

**Participants:**

Bronwyn Ambrogetti, Amber Bridge (**Hunter Community Legal Centre**), Suzanne Thomas, Tamara Dooley (**Financial Counselling Hunter Valley**), Shantell Bailey, Richard McCullagh, (**Legal Aid NSW**); Yolanda D’Aquino (**Defence and Veterans Legal Service**); Rebecca Hadfield, Joselyn Morgan, Jill Green (**Aboriginal Legal Service**); Frances Silva, Kayla Sanderson (**Aboriginal Services Unit, Dept. Communities and Justice (DCJ)**); Kristie Harris (**Engage, DCJ**); Jocelyne Lamarche, Kylie Sansa (**Soul Hub**); Jenna Nadiotis (**Hume Housing**); Katie van der Merwe (**Wesley Mission**), Kate Ormonde (**Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service**), Sarah Breusch (**UoN Legal Centre**), Nissa Lee Phillips (**Hunter Homeless Connect**), Julie Leto (**Justice Advocacy Service**), Seema Sanghi (**Hunter CLSD Coordinator**)

<b>Q2 Meeting Minutes</b>	<b>Hunter CLSD, 11 May 11am – 1pm, East Maitland Library</b>
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>
<b>Acknowledgement and intro</b>	+ relational exercise
<b>Purpose of meeting</b>	<p><b>A. CLSD Program Objective:</b> to work collaboratively to identify and address unmet legal and related non-legal needs of people in the Hunter region. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making better referrals/ referral pathways</li> <li>- working on projects and devising new services, and</li> <li>- coordinating our efforts.</li> </ul> <p><b>B. Meeting objective:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For partners to practice identifying legal issues, amongst a range of issues, both legal and non-legal, and ensure services know about new services’ eligibility and referral processes.</li> <li>• CLSD partnership action development based on community’s needs and local data, particularly around fines and people leaving prison facing accommodation barriers.</li> </ul>

**Legal Issue identification exercise, incorporating new service information**

**Legal Issue Spotting:** Use of a case study and the Legal Aid tool [here](#)

### **Case Study**

***Stella is 78 years** and lives in Mayfield. Her husband **Keegan 80 years has dementia** and has recently gone into a nursing home. It was a hard decision for Stella as she had cared for him at home for many years. Stella also has health problems. Stella and Keegan have been married for 25 years. It was Keegan's second marriage, and he has two adult sons from his first marriage (David and Peter). Keegan already owned a house when he met Stella and after they married Stella moved into Keegan's house. Despite Stella's efforts, her relationship with Keegan's kids has always been rocky. David has had mental health issues and has never acknowledged Stella as his father's partner.*

*Prior to losing capacity, Keegan had appointed Peter as his Enduring Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardian.*

*Soon after Keegan moved into the nursing home David and Peter started causing problems for Stella. One day she found them in the house taking Keegan's power tools and other valuable items. They became abusive and pushed Stella out of the way. The next week, Stella got a letter in the mail from David and Peter. It told Stella that she had 14 days to move out from the house which was owned by Keegan. It said the house had to be sold to fund Keegan's fees in the nursing home.*

*Stella went around to the Peter's house to discuss it, but they got into a heated argument. Peter called the police and said he was fearful of Stella. Peter told the police that Stella had attacked him when he tried to recover some of his father's things from his house the week before. The police took out an AVO for Peter's protection.*

*Stella contacted your service wanting some help with her problems. She must go to court next week and has been told she has to be out of the house a week later.*

## ***Discussion***

- **What are the legal issues?**

-**Eviction:** Stella needs to make an application to NCAT to stop the eviction from occurring, need to show she's in a tenancy as spouse, carer, payer of bills etc. (NCAT- **NSW Civil and Admin Tribunal** - the main forum for resolving tenancy disputes between landlords and tenants in NSW, incl. payment of the rental bond, rent increases, unpaid rent, termination of the tenancy agreement, compensation, repairs, and other breaches of the residential tenancy agreement)

-Stella needs to seek adjournment to get legal advice before facing court

-Keegan's loss of capacity and Peter as Enduring Power of Attorney -need to see the paperwork before he went into care; good that they are married to show their legal status; might need to remove Peter's power as he's showing he is not necessarily acting in Keegan's best interest (acting for other purpose, as selling house not in Keegan's best interest)

- **What other issues is Stella facing?**

-Stella's own health issues – does she have proper care and management of health?

-financial issues? Paying bills, is she on right pension? Sort out benefits and care program; does Stella feel safe at home? No need to sell home for Keegan's care as it is exempt from assets.

- **Who can you refer Stella to for support?** (See below for organisational details)

- **Legal Aid's Elder Abuse Unit**
- **Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service**

- **Hunter Community Legal Centre** - New service: 'Family Violence project' – able to provide support for defendants in these matters; can also work on Stella's behalf and talk to police about her possible misidentification as perpetrator.
- **Carries Place** – can get Stella DV support even if she has been identified as aggressor; has a solicitor for DV support.
- **Wesley Carefinder Service** – finding the right careers and care package.
- **Financial Counselling Hunter Valley Project**
- **Website to walk you through understanding *which* service can provide support for *what* legal issue:** <https://findlegalhelp.clcnsw.org.au/service-search>

#### What if...

- Stella was a man (and Keegan a woman), are there different services you need to contact? The same services can deal with this issue, ALS's new program only support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- Stella identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, would this change your plan of support for her? ALS's Family prevention program

#### New relevant services - understanding their footprint, goals, and referral process.

- **Aboriginal Legal Service** - Legal Assistance for Vulnerable Women (see more info [here](#) which includes: 1. External Referral Form – Form to use to send a client referral to our team; 2. Slide deck – Overview of the Program to share as appropriate; 3. PDF version of the program Flyer – to share as appropriate)
- **Hunter Community Legal Service** – Family law/Family violence prevention project -
- **Wesley Carefinder services**- support older people who need assistance to access and navigate the Aged Care services. This is a new program, contact: **Katie Van der Merwe** | Case Worker with the **Wesley Mission care finder service** | 0427 400 478 / Unit 1/555 High Street, Maitland NSW · (02) 4933 0077

<p><b>Action Plan Stocktake / Current issues in Maitland</b></p>	<p><b>Hunter CLSD <a href="#">Action Plan 2022- 2024</a> and <a href="#">Regional Profile and Data</a></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fines and fine debt</b> are relatively high in Maitland and East Maitland</li> </ul> <p>It has been discussed at previous meetings, that the CLSD Hunter group could set up a small working group to initiate advocacy for people under a certain age (20?) to have access to free public transport. If people are interested, please contact Seema: <a href="mailto:seemas@thehca.org.au">seemas@thehca.org.au</a></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>People leaving prison face homelessness /barriers getting temporary accommodation.</b></li> </ul> <p>Soul Hub – Jocelyn and Kylie - are very concerned with the number of people exiting prison having no where to stay and their bail conditions presenting barriers to accessing temporary accommodation. In collaboration with CLSD, there will be some legal education sessions given to DCJ and people working on temporary accommodation so there is a better understanding of bail conditions and people’s access to accommodation.</p>
<p><b>Upcoming events and other news</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Summit, Maitland 16/5 booked out!</li> <li>• Toronto Wills clinic 25/5 – Partnership with Sparke Helmore (Pro bono) and Legal Aid – open to First nation people seeking support in creating a will for free. Please contact Seema if you have an eligible person seeking a will.</li> <li>• Law event: Engagement of NGO and Govt. Services to Reduce Recidivism 26/5. Services section is booked out – more info <a href="#">here</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Next CLSD Hunter meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Thursday 10 August, venue TBC</b></p>

## Organisations

- **The Defence and Veterans Legal Service:** [davls@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:davls@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) if a person would like to email us for assistance.



**Have you served  
in the ADF?**

Your story can help others

We can give you free legal advice and help to get your story heard by the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide.

We are independent from the Royal Commission, ADF and DVA.

You can contact us by calling:  
**1800 33 1800** (FREE CALL)

[www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au](http://www.defenceveteranslegalservice.org.au)

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- **The Aboriginal Services Unit (ASU)** is a specialist team within the Department of Communities & Justice that delivers service to frontline clients and community through the Aboriginal Community Justice Groups and our service delivery in Local courts. We also influence diversion strategies, projects, and policy development through our informed and expert knowledge of Aboriginal people experiencing the NSW justice system as victims and offenders.  
[kayla.sanderson@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kayla.sanderson@justice.nsw.gov.au) · 0428542344 / [frances.silva@justice.nsw.gov.au](mailto:frances.silva@justice.nsw.gov.au)

- **Hunter Community Legal Centre** provides free legal advice to people who live, work or study in the Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, Port Stephens, Great Lakes and Hunter Valley regions The Hunter CLC provides [Free Legal Advice by Phone](#) and face to face advice at various [outreach locations](#) in the Hunter region, as well as Family Law advice through our [Family Law programs](#).  
For legal advice and information phone [\(02\) 4040 9120](#) (or Toll free: 1800 650 073) at the following times:  
Monday 10.00am – 12.00pm; Wednesday 2.00pm – 4.00pm; Friday 10.00am – 12.00pm  
**[Bronwyn.ambrogetti@hunterclc.org.au](mailto:Bronwyn.ambrogetti@hunterclc.org.au)**

- **Aboriginal Legal Service** prioritises cultural safety. Aboriginal community field officers work alongside lawyers to offer the best and most culturally appropriate legal advice and court representation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is currently developing a new civil law practice.  
> Criminal Law Practice:  
Tel: (02) 4914 6500  
> Care & Protection and Family Law Practice:  
Tel: (02) 4914 6550  
**[newcastle@alsnswact.org.au](mailto:newcastle@alsnswact.org.au)**

- **Soul Hub, Newcastle** - formally established in 2003 as Soul Cafe. The vision was to build a charity dedicated to helping the most vulnerable in our community. As well as serving up meals, they wanted to go beyond this to cater to the *whole* person. We're simply here to offer sustenance, a friendly face, and many other types of essential support. From accommodation to drug and substance abuse programs, haircuts, laundry, and legal and medical services, whatever our guests need, we help them access it.

2nd Floor, Cnr Hunter & Watt Street  
Newcastle NSW 2300  
(02) 4926 1758/ [reception@soulhub.org.au](mailto:reception@soulhub.org.au)

- **[Legal Centre, University of Newcastle](#)**  
During [University semester](#), UNLC offers free legal advice and information to members of the community. UNLC undertakes cases in the public interest. Find out more information on our [previous public interest cases](#)  
Drop in or [contact us](#) for more information PH: 02 492 18666

- **Justice Advocacy Service** supports young people and adults with cognitive impairment in contact with the NSW criminal justice system, including as victims, witnesses, and suspects/defendants to exercise their rights and fully participate in the process.  
A referral can be made by calling JAS on 1300 665 908.  
**[letto@ids.org.au](mailto:letto@ids.org.au)**

- **Financial Counselling Hunter Valley Project** has been providing a free financial counselling service to the Upper and Lower Hunter for the past 30 years. We provide a non-judgmental, empathetic & client centred approach to our work. We assist with referrals, exploring options to manage debt, developing budget skills & provide advocacy with creditors & other appropriate agencies.  
[suzanne@fchv.org.au](mailto:suzanne@fchv.org.au) / [tamara@fchv.org.au](mailto:tamara@fchv.org.au)
- **Hunter Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service:** Free telephone advice, information, advocacy, and (where appropriate) representation at the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT). Assist people renting privately through a landlord or Real Estate Agent, tenants in Public and Community housing, tenants renting Caravan Parks, homeowners in Land Lease Communities and residents of Boarding Houses.  
(02) 4969 7666/ 1800 654 504  
Mon: 9am - 1pm; Tue: 9am - 1pm; Wed: 9am - 1pm; Thu: 9am - 1pm Fri: 9am - 1pm  
Note: If you can't get through during advice hours please keep trying. Outside of advice hours, you can leave a message. If you are under threat of eviction, contact us using [this link](#)
- **Hunter Homeless Connect – Connecting provides an opportunity** for small businesses, corporate organisations, and individuals in the community to be active participants in responding to homelessness in the Newcastle and Hunter region. More info [here](#), including about the directory and the Expo on August 9 2023.  
[nissalee@gmail.com](mailto:nissalee@gmail.com)
- **Carrie's Place** provides a range of culturally appropriate programs for people experiencing domestic and family violence, and/or homelessness - [02 4934 2585](tel:0249342585) office hours (9.00am to 4.30pm) / [02 4933 1960](tel:0249331960) after hours (4.30pm to 9.00am) / [intake@carriesplace.org.au](mailto:intake@carriesplace.org.au)
- **Legal Aid NSW**  
Elder Abuse Service: 4324 5611 or [elderservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:elderservice@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)  
[Richard.McCullagh@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Richard.McCullagh@legalaid.nsw.gov.au)  
We have social workers and lawyers working together to support older clients with legal issues and social supports. We can help clients with:

**Everyone deserves respect**  
Legal help for older people on the Central Coast and Lower Hunter

 **02 4324 5611**



- Granny flat or housing problems
- Support around AVOs
- Centrelink
- Unpaid loans
- Reporting matters to the police and victims' services
- Evicting unwanted occupants from the house (usually abusive adult children)



- Money stolen under powers of attorney
- 

## **Introducing the Respect at Work Legal Service**

### ***Who are we?***

We are part of Legal Aid NSW.

We are a specialist state-wide service which aims to provide holistic and trauma-informed legal services to individuals experiencing sexual harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace

Some CLCs and the ALS have also received funding to provide the same services.

Our key target client groups are:

People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

Young people

People with disabilities

### ***Why?***

Because we know these groups experience significant discrimination and are the least likely to get advice or take action due to multiple barriers.

### ***What do we do?***

We provide:

Free advice to everyone

Help to clients with negotiation and alternative dispute resolution, such as with internal workplace complaints;

Help lodging formal complaints with the FWC, AHRC or ADNSW;

Assistance at conciliation at the AHRC or ADNSW;

Representation in court (subject to a grant of aid);

Community Legal Education (CLE) to community workers and the public;

Referrals to non-legal support services.

### ***Connecting with you***

We are looking to collaborate with all the work already being done in the region by existing legal and support services

We know many people experiencing these issues don't make formal complaints. One of our key messages is to encourage people to talk to us about their options.

We need your help to spread that message and identify barriers to people in your community accessing our services.

We would love to hear more about identified issues, needs, tips, problematic industries and workplaces, particularly relevant organisations in the community we should be connecting with

### ***Questions***

- Who do you think in your community would benefit from our service?
- What's the best way to engage with these people?
- What forms of engagement should we avoid?
- Who else in the community do we need to collaborate with?
- Potential barriers to accessing our service?

We would love to hear your answers to these questions or accept any referrals. You can email [respectatwork@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:respectatwork@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) or call 02 9219