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**Youthlaw Annual Report**

for the Year Ended 30 June 2003

*report*



# About Youthlaw

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Youthlaw is Victoria's state-wide young people's community legal centre and began operations on 1st October 2001. Youthlaw works to achieve systemic responses to the legal issues facing young people, through casework, policy development, advocacy and preventative education programs.

Youthlaw is based at Frontyard Youth Services in central Melbourne. Frontyard consists of an integrated team of colocated services, that work collaboratively to address the needs of young people at risk, including, accommodation, financial, legal and health needs.

Youthlaw provides free legal advice Monday-Friday 2-5pm (no appointment needed) and Wednesday evenings 5.30-8pm by appointment. Other services Monday-Friday 9am-5.30pm.

Youthlaw, At Frontyard, 19 King Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Tel 9611 2412 Fax 9620 3622  
Email [info@youthlaw.asn.au](mailto:info@youthlaw.asn.au)

[www.youthlaw.asn.au](http://www.youthlaw.asn.au)



# Annual Report

2002 - 2003

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## Chair's report

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### Chair's Report

For the financial year 2003/2004, we were pleased to receive a small contribution from the State Government to our recurrent funding. While it is nowhere near adequate to sustain Youthlaw into the future, it is a tribute to Youthlaw's significant work since our establishment almost two years ago.

Our partnership with Blake Dawson Waldron has continued to flourish. Whilst the private profession continues to advocate for expanded legal aid funding, including to children and young people, BDW has continued supporting Youthlaw through its pro bono program. BDW has extended its commitment to Youthlaw for a further two years, over which time we will continue to work in partnership towards adequate recurrent funding from government for our core services.

Youthlaw has consolidated our home at Frontyard Youth Services in central Melbourne. The rewards and challenges of working with high profile services from different disciplinary backgrounds provides opportunities for collaborative partnerships that can address young people's issues in an holistic way.

A great testament to Youthlaw's strategic partnerships is the funding of what can only be described as two of the most significant projects promoting the legal rights of young people in Victoria. This report outlines our work with Victoria Police, Crime Prevention Victoria and other project partners in the youth sector on the Independent Persons Youth Diversion Pilot Program and our continued partnership with Victoria Legal Aid in the area of community legal education that has seen the funding of a project to develop a much needed curriculum resource for secondary school teachers.

The role and effectiveness of Youthlaw is closely tied to that of our colleagues in community legal centres in Victoria and nationally. Youthlaw's commitment to community law is shown in our significant contribution to the sector and its development through projects such as ChangeXchange, active involvement in various networks around policy issues affecting young people and our work on the organising committee for the National Community Legal Centre conference over consecutive years.

As this report shows, Youthlaw's output far exceeds realistic expectations for the resources we have. Our substantial achievements are only possible thanks to the tireless work and commitment of Youthlaw's staff, volunteers, project partners and the significant in-kind assistance provided by BDW. Thanks also to my colleagues on the Committee of Management, who, on behalf of our members keep us all on track.

Last but not least, thanks to the young people who have contributed to the work of Youthlaw, as managers, in consultations, as active clients and through our community education work. We hope that the continued development of our youth participation policy will see greater involvement by a greater diversity of Victoria's young people.



Gavin Green

Chair, Committee of Management

## Legal advice & casework

### Legal Advice and Casework

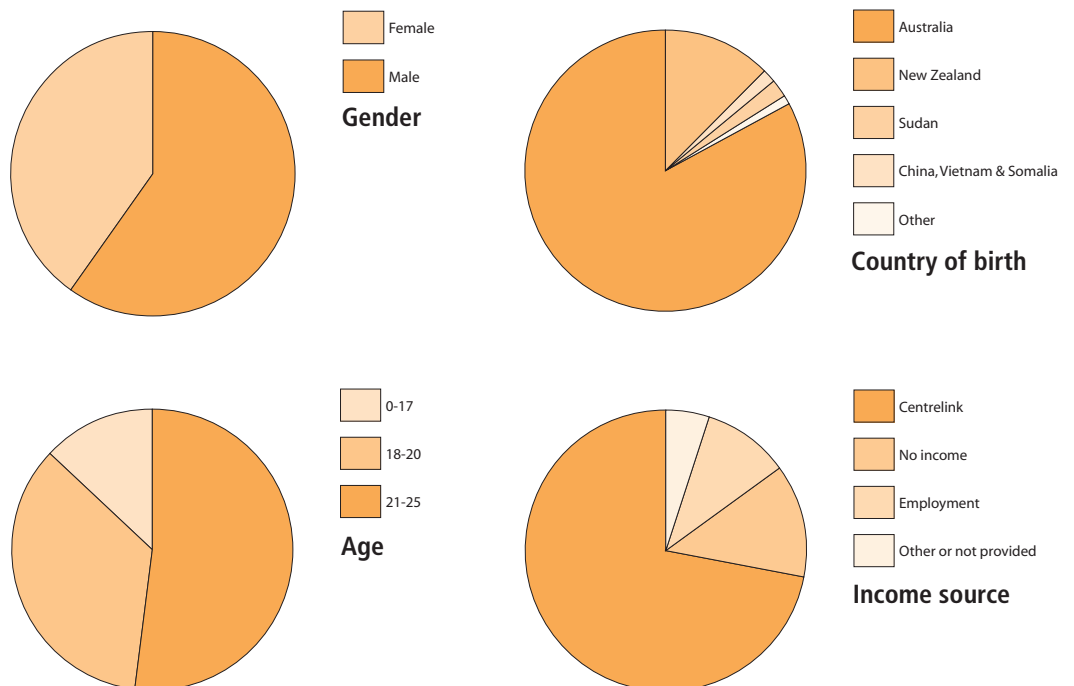
*Objective* – To provide high quality, free and accessible legal advice and casework services to young people aged up to 25 years of age and to assist in the development of a network of lawyers and legal advocates who regularly act or advocate for children and young people, by providing research, training and policy development in matters of children’s rights.

#### *Youthlaw Achievements 2002/2003*

- Number of clients assisted = 1138
- Information and referral by telephone = 780
- Advice by phone and face to face = 163
- Cases opened = 195
- Total number of contacts with clients = 1703

## Profile of clients

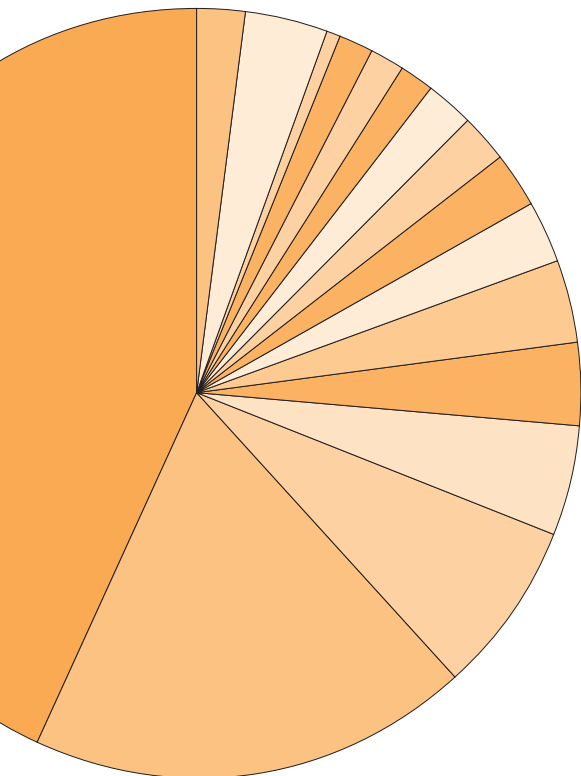
### Profile of Clients



## Law area

### Law Area

(Total number of 345)



- Crime = 149 (43%)
- Fines = 64 (19%)
- Debts = 25 (7%)
- Intervention orders = 16 (5%)
- Police complaints = 12 (3.5%)
- Family law = 12 (3.5%)
- Employment = 9 (3%)
- Motor vehicle accidents = 8 (2%)
- Crimes Compensation = 7 (2%)
- Education law = 7 (2%)
- Centrelink disputes = 5 (1.5%)
- Tenancy = 5 (1.5%)
- Discrimination = 5 (1.5%)
- Child Protection = 2 (0.5%)
- Other Civil (including contracts, defamation, copyright) = 12 (3.5%)
- Miscellaneous = 7 (2%)

### Key Priorities for 2003/2004

- Maintain levels of current service delivery
- Expand the number of younger clients, clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and number of clients seeking assistance with civil and administrative law matters
- Pursue strategic casework and litigation in areas of police accountability, discrimination of young people in public places, public transport issues, rights at school and the child protection system
- In conjunction with relevant agencies, work towards obtaining resources to implement a state-wide Youth Law Hotline for young people being interviewed by police, including after hours
- In conjunction with community legal centres in Victoria, develop a detailed funding submission and strategy that will successfully implement the Youthlaw network model for community legal centres

## Community education

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### Community Legal Education

#### *Objective*

To raise the level of understanding amongst young people, their advocates and the broader community in Victoria about how the law affects young people and their rights and obligations.

#### *Key achievements 2002/2003*

- Total of 37 sessions conducted about legal issues facing young people, with a total of 1670 attendees
- 25 sessions with young people in various schools, Tafes, community centres and at forums organised by local government and community legal centre workers throughout Victoria.

#### *Training for workers in legal issues facing young people*

- Mental health workers at OASIS
- Eastern region youth workers
- Youth workers in the Juvenile Justice system at Inside Out, Care and Community Concern
- Legal studies teachers at COMView
- Workers with same-sex attracted young people through the Rainbow Network
- Training for Victoria Legal Aid and Community Legal Centre staff about law reform issues in social security
- Western region youth workers in and around Maribyrnong
- Youth workers in and around City of Moonee Valley
- Youth advocates concerned to see the establishment of a Children and Young People's Commission
- Workers with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds at Landing on Your Feet training
- Workers with young people involved in volatile substance abuse in the Darebin City Council area.

#### *Project work*

- Information about fines and the PERIN system for workers and pro forma letters for young people, accessible from the Youthlaw web-site
- Weekly street-based community education service with clients of the Footpatrol, the mobile needle and syringe exchange in the CBD
- Outlaw – Peer education with North Melbourne Legal Service and Flemington Kensington Community Legal Service with young people in the City of Melbourne

- A partnership project with Victoria Legal Aid to produce curriculum based resources for teachers in early high school years to accompany the publication Am I Old Enough
- A partnership project with MacKillop Family Services to train 6-8 young people from the Western Region to become peer educators about legal rights and responsibilities.

### *Contributions to projects of other organisations and journals*

- Domestic Violence and Resource Centre- Young People, Violence and the Law web-site
- Video project- Young People and the Law
- YIKES, Newsletter of the Youth Affairs Council of Victoria about fines, insurance law reforms and the new chroming legislation
- Fitzroy Legal Service Law Hand Book

### *Use of the media*

Media releases, letters to editors and successful publication in the media:

- Cheating in university exams
- Support for a Children and Young People's Commission
- Insurance reforms
- TV and print media about the response of the Child Protection system to young people reported as missing persons
- Done by Law on 3CR about Juvenile Justice issues
- Gippsland student radio program recording – graffiti and the law
- The Age about various issues facing young people in the City of Melbourne
- RRR Mid-Week Crisis about new police powers to search for weapons

### *Key priorities for 2003/2004*

- Maintain the current level of service delivery
- Successful completion of current projects
- Evaluation of peer education as a best practise model of service delivery for legal education
- Seek funding for a community legal education worker with a travel budget to design and implement a comprehensive and proactive community legal education program, including visits to rural areas.

## Policy, research & law

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### Policy, Research and Law Reform

#### *Objective*

To clarify or further the legal rights of children and young people, bring about changes to laws, policies and practices to advance the interests of young people in Victoria and promote the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in Victoria and the recommendations in Seen and Heard (1997).

#### *Youthlaw achievements 2002/2003*

Law Reform submissions – responding to inquiries:

- Presentation at the Victorian Parliamentary DNA Inquiry
- Presentation of a paper at the VCOSS Social Policy Forum about community education programs for young people
- Written submission to the Commonwealth Government about its proposed Age Discrimination legislation
- Written submission to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority about VCE cheats and associated legal processes
- Written submissions to various Ministers and to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee about chroming
- Written submissions to various Ministers and to the Scrutiny of Acts and Regulations Committee about insurance reforms affecting young people

#### *Projects*

- Drove the development of Independent Persons Youth Diversion Pilot Program- as part of a coalition of peak youth agencies, Government and Victoria Police, developing statewide infrastructure that provides simple and reliable allocation of trained independent persons to attend police stations during police interviews of young people under 17 years of age. Five local government areas are being piloted in the first 18 months.
- Assisted to establish ChangeXchange, a network of community organisations seeking to create sustainable infrastructure and share ideas about effective campaign tools and techniques to achieve broad social change.

#### *Ongoing law and policy reform work about the following issues*

- Police accountability
- Juvenile Justice reforms, including raising the age of the Childrens' Court to 18 years and retention of the 'dual track' system for 17-21 year olds
- Cautioning of young people under 17
- Work towards the establishment of a Victorian Children and Young People's Commission
- Policing in the CBD including Bail conditions with exclusion zones
- Volatile substances abuse and policing
- Fines and the PERIN system

## *Regular meetings and networking*

- National Youth Advocates Network
- National Children's and Youth Law Centre Board
- Refugee Young People and Justice Issues Working Group of Department of Immigration, Migrant and Indigenous Affairs
- Children and Youth Issues Working Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Police and Service Providers Forum, City of Melbourne
- Youth Services in the CBD Network
- Welfare Rights/ Social Security Working Group of the Federation of Community Legal Centres
- Conference Organising Committee, National Association of Community Legal Centres National Conference 2002 and 2003

## *Key priorities for 2003/2004*

- Employ a Human Rights and Advocacy Officer to expand the level of service delivery in policy, research and law reform
- Establish Youth Action Teams that will provide and promote opportunities for participation by children and young people in Youthlaw's advocacy and law reform work on an ongoing basis

# Youth participation

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## **Youth Participation**

### *Objective*

To promote opportunities for participation by children and young people in Youthlaw's work and strategic direction setting.

### *Our policy*

Youthlaw is committed to the principle of youth participation. This is a multi-faceted concept extending well beyond mere consultation. Youth participation means involving young people in the decision-making processes of the Committee of Management, initiating and supporting Youth Action Teams and directly involving young people in key policy formulation and project implementation. Meaningful participation assists young people in developing leadership capabilities. This is the key difference between participation and consultation. Participation means that adults devolve a degree of power to young people so that they can influence the decisions that affect them. Consultation gives young people less influence because adults ultimately make the decisions. Meaningful participation involves:

- Raising young people's awareness of the social, political and economic issues affecting them

- Providing young people with ongoing support
- Providing young people with a sense of belonging and ownership in relation to decision-making
- Providing young people with a sense that their participation is valued
- Providing adequate resourcing including time, space, funding and information
- Acknowledging the contribution of young people (e.g. reimbursement of costs)
- Acknowledging some of the barriers young people may face (e.g. timing of meetings) and modifying or removing these barriers.

Participation should become part of the organisation's 'culture' and be discussed by the Committee on an ongoing basis by including youth participation as a standing agenda item for example.

#### *Youthlaw achievements 2002/2003*

- Youth Participation policy adopted
- Three young people appointed to the Youthlaw committee of management
- Views of young people obtained about policy and community education issues through surveys
- Involvement in peer education projects about legal issues facing young people

#### *Key priorities for 2003/2004*

- Young people continue to be supported as full voting members on Youthlaw's committee of management
- Youth Action Teams established and resourced that will provide and promote opportunities for participation by children and young people in Youthlaw's advocacy and law reform work on an ongoing basis
- Increase in membership of Youthlaw by young people by conducting targeted membership drives
- Work towards half of the membership of the committee of management being young people by 2005
- Annual review of the youth participation policy

## Sustainability

### Organisation Sustainability

#### *Objective*

To ensure the long term financial viability of Youthlaw and to ensure that Youthlaw is able to operate efficiently and effectively on a day to day basis.

#### *Youthlaw achievements 2002/2003*

- Funding
  - A further commitment of 2 years seed funding from Blake Dawson Waldron
  - \$22,269 of new recurrent funding from the State Government
  - Execution of a 3 year service agreement for the State and Commonwealth funding
- Administrative and professional infrastructure
  - Development of a comprehensive written policies and procedures manual in compliance with the service standards required by the State and Commonwealth service agreements
  - Administration support provided by staff and volunteers at Blake Dawson Waldron
  - New computers and furniture obtained
  - IT support provided by FINREA Computing Services and Blake Dawson Waldron
  - Desktop publishing and related marketing support provided Blake Dawson Waldron
  - Library resources and relevant professional memberships maintained
  - Volunteer induction and ongoing training conducted
  - Stationery supplied by Blake Dawson Waldron
  - Publicity materials maintained including Youthlaw's web-site, stickers, service brochure and posters
  - Access to interpreters maintained
  - Casework and policy research support provided by Blake Dawson Waldron
- Staff training and support
  - Regular developmental worker reviews of staff
  - Attendance at regular professional training and relevant conferences
- Sector networks
  - General Meetings of the Federation of Community Legal Centres
  - Frontyard Team Leader and Service Management Forums

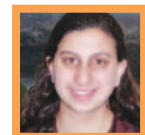
*Key priorities for 2003/2004*

- Maintain current level of service delivery and compliance with the service agreement and accountability mechanisms
- Continued work towards obtaining adequate recurrent funding from government for our core services
- Implementation of CLSIS – the new client database and information system
- Increase in Youthlaw’s active membership

## Committee

### **Youthlaw Committee of Management**

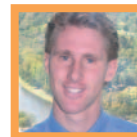
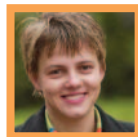
- Alex Markham, until March 2003
- Andrew Dodds
- Carol Ransley
- Gavin Green, Chair
- John Finalyson
- Natalie Bannister (appointed by Blake Dawson Waldron), Public Officer
- Phil McKeiver (appointed by Blake Dawson Waldron), Treasurer
- Robyn Hamilton (appointed by Federation of Community Legal Centres), until June 2003
- Cindy Peachey from June 2003
- Michael Apout from June 2003
- Zeinab Fakih from June 2003



## Staff

### Youthlaw Staff

- Sarah Nicholson, Director
- Anna Radonic, Principal Solicitor
- Kristen Hilton, secondee solicitor to October 2002
- Alec White, secondee solicitor from October 2002 to March 2003
- Simon Ellis, secondee solicitor from March 2003
- Nicole King, Reception/Administration worker, September 2002 – March 2003
- Rod Baker, casual Reception/Administration worker, April/May 2003



## Volunteers

### Youthlaw Volunteers

- Jo Poulton, bookkeeper to December 2002
- Meghan McBain, desk-top publishing
- Elaine Brown, IT support
- *Legal volunteers* – Will Crawford, Fiona Hammond, Phil Sharp, Amelia Tooher, Alec White, Nik Dragojlovic, Kimberley Pritchard, Tom Cordiner, Michael Paphazy, Merinda Logie, Cathy Pappas, Sophie Osborn
- *Administration volunteers* – Michele Kinder, Amanda Shaw, Caroline Beaumaris, Suzanne Pantan, Carmen Debono, Kate Harris, Ros Loveday, Kate Williams

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## Youthlaw Financial Report

for the Year Ended 30 June 2003

report

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# Annual Report

2002 - 2003

## Statement of Financial Position As at 30 June 2003

	2003	2002
	\$	\$
<b>EQUITY</b>		
Committed Fund	79,943	51,448
<b>TOTAL EQUITY</b>	<u>79,943</u>	<u>51,448</u>
Represented By:		
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Petty Cash	–	(83)
Macaulay Credit Co-op S1 A/C	975	434
Macaulay Credit Co-op S30 A/C	85,325	63,839
Sundry Debtors	–	616
	<u>86,300</u>	<u>64,806</u>
<b>NON CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Office Furniture & Equipment	13,143	–
Less Accumulated Depreciation	2,532	–
	<u>10,611</u>	<u>–</u>
	10,611	–
<b>INVESTMENTS</b>		
Shareholdings	5	5
	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u>96,916</u>	<u>64,811</u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Provision for Annual Leave	8,752	5,336
Provision for Long Service Leave	2,925	1,119
GST Payable	1,346	1,191
Accrued Expenses	–	1,511
PAYG Payable	3,376	3,780
Superannuation Payable	574	426
	<u>16,973</u>	<u>13,363</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u>16,973</u>	<u>13,363</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u><u>79,943</u></u>	<u><u>51,448</u></u>




# Annual Report

2002 - 2003

## Statement of Financial Performance for the Year ended 30 June 2003

	2003	2002
	\$	\$
<b>INCOME</b>		
Interest Received	2,099	601
Blakes' Donation	70,000	75,000
Fundraising/Donation	100	28,800
Costs Recovery & Retained	3,659	-
Community Legal Education	381	-
Other Revenue	38,653	7,840
Government Subsidies	69,139	50,769
	<u>184,031</u>	<u>163,010</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Accountancy Fees	1,425	1,111
ASC Lodgement Fees	63	-
Audit Fees	122	400
Bank Charges	35	85
Client Disbursements	1,354	-
Depreciation	2,532	-
Employees' Amenities	203	42
Equipment Purchases	419	131
Leave Provision Adjustments	-	6,455
Insurance	1,006	-
Library	462	225
Light & Power	153	-
Moving Expenses	438	-
Memberships	1,524	664
Payroll Service Charges	349	-
Projects	-	298
Practicing Certificate	400	400
Postage	570	267
Printing	999	1,291
Publicity	609	-
Rent	31,200	28,800
Salaries	101,364	58,406
Security Costs	4	-
Staff Recruitment	91	-
Staff Training	2,007	582
Stationery/Photocopying	1,256	3,875
Structural Maintenance	-	393
Sundry Expenses	253	576
Superannuation Contributions	7,547	4,757
Telecommunications	9,681	2,333
Travelling Expenses	863	155
Workcover	476	311
	<u>167,405</u>	<u>111,557</u>
<b>OPERATING PROFIT</b>	<u><b>16,626</b></u>	<u><b>51,453</b></u>

## Audit Report



**J L COLLYER & PARTNERS**  
ACCOUNTANTS & AUDITORS

1st Floor  
63 Kingsway  
Glen Waverley Vic 3150  
PO Box 340  
Glen Waverley Vic 3150  
Phone: 03 9580 0211  
Fac: 03 9561 5497  
Email: jcollyer@iiccardo.com.au

**INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT**  
- To the Members of *Young People's Legal Centre Inc.*

**SCOPE**

We have audited the attached special purpose financial report comprising the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Financial Performance, and the Statement of Cash Flows, of **Young People's Legal Right Centre Inc.** for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003. The Committee of Management is responsible for the financial report and have determined that the accounting policies used are consistent with the financial reporting requirements of the constitution and are appropriate to meet the needs of the members. We have conducted an independent audit of the financial report in order to express an opinion on it to the members of **Young People's Legal Rights Centre Inc.** No opinion is expressed as to whether the accounting policies used are appropriate to the needs of the members. The financial report has been prepared for distribution to members for the purpose of fulfilling the Committee of Management's financial reporting requirements under the constitution. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report or on the financial report to which it relates to any person other than the members, or for any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Our audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial report and evaluation of significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion whether, in all material respects, the financial report is presented fairly in accordance with the accounting policies described in Note 1 to the financial statements. (These policies do not require the application of all Accounting Standards an UIG Consensus Views). The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

*J. L. Collyer*


**Audit Opinion**

In our opinion, the financial report presents fairly in accordance with the accounting policies to the financial statements the financial position of **Young People's Legal Rights Centre Inc.** as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2003, and the results of its operations for the year then ended.

Date: 26-9-2003 Firm: J. L. COLLYER & PARTNERS

Partner: J. L. COLLYER

DIRECTORS  
JANET L. COLLYER FCPA LIORNI R. ARNOLD CA B.BUS ANTHONY E.G. FIEDLER CA B.BUS



Chartered Accountants

# inside back cover

## Questions

### We can answer questions about:

- *Getting around* – rules for riders and drivers
- *Public transport* – dealing with transit police, inspectors and fines
- *Police* – your rights on the street, going to Court, what to do about unfair treatment
- *Security Guards* – when can they search you and your bags?
- *Alcohol and drugs* – smoking, marijuana. What does the law say?
- *Family issues* – your parents are breaking up, who listens to you?
- *What to do about violence or abuse at home* – when can you leave home?
- *Relationships* – laws about sex, becoming a young parent and personal safety
- *Schools* – suspension, expulsion, harassment from other students
- *Discrimination* – what is it, when is it unlawful and what can you do about it?
- *Financial support* – what if Centrelink says you are not eligible for benefits or cancels your benefit?
- *Working* – do young casual workers have any rights?

Young Peoples Legal Rights Centre  
Inc No A0041616E  
ABN 12 794 935 230

[www.youthlaw.asn.au](http://www.youthlaw.asn.au)

Tel 9611 2412 Fax 9620 3622  
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Designed by Meghan McBain – Visual Communications Coordinator,  
Blake Dawson Waldron

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