



ALAN MANLY

(Supplied)

End of the nightmare

By Sumeyya Ilanbey

A measly \$115 stripped Alan Manly of his life savings, his time and his emotional well-being.

About 20 years ago, Mr Manly, originally from Bacchus Marsh, became involved with a fraudster, and a \$115 invoice from the man for photocopying ended up in long-running legal action.

Ten years and many court cases later, Mr Manly finally walked away from the man who had tied down him and his family.

His book, *When there are too many lawyers, there is no justice*, tells the story of his life, which, he said, was "virtually a smoking ruin".

"Writing the book was a fulfilling, cathartic journey," Mr Manly said. "After nine drafts – and each draft I read three times – I finally stopped crying."

After paying more than \$100,000 to lawyers, Mr Manly finally decided to represent himself in court. The now-Sydney resident was lucky enough to survive with his marriage intact, but he discourages others from following the path

he took. "Would I recommend it? I wouldn't recommend representing yourself," he said.

"Mine wasn't a story of principle.

"I was trapped by a person who wouldn't get out of my life, even though I wanted to get rid of him."

Mr Manly dropped out of Bacchus Marsh High School, now known as Bacchus Marsh College, in year 9 before working as a postman, television repairman, computer engineer, sales and marketing assistant. He now works in the education sector.

Cops, medicos in call-out link

An initiative that led to mental health clinicians joining forces with police to respond to mental health call-outs is to get a funding boost.

The Mid-West Police and Clinician Emergency Response (PACER) initiative – a partnership of Western Health, Brimbank and Melton police, Macedon Ranges and North Western Melbourne Medicare Local, NorthWestern Mental Health, Melbourne Health and Ambulance Victoria – will share in \$2.729 million of state government funding. The program, launched last month, allows police to call on the PACER unit when responding to any situation where someone is experiencing a mental health crisis. It will also link patients to relevant support services.

State Health Minister Mary Wooldridge said the extra funding would deliver a more targeted and timely response to patients needing urgent medical health support and reduce pressure on police, ambulances and emergency departments.

"These initiatives will ensure that people with a mental illness receive the most appropriate and least restrictive care in a timely manner," she said.

Western Health is one of 12 mental health services to get the funding, which is part of a \$15.1 million state government promise to roll out a mental health and police response program across Victoria over the next four years.

Charlene Macaulay