

NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum **Report to NLA**

LIRF met online via Zoom on Tuesday 13 October 2020.

The theme of the meeting was the use of technology. The group had a facilitated discussion around how we are now using technology and social media to make referrals and get legal information to priority client groups. Prior to the meeting participants were asked to consider the following questions:

- What has worked for you?
- What have you learnt about using technology and social media to make referrals and to get legal information to your clients?
- What expertise do we need to develop to effectively use technology and social media?

Three services described how they use technology to provide legal information and assistance to their clients.

In the first presentation, Marisa Seeley (Team Leader Adult Programs, Liverpool Library) and Jacqueline Ziesel (Community Legal Education and Community Engagement Officer, SWSLC) discussed their joint Law Week program which live streamed community legal information talks on employment and family law via Facebook.

Points to note included:

- the partnership worked very well, with the library dealing with all the technology aspects and the CLC dealing with the content
- they used Zoom to record and live streamed to Facebook
- community members could submit questions (anonymously) before the session as well as Q&A during the session
- the livestream events had approximately 20 people at each session
- the videos were available on Facebook for 24 hours after the event and each session had approximately 500 further views
- the partnership will continue, with future legal education talks planned.

In the second presentation, Chris Anderson (Operations Manager, Marrickville Legal Centre) discussed MLC's new legal chat bot, noting that:

- the bot is being developed to address the high number of inquiries made about traffic matters
- bots are very good at collecting reliable information from the client quickly and efficiently
- the bot has the ability to present fact sheets and information to the client - they have found that clients who have read this information prior to attending a legal advice appointment are able to make much better use of their appointment time

- the aim is to build the capacity of clients, provide them with a base level of information in order to make decisions
- part of the development process was to go through all the fact sheets which could be provided to make sure the language was clear and that it was information not advice
- the software used is Microsoft Power Virtual Agent – it is reasonably priced and offers not-for-profit pricing
- responses to questions asked by the chat bot go to front desk staff who then decide whether to add the person to a clinic or refer elsewhere
- they plan to integrate the bot with other systems they use.

The legal chat bot is available at the bottom right of the MLC website: www.mlc.org.au

There will be an official launch of the chat bot later this year.

In the last presentation, Jessica McLaren and Natalie Neuman (Community Legal Education Branch, Legal Aid NSW) discussed their program of podcasts, webinars and newsletters.

They noted that:

- they do 1-2 webinars and podcasts per month
- they are currently recording the podcasts at home, using Microsoft Teams, and are keen to do them in collaboration with community legal centres and other agencies
- during the lockdown they shifted to doing more webinars as surveys showed this was what people wanted at that time
- the webinars have evolved over time, they are now using more interview and panel style delivery
- podcasts are also evolving, and they are exploring a style that explores issues rather than giving of legal information – but it does also depend on the topic, one recent example is a podcast “Hard Conversations” which explores elder abuse
- participants can submit questions in advance
- the topics chosen for the webinars are a combination of new laws and subjects requested by participants
- surveys are sent by the webinar software, and they also survey people via their fortnightly newsletter which goes to 5000 community workers.

Podcasts Law for Community Workers on the go:

legalaidsnswcle.podbean.com

Community Legal Education webinars:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLApA5ctFL2pV-bMUR2vvHwj7O8QwyeMO_

LIRF is co-convened by LIAC and Legal Aid NSW. Contact:

- Philippa Scarf, philippa.scarf@sl.nsw.gov.au
- Kate Halliday, Kate.Halliday@legalaid.nsw.gov.au

Please contact Philippa to be added to the LIRF contact list.

This was the final LIRF meeting for 2020. Meeting dates for 2021 will be scheduled shortly and sent to the LIRF contact list. Participants indicated support for meetings to be held online as they enable broader participation.