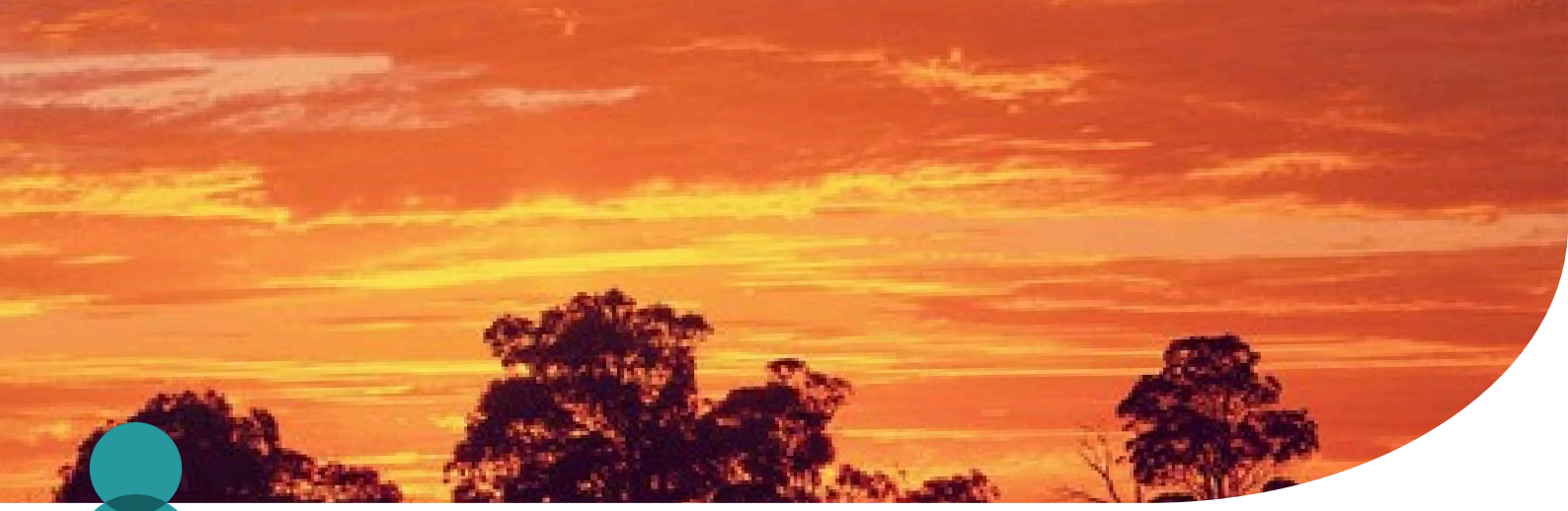


Services are accessible

# Margaret's story: The power of being heard

At 73, Margaret* knew what she wanted: protection from family violence without losing contact with her daughter.

The First Nations woman from the Goulburn Valley had experienced violence from her adult daughter. Police applied for an intervention order, but Margaret didn't want her daughter banned from visiting her home.

Police argued that Margaret had a cognitive impairment and that her wishes should carry less weight when the court decided what protections she needed.

Margaret connected with ARC Justice through its Health Justice Partnership with Rumbalara Aboriginal Co-operative in Shepparton. Lawyers from the Goulburn Valley Community Legal Centre represented her, working closely with the Rumbalara worker supporting her.



** Name changed*

The case became about more than an intervention order. It was also about Margaret's right to make decisions about her own life. ARC Justice challenged the evidence of cognitive impairment. The magistrate found it unreliable and refused to accept it. Police then agreed to a more limited order.

The final order protected Margaret from family violence while respecting her wish to remain in contact with her daughter, including visits to her home. Margaret also remained connected to support through Rumbalara and her lawyer. The relationship that helped her access legal help continued. She received protection without losing her right to be heard.