youth
LEGAL SERVICE

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Strengthening Access to Justice in WA

Merger of Services between Encompass Legal and Community Services (ELCS), Wheatbelt Community Legal Centre (WCLC) and Youth Legal Service (YLS)

PUBLIC NOTICE: Strengthening Access to Justice in WA – Merger of Services between Encompass Legal and Community Services (ELCS), Wheatbelt Community Legal Centre (WCLC) and Youth Legal Service (YLS)

We wish to announce Wheatbelt Community Legal Centre Inc. and Youth Legal Service Inc. will join ELCS in a strategic merger effective 1 April 2026.

The decision to merge was made following thorough consideration by the Boards and leadership teams of all three organisations, with particular focus on the needs of vulnerable clients and the long-term benefit that combining resources and expertise will achieve. Alignment of values and purpose, service sustainability, and strengthening regional and specialist legal support were key considerations in this decision.

“The merger reflects our shared commitment to improving access to justice across Western Australia,” said Encompass Legal and Community Services Chair Jennifer Hannan. “By bringing together our strengths, we are building a more integrated and resilient service that is better positioned to respond to growing community need.”

“Regional communities deserve strong, locally informed legal support,” said Wheatbelt Chair, Aaron Dewse.

“This merger ensures services in the Wheatbelt region remain sustainable and embedded within a strengthened organisation.”

“Children and young people require specialist legal assistance and advocacy,” said Youth Legal Service Chair, Deborah Colvin. “Through this partnership, statewide youth-focused expertise will remain central within a more robust organisational framework and increased ability to enhance and expand services to young people.”

All current services will continue following the merger, with the service names Wheatbelt Community Legal Centre and Youth Legal Services continuing to be used and promoted to the public, ensuring continuity of support for clients across Western Australia.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Boards and leadership teams, staff, funders and the communities we serve for their continued support throughout this process.

ELCS warmly welcomes the WCLC and YLS teams into ELCS as we form a new united team. ELCS also welcomes the Chairpersons of both WCLC and YLS as board members at ELCS to ensure continuity of corporate governance knowledge moving forward.

For further information, please contact: info@elcs.org.au