



2. David Atkinson, Jan Muir, Andrew Jackamos, Joanne Atkinson, Katie Pittman, Robin Inglis & James Cotta (2002 'Be Strong' launch @ Rumbalara)



3. Justin Mohammed, Magistrate Kate Auty, Larry Jackson, David Atkinson & Parliament Secretary Richard Wayne (in background) (2002 Indigenous Community Justice Awards @ the Victorian Justice Ceremonies)



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CHAIRPERSON

**Frank Guivarra:** has been involved with VALS for a number of years. Currently employed with Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Limited (VACSAL). Frank has extensive experience in Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management having worked in the field for twenty-five years. Frank has an involvement with Human Rights forums and has attended international forums. He holds an executive position at NAILSS and has represented NAILSS under the auspices of the United Nations in Geneva and New York. He has attended national and international forums including the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban South Africa.

## SECRETARY

**Lorraine (Bunta) Patten:** a Gunditjmara woman. She has been involved in Koori Affairs for many years. She has been a VALS Board member in the past and was the Manager of the Gladys Nicholls Hostel in Northcote. She is the Chairperson of the Weeroona Aboriginal Cemetery in Greenvale. She was also an ATSIC Regional Councilor for 5 years.

## DIRECTOR

**Antoinette Gentile:** Antoinette is a Yorta Yorta woman. She was previously employed at VALS for 6 years and held a number of positions during that period including the position of Chief Executive Officer. She is currently employed by the Department of Justice in the Indigenous Issues Unit as a Senior Project Officer. Antoinette has a keen interest in women's issues.

## DIRECTOR

**Peter Hood:** born at Yallourn and is a direct descendant of the Kurnai people. Peter has been actively involved in Indigenous affairs in his local area of Gippsland for 14 years.

He has worked as an Aboriginal Educator in Moorwell, the Juvenile Justice worker for the Central Gippsland area, a Field Officer for VALS and is currently employed with Victorian Aboriginal Child Care Agency as the Program Manager for the Kunai Aboriginal Youth Crisis Support Centre program.

## DIRECTOR

**Des Morgan:** A Yorta Yorta man from the Murray / Goulbourne river area of Victoria / NSW. He has been an active member of the Aboriginal community since 1984, having served on various local and state organizations, Boards of Management Inc, Legal Service, Aboriginal Advancement League, VACSAL, VALEAI. He also served a 6 year period as an ATSIC Regional Councilor and Chair of Referenda Corp (Echuca) for several years and a member of the Yorta Yorta Nations Aboriginal Corporation.

## DIRECTOR

**Phil Egan:** Phil a former VFL/AFL footballer, is now self-employed as an Education Consultant. He has an interest in global Indigenous issues, children and their development, fishing and camping.

## DIRECTOR

**Terrie Stewart:** has been involved with VALS for over 10 years. She has held positions with VALS such as Financial Counselor, Office Manager, Client Service Officer and Team Leader. Terrie has also held positions at the Bert Williams Centre as a Youth Support Worker and is currently employed as a Koorie Support Worker at Parkville Youth Residential Centre and Melbourne Juvenile Justice Centre. She has been actively involved in the criminal justice area for over 10 years.



*Frank Guivarra  
(Chairperson),  
Anoinette Gentile  
(Director) and Des  
Morgan (Director).*



# STAFF (as of June 30 2002)

## Chief Executive Officer

Acting -Peter McDougall

## Receptionist

Shirely Reynolds

## Corporate and Financial Services Unit

Executive Officer - Chris Dodds

## Research, Planning and Development Unit

Research Officer - Vacant

## Research, Planning & Development Unit

Executive Officer - Robin Inglis

## Community Legal Education Unit

Project Officer- Jan Muir

Education Officer - Catie Pitman

## Legal Practice

Executive Officer- Tom Munro

## Auditor

Eric Townsend

E Townsend & Co

Chartered Accountant

## Legal Practice

### *Criminal Section*

Deputy Executive Officer – Jenny Clark

Kimberly Bott

Graeme Davis

Justin Wheelahan

Tim Whitehead

Becky Pattinson (Bainsdale)

### *Civil Section*

Michele Zaccoro

### *Family Law Section*

Lorne Clements

Dennis Barry

Leah Billeem

## Client Support Unit

### *Metropolitan*

John Bell

Bradley Boon

Justin Downing

Matthew Holmes

### *Regional*

Wayne Bell (Heywood)

Ray Clarke (Mildura)

Willie Pepper (Morwell)

David Aitkinson (Shepparton)

Clayton Ison (Swan Hill)

Lyn Morgan (Bainsdale)

## Administration

Administration Officer

Lance Zampaglione

## Legal Secretaries

Julie Mason

Raylene Hibbins (Bainsdale)

## Filing Clerk

Teresa Hofilena



## EXECUTIVE OFFICER—LEGAL PRACTICE

The year 2001 to June 2002 was a difficult year for the legal practice.

The criminal and family practices lost a number of experienced staff. That trend has continued into the 2002 to 2003 financial year.

Since the last report Pat Bourke, Paul Haskett, Paula King, Elisa Whittaker, Kerry Wilde, Shaun Ginsbourg, Richard Edney, Tom Munro, Ann-Maree Baring and Becky Pattinson have left the service. (Justin Wheelahan and Graeme Davis left during that period, but have since returned.)

The loss to the service, and the community it serves, with the departure of these people is immense. They take with them a wealth of legal expertise, experience and knowledge of the Koori community.

We have experienced great difficulty attracting suitable applicants for the vacancies created by these departures. Recent experience strongly suggests there is no prospect of attracting experienced applicants for positions in the criminal practice.

Accordingly, whilst solicitors were grateful to receive a pay rise along with all other staff, there remains a real need to address salary structures for legal staff to ensure that we are able to retain staff, and to attract applicants when the need arises.

Unfortunately we now face the challenge of filling the Bairnsdale position vacated by Becky Pattinson. Generally we have not been able to attract experienced solicitors for that position, and very few inexperienced solicitors are willing to take on the challenge of working in a remote location and running a legal practice by themselves.

### Criminal Practice

The criminal practice continues its practice of allocation of a solicitor to each region of the state.

Tim Whitehead is responsible for the Hume Region; Kimberley Bott the Murray River (Mildura and Robinvale) Region; Justin Wheelahan the Western District; Graeme Davis Swan Hill; Urfa Masood will be handling West Gippsland; and for the time being Samantha Brown will be handling Bairnsdale.

### Family Section

The family law section is staffed by:

1. Lorne Clements
2. Denis Barry
3. Leah Billeam

The position occupied by Leah is a Victoria Legal Aid position based at the service. The position is due for review and

we hope that we can retain Leah at the service.

### Civil Section

Michele Zaccaro remains the civil solicitor.

One of the key areas of practice continues to be the pursuit of claims arising from complaints against police.

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### Koorie Court

Koorie Court commenced at Shepparton during the last twelve months and is due to commence at Broadmeadows in the near future.

Koorie Court in Shepparton has operated quite well, and is popular with our clients.

Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Melbourne Magistrates Court.

This is a position funded by Justice Department and has proven to be a very valuable resource for clients appearing before the Magistrates Courts and the County Courts, particularly for clients in custody.

### Submissions and Publications

Richard Edney presented a paper entitled "Indigenous Punishment In Australia: A Jurisprudence of Pain?" at "Best Practices. In Corrections For Indigenous Peoples Conference" convened by the Australian Institute of Criminology held in Sydney on 8 October 2001.

An article also published by Richard Edney entitled "The Use Of The dock Under Australian Criminal Law: Desirable Practice or Impediment To a Fair Trial?" prompted a campaign by VALS for the abolition of the dock. This proposal received support from the Bar Council and the Criminal Law Section of the Law Institute of Victoria. However, the Attorney-General decided against any legislative change.

A submission to the Law Reform Commission suggesting change to the Bail Act, received their support, and the government is considering changes recommended by them. We are seeking a change to the provision of the Bail Act that provides bail shall be refused where a person fails to appear unless they can show the reason for failing to appear was beyond their control.

VALS also gave evidence to a Victorian Parliamentary committee in relation to penalties for summary offences. VALS submitted that the penalties for street offences (such as indecent language) not involving violence should be fines only, and that imprisonment for these offences should be abolished.

*Jennifer Clark*

**Executive Officer – Legal Practice**



# Research, Planning and Development Unit (and Education)

The Research Planning and Development Unit provides information, advice, referral and support and advocates for improved laws, legal system operation, diversion and prevention strategies. Additionally the Unit has a number of organisational support roles in relation to preparation of funding submissions, library, information technology and file management.

## Highlights of the 2001-2002 year

The Unit has continued to work with Koori Communities, via its community legal education work and liaison with VALS Client Service officer. It has:

- Secured funding for an Indigenous Women's Justice Forum project worker
- Initiated and supported successful attempts to have a family lawyer seconded from Victoria Legal Aid
- Made a written submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Inhalation of Volatile Substances (Chroming Inquiry)
- Finalised and launched the Local Agreement between Shepparton police and Koori Justice workers
- Provided an issues paper on the development of the Koori Court
- Assisted an Aboriginal Cooperative to utilise the Racial Vilification Act in response to a complaint by two individuals about alleged comments by a state politician. (This was the first time an Indigenous organisation had used the act in this way)
- Initiated research aimed at improving the effectiveness of letters to clients
- Made a submission to the Community Justice Panel Review
- Assisted in attempts to seek justice for our clients who have complaints against the Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund
- Submitted a report to the Department of Justice on their Access to Legal Representation Review.
- Completed the "Be Strong-Use Your Rights" community legal education kit.

## Key Tasks of the Unit

- Provide information to the CEO and Board about government policy and programs
- Provide information to the public, including media and human service organisations about VALS and issues affecting Kooris
- Provide Community Legal Education to Koori community members
- Do research about policy changes and issues affecting the Koori community
- Record details of all client matters; create files and maintain and improve the VALS data base.
- Coordinate information technology planning and maintenance
- Library maintenance including updating all legal loose leaf systems
- Represent the service at meetings with government departments and other organisations
- Contribute to the services ongoing activities and development via assistance with funding submissions and training issues.
- Provide quarterly reports to ATSIC on the service's activities.

## Community Legal Education

In October 2001 we were fortunate to recruit Jan Muir to the Community Legal Education section. Catie Pitman with assistance from the Client Service Officers had been the only worker for sixteen months in this section.

A Local Agreement between Shepparton Police and the Koori justice workers in Shepparton was facilitated by the education staff. This agreement was publicised by regional television, ABC radio and regional newspapers. Education staff also completed the "Be Strong" community education kit and held a number of community issues workshops; these workshops also helped in the development of the local agreement and the education kit. The workshops included speaking at a workshop organised by the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria about complaints processes and workshops with Koori young people and Koori workers.

There were community meetings in Echuca and Dandenong. VALS also helped publicise the Community Justice panel review meetings and the Victorian Aboriginal Justice Agreement

## Policy, Publicity and Research.

Seven months after the position was vacated Cynthia Lim joined the unit as a research worker in October 2001. Cynthia was a fantastic contributor to VALS from day one. She moved on to the Department of Justice in May 2002 and was sadly missed.

In addition to the matters listed under "highlights" the unit has provide statistical information to the Department of Justice, hosted a visit of Indonesian justice workers from the Castan Centre, made a presentation to the VCOS policy congress, attended Department of Justice forums, written reports about proposed Commonwealth Electoral reform, provided media releases in relation to Police proposals to prevent Police from being sued and on Indigenous Family Violence, commenced planning for a forum about sentencing with the Victorian Council of Social Services and provided information to a wide range of organisations about services and issues when requested. Data entry and filing system management have been performed by Teresa Hofilena. This is a demanding and busy position and this work is the basis of VALS quarterly reports to ATSIC on performance indicators.

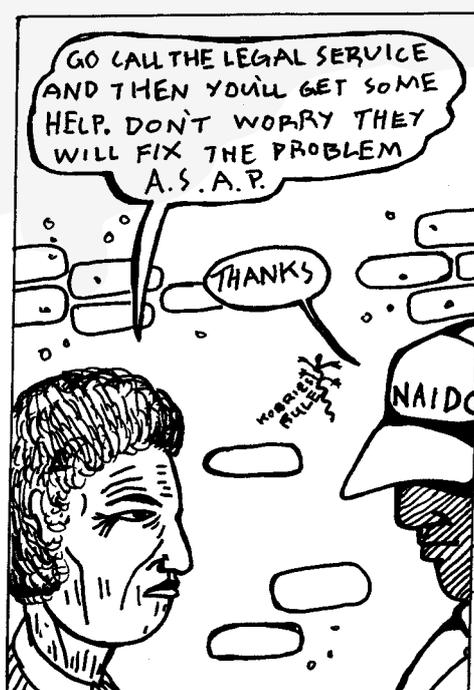
Last year VALS opened 5324 new matters. A "matter" could involve one or more charges that occurred at the same time. The number of new matters is 2% less than last year. A significant contributor to this lower total of new matters was a high vacancy rate in the family law section for much of the year which meant that new family law cases declined from 168 in 00/01 to 90 in 01/02.

The number of active matters (cases and duty work) and information provided to female clients was 2909.

The percentage of appeals for criminal matters which were successful was 68.7%.

*Robin Inglis*





Cartoons from the "Be Strong Use Your Rights Kit" produced by the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service. Illustrated by Yil-lul Barney.



## FINANCE & CORPORATE SERVICES UNIT

The Corporate & Financial Services Unit is responsible for maintaining the financial framework and structure which supports all operational areas of the organisation. This involves ensuring that VALS meets its statutory obligations and maintains a reliable system of internal controls which is designed to reasonably ensure that all transactions are authorised in accordance with approved management procedures, that all transactions are properly recorded and that the assets of the Co-operative are safeguarded.

VALS principal cost is staff salaries, with other major expenses being outside briefs, motor vehicle running, telephone and travel. Taken together these expenses account for 97% of the recurrent funding provided to VALS by ATSIC in 2001/02. A full analysis of Income and Expenditure is provided in the Annual Financial Statements.

Reports are provided by means of monthly Financial Reports to the Board of Directors, quarterly reports to ATSIC and Annual Reports to Members. Each is provided with varying analyses according to their needs and statutory obligations.

The Service is primarily funded by ATSIC by means of quarterly grant payments in advance. Payments are made only if satisfactory Financial Reports have been submitted to ATSIC

in accordance with VALS contractual agreement with ATSIC. Tied to ATSIC grants are additional terms and conditions that require VALS to undertake a range of accountability procedures. During the past financial year ATSIC provided VALS with additional funds for specific projects, and these are accounted for separately.

The Commonwealth Government provides funding to VALS for Emergency Relief to those in need of financial or food assistance. Assistance is only provided after an assessment of each application.

There has been no change in accounting procedures during the year.

VALS budgets for break-even endeavours to end of the year just under budget in order to protect the capital base of the organisation and to ensure that we have sufficient funds to meet the needs of unplanned events.

The Balance Sheet shows the strong stability position as at 30 June 2002 with a 1.35% increase in the value of current assets over current liabilities. Capital expenditure was modest during the year, and it is anticipated that this will remain the same during 2002/03.



# Statement of Financial Position as of June 30 2002

**VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LTD**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2001 - 2002**  
**CONSOLIDATED**  
**TRADING PROFIT AND LOSS STATEMENT**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2002**

<b>INCOME</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2001</b>
	\$	\$
<b>Grants</b>		
Atsic	2,269,578.00	2,299,664.00
Other	15,677.96	105,395.96
Transfer from Last year Current Liability	395,390.21	254,935.84
	<b>2,680,646.17</b>	<b>2,659,995.80</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Member Subscriptions	120.90	21.82
Bank Interest	35,231.55	45,536.80
Reimbursements Received	6,226.14	9,737.14
Legal Costs Recovered	47,099.74	29,006.01
Legal Aid Reimbursed	34,576.39	149,785.45
Donations	5,700.00	5,350.00
Profit/-Loss on sale of Non-current Assets	-	3,126.36
	<b>128,954.72</b>	<b>242,563.58</b>



## Statement of Financial Position as of June 30 2002

EXPENDITURE	2002 \$	2001 \$
Salaries	1,301,692.15	1,278,249.20
Superannuation	112,164.05	114,501.13
Workcover	16,258.54	17,198.45
Annual Leave Accrual Expense	-24,425.25	7,584.51
Long Service Leave Accrual Expense	12,106.47	11,059.83
Motor Vehicles - Fuel	39,996.14	38,166.37
Motor Vehicles - Leases & Repairs	98,954.91	95,316.70
Repairs & Maintenance - Buildings	3,167.66	4,664.47
Repairs & Maintenance - Plant	1,400.09	740.77
Repairs & Maintenance - Computers	10,576.20	11,114.90
Depreciation - Furn Fittings & Equip	31,537.00	31,389.35
Depreciation - Motor Vehicles	21,932.51	13,782.00
Depreciation - Buildings	18,656.00	18,628.00
Audit Fees	8,000.00	6,300.00
Equipment hire	14,527.89	29,457.45
Outside Briefs	330,549.17	359,552.78
Bank Charges	1,730.87	3,145.99
Cleaning	19,985.58	22,679.96
Insurance	16,767.26	15,749.35
Annual General Meeting Expenses	3,490.06	5,860.32
Directors Meeting Expenses	2,261.33	1,380.31
Other Meeting Expenses	2,539.75	677.45
Postage	11,833.82	11,207.77
Rates	10,770.92	10,722.61
Rent	34,689.96	33,910.02
Telephone	78,726.36	63,859.12
Staff Training	2,522.87	847.45
Library Expenses	17,355.10	16,519.84
Security	6,862.99	6,363.50
Storage	3,362.84	3,141.08
Staff Amenities	1,992.00	1,978.72
Advertising	12,869.39	9,165.30
Fringe Benefit Tax	8,801.29	-
Practicing Certificates	5,931.54	5,072.00
Subscriptions	2,608.71	2,376.11
Food Vouchers	980.00	2,000.00
Legal Fees	3,607.00	1,303.10
Sundries	42,362.69	4,629.52
Electricity & Gas	13,579.42	14,760.31
Printing & Stationery	26,107.93	22,276.00
Travel	96,446.34	88,596.20
Telephone Installation	-	1,980.00
Computer Upgrades	-	3,150.00
Current Liability Carried Forward	384,200.44	395,390.21
	<b>2,809,479.99</b>	<b>2,786,448.15</b>

<b>OPERATING PROFIT/-LOSS BEFORE INCOME TAX</b>	<b>120.90</b>	<b>116,111.23</b>
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## Statement of Financial Position as of June 30 2002

	Note	2002 \$	2001 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Cash	15	1,051,412.89	1,041,907.67
Receivables	4	8,036.65	14,218.00
Prepayments		30,438.00	29,524.10
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,089,887.54</b>	<b>1,085,649.77</b>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Property, Plant & Equipment	5	1,072,968.00	1,145,093.51
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1,072,968.00</b>	<b>1,145,093.51</b>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<b>2,162,855.54</b>	<b>2,230,743.28</b>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Payable & Accruals		115,617.17	160,148.26
Provisions	6	173,610.91	185,929.69
Unspent Grant Funds	7	384,200.44	395,390.21
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>673,428.52</b>	<b>741,468.16</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>		<b>673,428.52</b>	<b>741,468.16</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>1,489,427.02</b>	<b>1,489,275.12</b>
<b>MEMBERS FUNDS</b>			
Members Share Capital	8	303.60	272.60
Reserves	9	6.00	6.00
Retained Surplus		1,489,117.42	1,488,996.52
<b>TOTAL MEMBERS FUNDS</b>		<b>1,489,427.02</b>	<b>1,489,275.12</b>





## AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the above financial records of the VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL  
LEGAL SERVICES CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

For the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2002 relating to

### RECURRENT FUNDING

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(Description of project)

project. I certify that

- (i) all ATSIC grant funded assets with a written down value of over \$1,000 have been insured with an approved insurer;
- (ii) the organisation is maintaining an Asset Register of assets acquired with ATSIC grant funds where the purchase or construction price exceeds \$1,000; = new assets acquired during 2002 with ATSIC grant funds have been included on an asset register.
- (iii) Previous years unexpected funds were used for the agreed purpose.
- (iv) There are no CDEP Wages funding to this organisation.

**Attached is a copy of the Auditor's Management Letter to the Grantee or a detailed Report, including:**

- (i) specific comment on the adequacy of financial controls being maintained by the Grantee;
- (ii) specific comment on the financial position of the Grantee as it relates to any issues effecting the ability of the Grantee to repay surplus Grant Funds or complete the approved activity with available funds; and
- (iii) where there are audit qualifications, an outline of the reason(s) for the qualifications and the remedial action recommended.

**Auditors Recommendations.**

A commercial salary computer package such as MYOB or Quickbooks would standardise the existing spreadsheet salary system even though it is reasonably efficient.

The information presented to me is a true and fair account of the financial transactions and is based on proper accounts and accounts and records.

*Eric Townsend*

Auditor's Signature

24 1 9 12002

**E TOWNSEND & CO**

**SUITE 4/LEVEL 1**

**405 NEPEAN HIGHWAY**

**FRANKSTON VIC 3199**

VICTORIAN ABORIGINAL LEGAL SERVICE CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

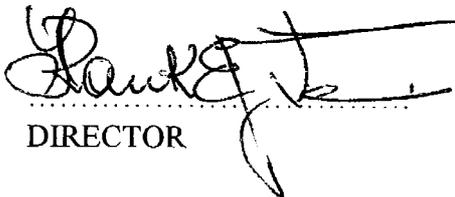
DECLARATION OF DIRECTORS

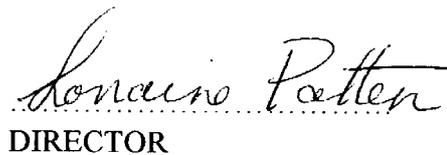
The Board of Directors of the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Co-operative Limited declares that the financial statements and notes:

- (a) accord with the Co-operatives Act 1996
- (b) comply with Australian Accounting Standards, and
- (c) present fairly the financial position of the Co-operative as at 30 June 2002 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year ended on that date.

In the Directors opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Co-operative will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.

Signed on behalf of the Board at Fitzroy this 31st day of January 2003

  
DIRECTOR

  
DIRECTOR

**Notes**



# BE STRONG USE YOUR RIGHTS

## Which path of action is best for me?

A support worker or the Client Service Officer (Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service) will help you with whatever action you take.

Whatever you do, by acting on one or more of these paths, you will be contributing to change that can help your community!

Sometimes an **independent mediator** can help you and the other person talk about the problem and come to an agreement

**Speak directly** to the person or organisation you are concerned about

**Deal directly with the person/s involved**

**Use a complaint process, a tribunal or a court**

**Tell other organisations and ask them to take action**

**Lodge** your complaint with the relevant complaints agency

Ask staff at your Co-op, a counsellor or ATSIC representative to help you and your community to organise a group to **publicise the problem**

Record your concerns on the Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service "**complaints register**" so that the information can be used to influence government