



NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum Report to NLA

LIRF met on 7 March 2018.

Warren Strange, Executive Officer, knowmore: now the Royal Commission has finished its work – what comes next for knowmore and its' clients?

Warren spoke to us about the work of knowmore, a unique, national legal service, providing trauma-informed and holistic services to survivors and other people who engaged with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. knowmore was established in 2013. Warren's presentation covered the following:

- An update on knowmore's work relating to the Royal Commission
- The Commission's recommendations about redress
- Implementation of the Commonwealth Redress Scheme and knowmore's future role.

Of particular interest at this point is the Commonwealth Redress Scheme (CRS). Some of the issues that arise in the way that it has been structured include:

- Eligibility – excluding some survivors due to criminal convictions / non-citizens
- Institutional responsibility
- \$150,000 cap (note that the Royal Commission recommended a cap of \$200,000)
- Acceptance period for offers
- Funder of last resort
- Payment nominees.

There are still many unknowns around the Scheme at this point.

One of the recommendations of the Royal Commission was that the Commonwealth establish a legal advice service for survivors of institutional child sexual abuse. Such a service "should be trauma-informed, collaborative, available, acceptable and high quality." The good news is that knowmore's funding was extended in February 2018 as that is precisely the sort of service it is! The service will continue to help survivors access redress under the CRS.

Warren distributed two information pages to the group: a service snapshot and a data snapshot for NSW. Both of those documents can be found on the knowmore website, at <http://knowmore.org.au/resources/knowmore-service-snapshot-2/>.

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:

Justice Connect

<https://www.justiceconnect.org.au/>

- Justice Connect has recently appointed a new CEO, Chris Povey, who commenced in February.



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- Justice Connect is working with the Department of Financial Services and Innovation in NSW to develop plain language resources to assist non-government organisations who are contracted to deliver services by human services departments (chiefly FACS and Health). This is part of a move to make funding contracts consistent (one model contract). Justice Connect has developed a suite of resources to support the new contracts, including checklists and template sub-contracts. The first tranche of these resources will be available on the Not-for-Profit Law Hub site soon <https://www.nfplaw.org.au/>.

Tenants Union of NSW

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

- A review of the Boarding Houses Act is due later this year. The TU has published their own report on the first five years of operation of the Act: <https://www.tenants.org.au/tu/news/tunsw-report-5-years-boarding-houses-act-2012>.
- The NSW Department of Family and Community Services, Ageing, Disability & Home Care is transferring the management of group homes to the non-government sector. As a result of this change, residents of transferred group homes will get a new landlord. Shelter NSW and the Tenants' Union of NSW collaborated to deliver several forums in February.
- The TU is about to start work on a project funded with an Anniversary grant from the Law and Justice Foundation, which will support tenants whose housing is transferring from Housing NSW to community housing providers. The project will develop a number of resources, document best practice and aim to minimise negative outcomes for tenants.

Australian Pro Bono Centre

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

- The National Pro Bono Aspirational target (at least 35 hours of pro bono legal work per lawyer, per year) celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. The Centre will be reviewing the target with their members.
- As part of the Centre's work with mid-size and emerging firms, they will be running forums in Sydney and Melbourne.
- The Centre will also host a forum this year to review the first twelve months of implementation of their guide for in-house and corporate counsel.
- The Centre's guide on self-care for lawyers providing pro-bono services has been updated. <http://www.probonocentre.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Client-Management-and-Self-care-Guide-February-2018.pdf>.
- The Centre is developing a policy paper on working with interpreters in pro bono matters.
- The Centre is updating its' website with links to legal service providers. The intention is to step clients through how to access assistance. If you are interested in reviewing and testing this section, please email Sue on sue.hunt@probonocentre.org.au.
- Sue updated us on the Centre's developing research program. If you are interested in engaging with this program, please email Sue as above.



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

- LawAccess has appointed a new Community Outreach Coordinator, Christine D’Rozario. Christine will attend future LIRF meetings.
- LawAccess has a new topic in their Representing Yourself section, on Noise. You can find it here: <http://www.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/Pages/representing/Noise/Noise.aspx>.
- The average waiting time for callers is currently under two minutes.

CLCNSW

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

- CLCNSW has recently appointed a new Executive Director, Tim Leach.
- CLCNSW has been using the Foundation’s Collaborative Planning Tool, to assist member Centres find service data for their planning and funding applications.
- The updated CLC Directory is now available as a PDF on the website. You can find it by going to the publications list on this page: http://www.clcnsw.org.au/cb_pages/clcnsw_publications.php.
- CLCNSW recently surveyed member centres on their law reform priorities. They are working through more than 150 suggestions!

CLSD Unit, Legal Aid NSW

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

- Kate alerted us to a page on the Legal Aid website where you can subscribe to any or all of Legal Aid’s four newsletters: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media/legal-aid-news/subscribe-to-legal-aid-news>.
- The CLSD unit has recently completed planning days in six regions around NSW. As part of this work the unit creates a very comprehensive profile for each region (the Law and Justice Foundation provides some of the data used). These regional profiles are available on the CLSD webpage, as above.
- The Unit is also doing some work on assisting AVO defendants to understand and comply with their orders.

CLEW network/Seniors Rights Service (SRS)

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

- The Community Legal Education Workers (CLEW) network (a network of CLCNSW), is planning their annual RRR roadshow, which this year will be hosted by the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre in Katoomba.
- SRS has just hosted the fifth national elder abuse conference.
- SRS is waiting for the report from the Retirement Villages Inquiry to be made public.

Law and Justice Foundation

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



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- Catherine reported that the Foundation has just published an evaluation of the first nine months of operation of Legal Aid NSW's Domestic Violence Unit. You can read the press release here [http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/media/\\$file/MR_2018_DVU_eval.pdf](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/templates/media/$file/MR_2018_DVU_eval.pdf) and download the report here [http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/articleIDs/2F51E86CB837FB128525822700048FB6/\\$file/DVU_eval_Legal_Aid_NSW.pdf](http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/site/articleIDs/2F51E86CB837FB128525822700048FB6/$file/DVU_eval_Legal_Aid_NSW.pdf).
- Catherine also alerted the meeting to the Foundation's new fines paper, with an accompanying infographic, both available here: <http://www.lawfoundation.net.au/ljf/app/&id=D5D375991CE8E1B68525823A000641F4>.
- Jane distributed the latest statistics available for the Prisoners Legal Information Portal (you can see the external version here <http://www.correctiveservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/Pages/CorrectiveServices/related-links/library/legal-info-portal.aspx>). The statistics are attached to these minutes. The Portal is currently being reviewed by the Prisoners Legal Information Team.

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

Jane Kenny

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