

Hunter CLSD Action Plan

2022 – 2024

<p>Fines and fine debt are relatively high in locations of social and economic disadvantage in the region, including Maitland, East Maitland, Raymond Terrace and Cessnock. 42% of fines were issued in the Hunter region for travelling on public transport without a ticket. We would like to reduce the burden of fine debt on people experiencing economic and social disadvantage in the region</p>		
Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and notes
Advocate for free transport for people who are under 18 years or for an alternative to issuing them with a fine	More information about the impact of fines on young people under 18.	
Work with the WDO team on a local guide to WDO sponsors	WDO team knowledge about active sponsors and potential sponsors	
Promote the availability of write off for fine debt and services that offer this (Hunter CLC, ALS NSW/ACT and Legal Aid NSW).		
<p>We would like to improve knowledge about each other's services and referrals between legal and other services, including for people affected by domestic and family violence.</p>		
Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and notes
The CLSD partnership meets in different locations in the region, has a focus on that region and incorporates networking events at meetings	Regional coordinator	
Prepare and share a guide to legal assistance services in the Hunter	Legal services to share information Regional coordinator time	
Training for duty lawyers on ADVOs and avenues for warm referrals to support better outcomes.		
<p>People leaving prison in the region face homelessness and barriers to getting temporary accommodation and connecting with legal and support services. Recent research (AHURI 2022) indicates that people leaving prison have been the fastest growing client category for homelessness services over the last decade. Allocating public housing to people exiting prison can reduce their interaction with police and the criminal justice system. We would like to ensure that people leaving prison in the region know where to get help with housing and people on bail can access temporary accommodation.</p>		

Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and notes
Investigate DCJ practices in denying temporary accommodation to people who are on bail to reside at a specified address or in denying that assistance unless the person makes an application to vary the residential condition in their bail.	Collaboration between Soul Café, Legal Aid NSW Newcastle, CLSD Unit and regional coordinator	
Depending on the outcome of the above, advocate for change in DCJ practices and improve referrals to legal advice and assistance to people who need to change their bail conditions to get temporary accommodation assistance from DCJ.	Collaboration between Soul Café, Legal Aid NSW Newcastle, CLSD Unit and regional coordinator	
Investigate options for disseminating information about local housing legal and support services to people leaving prison in the Hunter region.	Collaboration between Soul Café, Legal Aid NSW Newcastle, CLSD Unit and regional coordinator	
We would like to ensure that young people having ADVOs made against them get legal advice and other support to reduce further involvement in the criminal justice system.		
Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and notes
Investigate whether there are any gaps for young people who need legal advice about an ADVO and how they might be addressed.	Data on young people and ADVOs in the region. Input from lawyers and other workers from Children's Court in the region.	
Investigate/promote multi-agency response for young people who are having ADVOs made against them.		
Investigate and develop information for parents and carers about how they can support young people to comply with ADVOs.		
We would like to continue the work of the partnership between legal and tenancy advocacy services and social housing providers and stop tenancy matters escalating to NCAT.		

Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and Notes
Enhance communication and referrals between legal and advocacy services and social housing providers.		
Advocate for realistic payment plans for rental arrears.		
Offer further CLE to front line workers at social housing providers.		
Out of the 753 reports made to the Ageing and Disability Help Line January to March 2022 the Hunter region had the second highest number of report (79 behind Sydney at 122).		
Actions	What we need (resources)	Monitoring and Notes
<p>Hold community awareness event in the region which includes the availability of free wills.</p> <p>Need to determine: location (Singleton or Cessnock?) and other partners.</p>	<p>Elder Abuse Service Spark Helmore A partner who can do free health checks.</p>	