

Education Act Prosecutions Working Group Report to NLAf – May 2016

The Education Act (EA) Prosecutions working group met on 26 May 2016. Key issues discussed included:

Letter to NSW Ombudsmans Office

After the last NLAf Plenary meeting a letter was sent to the NSW Ombudsman's Office requesting assistance to address concerns identified by the Working Group, namely:

- aiding the development of inter-agency principles or protocols to address truancy and school non-attendance across NSW;
- evaluating whether the current programs and procedures are effective in improving school attendance; and
- considering whether agencies might be able to more effectively work together to achieve better outcomes for children and young people with chronic truancy or low school attendance.

Data Analysis and Mapping of Services

An approach will be made to the Department of Education for current data on EA matters and where these matters are being listed. A new Compulsory Schooling Order list at Mt Druitt Local Court was discussed. This list has been established to encourage greater attendance by families involved in EA matters.

We were advised about the work of the [Clontarf Foundation](#) addressing truancy with Aboriginal boys in regional NSW through linking participation in their sporting programs with school attendance.

Judicial Officer Education

A letter has been drafted for the NLAf Chair to the Chief Magistrate asking that information be circulated to Magistrates reminding them that legal assistance is available for EA matters and to ask that they refer parents/children to the duty lawyer if they attend unrepresented.

A meeting was held with the Education Director at the Judicial Commission of NSW to discuss ways that issues around EA matters could be promoted to judicial officers through their publications. We have been invited to prepare an article for their monthly Judicial Officer Bulletin and contribute to an update to their Children's Court Handbook.

Annmarie Lumsden

Director – Strategic Planning and Policy, Legal Aid NSW

Chair NLAf Educations Act Prosecutions Working Group, 26 May 2016.