



## NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum Report to NLA

LIRF met on 11 October 2017

### **Heather Anderson, Senior Legal Officer, Legal Aid NSW: Men's behaviour change programs**

Heather is a criminal defence lawyer at Legal Aid. She spoke to us about a project that she ran that came out of her work with perpetrators of domestic and family violence. The project was developed from internal discussion on what the Criminal Law Division could do to contribute to Legal Aid's domestic violence (DV) strategy, as well as the NSW Premier's priority to reduce DV re-offending.

The project was informed by research undertaken by Victoria Legal Aid. (See the paper *Characteristics of respondents charged with breach of family violence intervention orders* <http://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/about-us/what-we-do/research-and-analysis/characteristics-of-respondents-charged-with-breach-of-family-violence-intervention-orders>). The project also drew on findings from internal work on the usefulness of additional legal support for DV respondents.

The early focus of the project was on the lawyers working with that client group, and providing resources to assist those lawyers in this work. The focus has since shifted to a more direct client focus. Heather outlined a number of challenges in working with this client group, including limited time at Court, the difficulty of follow up contact, and low/no literacy levels which affects the provision of written material. She also noted that most DV re-offending occurs within two days of the first offence, so by the time the client gets to Court it's too late to give them advice about re-offending.

Heather noted that men's behaviour change programs are an important part of this work. These clients will likely also benefit from family law advice, Work and Development Orders, help with tenancy matters and referrals to mental health and drug and alcohol programs.

### **Joshua Scotland, CLE Lawyer, Legal Aid NSW: the Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme**

Josh works in the CLE unit at Legal Aid and is leading Legal Aid's work on this Scheme. In brief, the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme started on 1 July 2017 and will finish on 30 June 2022. It will provide reparations and an apology to Stolen Generations survivors who were removed by, or came into the care of, the Aborigines Protection Board or the Aborigines Welfare Board before 20 March 1969.

Stolen Generation survivors can apply for a payment of \$75,000 by submitting an application form and copies of two forms of identification. People who are eligible for the Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme are also automatically eligible for a Funeral Assistance Fund payment of \$7,000.

Legal Aid NSW has prepared resources for the use of lawyers in Community Legal Centres and the Aboriginal Legal Service who are delivering education about the Scheme. (*Legal Aid NSW's tip sheet for lawyers wanting to deliver a session directly to members of the Stolen Generations has previously been circulated to NLA members*).



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The ATO and the Department of Social Services have determined that payments to Stolen Generations survivors from the NSW Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme are not taxed and do not affect pensions or other Centrelink payments. An Aboriginal Affairs fact sheet on this can be found at this link: <http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/pdfs/stolen-generations/FACT-SHEET-5-NSW-Stolen-Generations-Reparations-Scheme-and-Funeral-Assistance-Fund-Centrelink-and-Tax-Information.pdf>.

Other Aboriginal Affairs fact sheets, and the application form for the scheme can be found here: <http://www.aboriginalaffairs.nsw.gov.au/stolen-generations/reparations-scheme>.

Legal Aid NSW's Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities (1800 793 017) is designed so that members of the Stolen Generations can speak to a free lawyer with as few hurdles as possible. By calling that number members of the Stolen Generations will likely speak to an Aboriginal member of staff in the first instance.

The Law Society of NSW (9926 0138) has agreed to prepare wills for members of the Stolen Generations for free or at a substantially reduced cost.

### **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:

#### **Ashurst**

<https://www.ashurst.com/en/about-us/responsible-business/pro-bono/>

- Wills days for vulnerable clients continue around NSW. There is increasing coordination among the firms willing to do this work on a pro bono basis, resulting in greater capacity. More mid-tier firms are joining this work.
- Jilly Field has recently joined Ashurst's pro bono practice. Jilly started the law reform hub (<http://www.probonocentre.org.au/apbn/sep-2015/law-reform-hub-supporting-voice-community-advocates/>) and is continuing work through that channel at Ashurst. You are welcome to contact Jilly for assistance with your law reform projects.
- Ashurst is building up a library of webinars on various legal education topics for lawyers.
- Ashurst has recently joined the Financial Inclusion Action Plans initiative, led by Good Shepherd Microfinance. You can read more about this work here: <http://goodshepherdmicrofinance.org.au/services/financial-inclusion-action-plans-fiap/>.

#### **Australian Pro Bono Centre**

<http://www.probonocentre.org.au/>

- The Centre recently launched their guide for corporate in-house lawyers wishing to do pro bono legal work. This has been followed with a busy program of work with large corporates who have expressed interest in their legal teams participating. Contact Sue Hunt for potential referrals.
- The Centre is ramping up its' research program. They are developing a research agenda in partnership with the National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC).



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- As part of this work, the Centre is also setting up a LinkedIn group in order to build a community of interest in their research agenda. Sue is contacting everyone who has expressed interest in joining this community. You are welcome to contact Sue on [sue.hunt@probonocentre.org.au](mailto:sue.hunt@probonocentre.org.au) if you would like further information and/or to join.

### **Civil Justice Strategy, Department of Justice**

<http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/justicepolicy>

- The Civil Justice Strategy team is currently working on the Review of CLC Services which is being conducted by Alan Cameron.
- More information is also available on the Review's website here: [http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/justicepolicy/Pages/lpclr/lpclr\\_consultation/community-legal-centre-services-review.aspx](http://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/justicepolicy/Pages/lpclr/lpclr_consultation/community-legal-centre-services-review.aspx). Anyone with an interest is welcome to make a submission. Submissions closed on Monday 23 October 2017. A report is due to be provided to the Attorney General by mid December 2017.

### **Seniors Rights Service**

<http://seniorsrightsservice.org.au/>

- Nalika circulated information about the 5<sup>th</sup> National Elder Abuse Conference, *Together Making Change*, which will take place in Sydney on 19-20 February 2018. Further information can be found here: <http://togethertakingchange.org.au/>.
- Seniors Rights Service is currently working on a submission to the retirement village industry review.

### **LawAccess NSW**

<http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/>

- LawAccess NSW has produced two new Auslan videos in partnership with The Deaf Society of NSW, called Need Legal Help? <http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/Pages/Languages/lawaccess-auslan.aspx>. One video is in traditional Auslan and the other is in Auslan with pictures.
- LawAccess NSW staff are currently working on a new topic for the Representing Yourself section of the website, on how to deal with noise problems.
- LawAccess NSW recently won the national "Best Government Contact Centre" award at the Annual Government Contact Centre Summit in the "over 30 seats" category. The service was acknowledged as an industry leader in customer relationship management, process improvement strategies and customer feedback strategies. Congratulations LawAccess!

### **Law and Justice Foundation**

<http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/>

- The Foundation will shortly publish a paper and an infographic on fines.
- As part of the evaluation of the REACH OUT project, implemented by the Mid North Coast Community Legal Centre, Melanie Kallmier developed a useful checklist for setting up a legal outreach using video conference. You can download the checklist either in PDF here: [http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/grants/\\$file/Outreach\\_by\\_video\\_checklist.pdf](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/grants/$file/Outreach_by_video_checklist.pdf) or in Word here <http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/grants/products>.



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### **Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC), State Library of NSW**

<http://legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/>

- A new version of *A Quick Guide To Drugs And Alcohol* is now available from Drug Info @ Your Library <https://yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publications/Pages/a-quick-guide-to-drugs-and-alcohol.aspx>.
- Copies will be in public libraries.
- You can order copies of the publication at no cost from the Yourroom website: <https://yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx>

### **Cooperative Legal Services Delivery (CLSD) program, Legal Aid NSW**

<http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/community-partnerships/cooperative-legal-services-delivery-clsd-program>.

- The CLSD program is thinking about how they can work with their members in the different regions to provide services to defendants in DV matters, in order to reduce re-offending. Some of the ideas include working with that client group to gather information on what they think would assist them and at what point in their “justice journey”. Kate will keep us informed.

### **Tenants Union of NSW**

<https://www.tenants.org.au/tu/>

- The TU is partnering with the Ethnic Communities Council to deliver ten “Know Your Rights As a Tenant” workshops for five CALD communities: Chinese (workshops for both Cantonese and Mandarin Speakers), Arabic, Korean and Vietnamese. The workshops will be delivered in Sydney over the next ten months.
- The communities were selected on the basis of census data on renter populations in CALD communities in Sydney.
- The workshops will be delivered by multicultural educators who regularly deliver workshops on a range of health, consumer and other issues. TU will train these workers.
- A Multicultural NSW grant is funding the project.

The next meeting of LIRF will take place in March 2018.

### **Jane Kenny**

**Grants and Legal Information Manager, Law and Justice Foundation  
Convenor, Legal Information and Referral Forum (LIRF)**

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