



PROJECT CONTINUES: NESAY chief executive officer Leah Waring said the funding would allow more vulnerable young people to access free legal support in a familiar and comfortable environment. PHOTO: Mel Guy

Government continues legal support for youth

YOUNG people working with North East Support and Action for Youth (NESAY) will continue to have access to free legal aid thanks to a Department of Justice and Regulation funding boost.

Victorian Attorney-General Martin Pakula announced \$200,000 in funding across two years for the Invisible Hurdles project.

The Hume Riverina Community Legal Service (HRCLS) integrated justice partnership program provides legal advice to vulnerable young people.

NESAY chief executive officer Leah Waring said the project made the legal



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system and interacting with lawyers less intimidating.

"This funding means young people who are accessing our support can see a lawyer on site and our staff can receive advice and support to help other young people too," she said.

"It's fantastic for our community that youths can access free legal support from this project in a space where they feel safe and respected.

"The lawyers from the

program are seen as part of the NESAY team and that really helps young people's confidence to be able to go and speak with the lawyer.

"It has really strengthened our approach so young people are getting the services they need with a smooth and seamless transition."

Ms Waring said NESAY was looking to introduce a group program within the project to help young people build independent living skills and provide a legal perspective to those conversations.

HRCLS principal lawyer Sarah Rodgers said the welcome funding highlighted the importance of integrated

justice partnerships to help young people experiencing family violence.

"We're excited about continuing this important work with our partners into the future," she said.

"We know young people will not walk into a lawyer's office off the street, so being on-site with services they trust has been crucial for the success of the project.

"The sooner they can get help, the higher the chance of a positive outcome."

The Invisible Hurdles project stage one final report and evaluation is currently being produced and is expected to be released in October.