

# Lawyer says education the key to tackling issue



**HERE TO HELP:** Lawyers Deborah Fisher and Cam Bloye believe educating young people can help to reduce instances of crime and violence in Wangaratta.

A LOCAL family lawyer has hailed early intervention and education among young people as key strategies to reducing crime and violence in Wangaratta.

Youth and family violence lawyer, Cam Bloye, offers free legal advice to young people in Wangaratta as part of Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) and NESAY's Invisible Hurdles project.

"The overwhelming majority of young people caught up in the criminal justice system have experienced some sort of family violence or childhood trauma," Mr Bloye told the Chronicle.

"By trying to break that cycle of intergenerational poverty and abuse through helping people at a young age, we can hopefully stop that pattern of violence that so often happens again and



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again in the same families."

My Bloye said he hoped that by helping young people deal with their legal issues, he could prevent civil or family matters from escalating into a criminal matter.

"Many young people see the law as something that's done to them and they feel that they don't really have a lot of agency in the legal system," he said.

"By working with NESAY, we're reaching a lot of vulnerable people around Wangaratta that otherwise wouldn't get access to a lawyer or other support services."

HRCLS lawyer and communications officer

Deborah Fisher said she agreed that early intervention and education were essential in breaking the cycle of family violence.

"By educating them about the law and legal system, they know where to get help so it stops matters from getting worse," Ms Fisher said.

"What we're seeing is the impact on these kids who are vulnerable because of their experiences and that adds to their suspicion of authority and the legal system."

Mr Bloye said he has seen "very positive results for young people in the North East, including Wangaratta".

He urged anyone in need of free, confidential legal assistance to visit him at NESAY on Thursdays.

Otherwise call HRCLS on 1800 918 377 or NESAY on 5720 2201.