



Central Highlands
Community
Legal Centre

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Community Legal
Centre

15 Dawson Street N, Ballarat
www.chdc.org.au

Press Release

Can we discuss the elephant in the room?

Opening a dialogue about an often sensitive topic

It is hard to ignore an elephant in the room, yet for many family violence victims, the elephant is never discussed. Central Highlands Community Legal Centre, with the generous financial assistance of the Grampians Integrated Family Violence Committee, has turned the metaphor into a reality with the arrival of the life sized baby elephant artwork.

“Family violence is not spoken about boldly enough in public. It is treated in hushed tones, behind closed doors. Our interest is in starting the conversation and helping people feel comfortable discussing their experiences and seeking immediate and longer term assistance” said Project Worker Jessica Frost-Camilleri.

The life sized baby elephant is currently residing in the Central Highlands Community Legal Centre and will spend time travelling in Ballarat amongst local service providers, finishing it’s journey during White Ribbon Day week with a display at Stockland Wendouree.

The elephant was created as an artwork by women of Mildura affected by family violence. Half the pachyderm is painted black and white, featuring pictures and messages of isolation and loneliness that victims feel when not speaking of their experiences.

By contrast, the other half of the elephant is bright, colourful and depicts the hope and relief of receiving assistance.

“There is often a perception of family violence being such a personal issue between family members, people begin to feel it is only happening to them, adding to their isolation. We want people to know that they are not alone and that there is help out there.”

Central Highlands Community Legal Centre provides free legal information and advice by appointment Monday to Friday and a duty lawyer service to the Family Violence Court at the Ballarat Law Courts. Bookings with a community lawyer can be made on 5331 5999 or by visiting the office at 15 Dawson Street North, Ballarat.

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more

Elephant in Your Room?

About the Elephant

The large elephant started life as a community art project and was produced by a group of women who had survived living with family violence. The elephant has been beautifully decorated in two halves. The left hand side is black and white and depicts the downside of abuse and the devastation it causes to people's lives. The right hand side is colourful and depicts the upside and joy of recovery, of building trust and respectful, strong relationships. The carousel is a common theme to both sides, both abuse and recovery, and highlights the journey for survivors and encourages hope for those currently experiencing family violence.

Why an Elephant?

"Elephant in the room" is an English metaphorical expression for an obvious truth that is being ignored or goes unaddressed. Those of us that work in this area appreciate the scale of the problem, the devastating effects it has on individuals, families and communities and the reluctance of many to acknowledge the issue. The imagery of the elephant in the room is ideal for starting discussions and raising awareness of family violence. The elephant itself stands out and attracts attention wherever it is exhibited and acts as a catalyst for the campaign.

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