



## NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum

### Report to NLA

LIRF met on 13 July 2016

#### **Document Accessibility Toolbar (DAT): Leona Zumbo, Senior Digital Inclusion Consultant, Vision Australia**

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/dat>

Leona gave a comprehensive presentation on the development and testing of the Digital Accessibility Tool, which was developed by Vision Australia. The tool was developed with funding from the Australian Communication Consumer Action Network (ACCAN). It provides a range of default and automated tools which work for all disability or age-related impairments. It is free to download and is a standard add-in for Microsoft Word.

The problem that led to the development of the DAT is that currently there are no global accessibility standards for documents produced in Word. The intention is that this tool will assist document authors to meet their obligations under disability law (and the business need to be as inclusive as possible in order to extend reach) to create accessible Word documents.

All functions for accessibility are located in one Ribbon. Each function has a tool tip which provides a brief description of what the function does and how this improves document accessibility. If the author requires something more comprehensive they can select the help button to navigate to a webpage containing more Word accessibility information.

In developing the DAT, Vision Australia undertook research, a task analysis and survey of clients, and now as part of the process of developing the DAT they are conducting extensive user testing to assist in refining the tool and making it as useful as possible for users.

Leona demonstrated the tool and responded to questions from the group. The DAT is still in beta phase. The DAT team is happy for anyone interested in using the tool to download it:

<https://www.visionaustralia.org/business-and-professionals/digital-access-consulting/resources/document-accessibility-toolbar#download>

You are encouraged to try it out and log any bugs you find with Vision Australia. The final version will be released when they are comfortable with the testing process.

For more information about the DAT and its progress, you can follow the DAT movement on Twitter with #VisionAusDAT, subscribe to the Digital Access e newsletter by emailing [digitalaccess@visionaustralia.org](mailto:digitalaccess@visionaustralia.org), and find out more about the work of Vision Australia's Digital Accessibility Team at <https://www.visionaustralia.org/dat>.

*(In a related matter, Community Legal Centres Queensland (formerly QAILS) has announced that the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department will be providing funding to integrate [browsealoud](#) into some of their members websites. This will allow people with vision problems or from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds to easily access the websites of ten Queensland CLCs as well as the CLCQ website. Thanks Kerry Wright for drawing my attention to this).*



## NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum

### Report to NLAF

#### **New work in legal information and referral**

The various agencies attending provided information about newly produced legal information resources and initiatives for enhancing legal referral:

#### **Legal Aid NSW**

- Legal Aid has a new Family Lawyer in Broken Hill.
- A satellite office was recently opened in Albury to service the Riverina-Murray area.
- Legal Aid is starting a new remote preferred provider scheme in Broken Hill and Moree for children in care matters, and another scheme for parents in care matters.
- The new Domestic Violence unit is based in Legal Aid's Liverpool office, covering Bankstown, Liverpool and Fairfield.
- There is a new client authority form to allow people to make enquiries about grants of legal aid on their client's behalf.
- Legal Aid's grants letters have been redone in plain English as part of their client service strategy. Legal Aid NSW is looking for volunteers for user testing – contact Clancy if you can help [clancy.vonschoenberg@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:clancy.vonschoenberg@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)
- There is a new CLSD region in Moree. The Aboriginal Legal Service has been appointed as the Regional Coordination Service there.
- The Regional Outreach Clinic Program (ROCP) is currently being reconfigured: new ROCP clinic locations will be explored in Tweed Heads and Goulburn. Legal Aid has closed down Lightning Ridge and Brewarrina clinics due to expanded Legal Aid outreach in those regions.
- Legal Aid recently undertook their annual Law Week events in Bourke and Brewarrina. An upcoming outreach event to Walgett is planned for August/September.
- The Children's Legal Service is doing some work in CLSD regions on issues around cyberbullying, sexting etc.

#### **Women's Legal Service NSW (WLS)**

- WLS is now running its series of full day seminars (for which they charge).
- Ask Lois [www.asklois.org.au](http://www.asklois.org.au) is broadening its scope to include presentations of research relevant to the Ask Lois audience.
- WLS is commencing joint CLE outreaches with Legal Aid to inmates at Silverwater.
- There is a new handbook on sexual assault in the pipeline.
- WLS staff are working on revising chapters for the next edition of The Law Handbook.

#### **NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF)**

- Kerry Wright introduced herself as the current NLAF Project Manager and gave an overview of the NLAF website <http://www.nlaf.org.au/>.
- Kerry is active with posting news in the "What's New" bar on the home page, so please send through to her any news you have that would be relevant to the NLAF membership: Kerry Wright [kwright@lawfoundation.net.au](mailto:kwright@lawfoundation.net.au).



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#### Department of Justice (Kellie Blakemore)

- Kellie informed us about the civil justice strategy that is currently being developed, under the leadership of Maureen Tangney.
- Traditionally, little attention has been paid to civil law matters.
- A collaboration group has been formed which is currently assisting with identifying priorities for the strategy. This is due to be finalised by the end of this year.
- There are currently four themes emerging: data on civil justice via NSW Courts and Tribunals – the Law and Justice Foundation is working on a review of this data; housing and debt; “Simple Pathways” – getting people to the right legal assistance quickly and early dispute resolution (with housing and debt likely to be sub-themes).
- Kellie is very happy to meet with any members of LIRF who have any thoughts on these matters. You can contact Kellie at [kellie.blakemore@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kellie.blakemore@justice.nsw.gov.au).

#### Court Services NSW (Belinda George)

- Court Services are currently working with Justice Policy on domestic violence related projects in two Courts in NSW. Defendants are being reminded via text message of their Court dates.
- Plain language AVOs have also been introduced in an attempt to reduce breaches.
- The Sheriff's Office recently introduced a new debt enforcement process in which clients are contacted ahead of enforcement proceedings to discuss options (such as time to pay arrangements). Just under 50% of writs are being resolved without the need for the Sheriff to attend.

#### Australian Pro Bono Centre (Sue Hunt)

- New editions of the Pro Bono manual and the What Works In Pro Bono manual will be launched in October. They will be published in hard and electronic versions.
- There will be free copies available for the legal assistance sector. If you would like copies you should let Sue know by emailing her on [sue.hunt@probonocentre.org.au](mailto:sue.hunt@probonocentre.org.au).

#### Justice Connect (Savi Manii)

- Not-for-profit Law recently received core funding from the NSW Government allowing it to expand its staffing. The information hub <http://www.nfplaw.org.au/> is currently being nationalised to extend its reach beyond NSW and Victoria.
- Justice Connect is running a project with Volunteering NSW that is developing some resources to go on both of their websites. These will include practical tools.
- Justice Connect's training program is currently going through the Crunch program, run by Social Traders <http://www.socialtraders.com.au/what-we-do/dsp-landing.cfm?loadref=127>.
- The referral service is setting up a new referral pathway for those experiencing unfair dismissal.
- The self-representation service is offering one hour advice sessions for self-represented people who have migration judicial review matters (they currently do this for employment and bankruptcy matters).



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- The MOSAIC service is being scaled back to a telephone service within the referral service, due to funding constraints.

#### Law and Justice Foundation (Helen Johnston)

- Helen introduced herself as the Project Manager for this year's Justice Awards and the Foundation's program of events for its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017.
- If you have any thoughts about anyone who you think should be recognised for their efforts to increase access to justice via a Justice award nomination next year, let Helen know now and she'll work with you on the nomination at the relevant time.

#### LIAC (Philippa Scarf and Catherine Bryant)

- An updated edition of the Voting And Elections Hot Topics is on the Find Legal Answers website at [http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/hot\\_topics/voting\\_and\\_elections/index.html](http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/hot_topics/voting_and_elections/index.html).
- LIAC is currently updating the online edition of the Tenants' Rights Manual with changes to the law.
- LIAC was busy on social media during Law Week promoting events in public libraries. They tripled their audience on Twitter and had a huge increase on their Facebook page.
- Philippa mentioned that the State Library has the accessibility tools JAWS and ReadIt, which is a scanner that reads books for clients with low vision. These tools are not currently in public libraries, but are available at the State Library for anyone to use.

The next meeting of LIRF will take place in October 2016.

#### Jane Kenny

Grants and Legal Information Manager, Law and Justice Foundation

Convenor

Legal Information and Referral Forum

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