

**Q1 Hunter CLSD Meeting Minutes**  
**15 February 10am – 12pm, Nikinpa, Toronto**

<b>Attendees:</b>	Kate Packer (Bungree Aboriginal Association), Seema Sanghi, Lily Cooper, Christine Francis, Sandy Moran, Amanda Gripton, Claude Muco (Legal Aid NSW), Nicole Grgas (Hunter Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service), Nissa Lee Phillips (CLSD Hunter), Robyn Dundas, Emma Russell, Bianca Connors, Hayley Daniels, Jill Green, Brooke Lancaster (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT), Shanayah Potts, Gabby Hooper (Hunter Community Legal Centre), Sharon Gissane (Carrie’s Place), Olenka Motyka (University of Newcastle Legal Centre), Chezarne Cuffe (The Salvation Army), Emma Beckett (Nikinpa)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Will Doran (Kurri Kurri Youth Services)	
<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Action</b>
Acknowledgement of country	Emma Beckett, Manager, Nikinpa gave an acknowledgment of country.	
Intro and purpose of meeting	<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.</p> <p>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>● To learn about Nikinpa, its services and the needs in the community</li> <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> </ul>	

<p>Introduction to Nikinpa</p>	<p>Emma Beckett, Manager, Nikinpa (previously at Awabakal) gave some history to the centre and the concept of Aboriginal child and family centres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The centres started being funded by the federal government, 15 years ago, with states managing the funds. QLD put buildings in school grounds, NSW does it differently and ensures community collaboration.</li> <li>• This centre in Toronto was set up by local elders and continues to be driven by community and Emma sees her main role as a facilitator for the community to meet.</li> <li>• <b>Services provided:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Doctor’s room, counselling, psychologists, primary health care, speech pathologist, paediatrician. New gov program to screen kids before school for hearing, sight etc - might identify deficits in kids, but not plan to alleviate those issues (need more early intervention). (Bungaree ask if it’s possible for their GP to attend here. As currently going to Cessnock and other locations).</li> <li>○ IT room for printing/tech for community</li> <li>○ Long relationship with TAFE – trying to grow own staff as childcare people leaving for better wages as so poorly paid.</li> <li>○ Art group.</li> <li>○ High school girls’ group – as nothing for girls in the region (activities for boys though)</li> <li>○ Adults/kids - Aboriginal health challenge – nutrition and healthy lifestyle.</li> <li>○ Host community events and CLSD events and wills day, etc.</li> <li>○ Centre full now with enrolments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Issues in the community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lots of kids in OOHC from this area – Hunter has the highest number in the state. Why does she think this is happening? Data base being kept on certain families, might be a bad case worker from DOCC or there might be malicious notifications included in there as well? We need to be doing more to stop the cycle as OOHC kids more likely to have their kids removed (no decent role models, ‘good enough parenting’ model being encouraged - keep kids safe). DCJ called Nikinpa to ask for number for a family, so staff are told not to disclose numbers as many families have fear in the area.</li> <li>○ Cost of living crisis – last 6 months. More kids enrolled but for fewer days as can’t afford (long day care is \$10-12 a day with a subsidy). Doing a lot more support for families for food (although not funded for this), cook for the childcare centre every day and package leftovers for families they know that need it (Oz Harvest goes to school across</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Bungaree to look into their GP attending</p>
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	<p>the road so get some food from there – readymade frozen meals). Pre-schoolers need to bring their own food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Housing is a problem – private rentals being sold.</li> <li>○ Rising cost of fuel is having an impact on families.</li> </ul> <p>Attendee introductions – new to CLSD:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Josephine has been before but has a new role with ARBIA - part of Lake Mac corrections, works with newly released high risk prisoners (all referrals from Corrections officer only) - Sandy suggests meeting with AWLC team. Many people being released here to join with family, rather than going back home in country.</li> <li>● Claude, Respect at work legal service, Legal Aid NSW, RAWLS – specialist team, trauma-informed service to support people experiencing discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace for CALD, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, young people.</li> <li>● Amanda – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community engagement officer, with RAWLS-based in Wollongong, new to role</li> </ul>	
<p>Legal Issue identification exercise</p>	<p><b>Legal Issue Spotting exercise</b></p> <p>Use of case studies and the Legal Aid tool <a href="#">here</a>. There are various tools, specifically designed for young people; people in prison; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and for people facing a natural disaster.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What are the legal issues?</li> <li>● What other issues are the people facing?</li> <li>● Who can you refer to for support?</li> <li>● Are there gaps you’re unable to support these people with?</li> <li>● If Ari and/or Marcus identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, would this change your plan of support for them?</li> </ul> <p>ARI:</p> <p><b>Issues:</b> unpaid fines, unfair dismissal, financial hardship, no notice of termination of employment, unpaid wages, discrimination at work, underpaid employment, harassment, irresponsible lending (unfair contract); possible AVO against boss for discrimination if situation escalated,</p> <p><b>Referrals:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Potential of Ari doing a Work and Development Order (WDO) to work off the fines? It was discussed that there might be a limited number of appropriate sponsors in the region, a WDO might not be practical.</li> </ul>	<p>Hunter free legal help guide can be found <a href="#">here</a></p>

- **Revenue NSW Advocates** from organisations, groups or government agencies can act on behalf of customers to help them resolve their debts. Learn how to apply to become an advocate [here](#). It might be helpful to become an advocate if you're working with people with fines and they are not sure about when and where they received them, how much they owe.
- Ari should apply for public transport card
- Financial counsellor – Moneycare from Salvos:  
or call the national debt hotline.
- CLC/Uni Legal Clinic.
- Payment plans.
- NILS loan: no interest loan scheme - can't be used to pay off existing debts, must be for goods/services or bond. Caseworkers can advocate for priority NILS loans based on hardship. Can be accessed through Salvation Army or Baptist Care locally. Has a specific eligibility criterion, needs three quotes. Needs a support/case worker to guide the process. Approx. 3 weeks to process. Next CLSD meeting- focus on NILS loans?

- **Law Access** - provides legal information to anyone with a legal problem in NSW: 1300 888 529.
- **Hunter CLC:** 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
- **ALS NSW/ACT:** Call 1800765767 or email: [fines@alsnswact.org.au](mailto:fines@alsnswact.org.au).
- **Legal Aid NSW WDO team:** [wdo@legalaidsnsw.gov.au](mailto:wdo@legalaidsnsw.gov.au)

**Non-legal issues:**

Does Ari have support in the community, linked in with local services? ACON could be referred to.

**If Ari and/or Marcus identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander:**

Ask Ari what services he would like to access- does he prefer Aboriginal Legal Service? Make it client focused. Aboriginal Legal Service (NSW/ACT) Ltd (ALS)

- The ALS 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.

	<p><b>ALS Fines Clinic</b></p> <p>The clinic accepts referrals for clients with all types of fines and operates state-wide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults and young people with fines in NSW are eligible to be referred. The primary focus continues to be assisting and representing clients impacted by unfair COVID public health order fines, but also assist clients with general fines issues in several ways, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ requesting the lifting of overdue fine licence sanctions and pausing enforcement of overdue fines while clients receive assistance.</li> <li>○ providing legal advice and assistance with challenging fines, managing and reducing payment plan amounts, and referrals for WDO's.</li> <li>○ for clients in severe financial or other hardship, the ALS may be able to apply for write-off of up to \$5,000 of overdue fine debts if eligibility criteria are met.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<p>Action Plan Stocktake / Current issues in Cessnock</p>	<p><b>Hunter CLSD Action Plan 2022- 2024 and Regional Profile</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost of Living</b> – what are people seeing?</li> <li>• <b>Fines and fine debt</b> are relatively high in Toronto (see snapshot below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revenue NSW website lists sponsors <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Partnership ideas:</b></p> <p>First Nations specific org to become a WDO sponsor - Nikinpa is the heart of the community here.</p> <p>Could Nikinpa be a WDO sponsor for the TAFE cert 3 on offer onsite (through mentoring).</p> <p>Also promote mental health/GP plan to help write off fines through WDO.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Birth certificates</b></li> </ul> <p>Nikinpa need help with ID/birth certificate day. Last BC event here had 300 people attend.</p> <p>Support services can apply for their clients online via the fee-waiver template. More <a href="#">info is here</a>, including a template support letter.</p>	<p><b>Chrissy from the WDO team</b> to send through updated list of local sponsors and speak further with Nikinpa about sponsorship</p>
<p>Upcoming events and other news</p>	<p>Cardiff Awabakal Elder Wills events to be held on 21<sup>st</sup> Feb and 6<sup>th</sup> March.</p> <p>Hunter CLC are holding workshops in Upper Hunter, re: sexting and revenge porn</p>	
<p>Next CLSD Hunter meeting</p>	<p>The next Hunter CLSD meeting will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> in Raymond Terrace.</p>	

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### Overdue fines dashboard

Age b... (All) Postco... (None)

2283 x

2283

**\$3,214,980**  
Total value of overdue fines

**1,823**  
Number of customers

**6,126**  
Number of overdue fines

**Average age of overdue fines**

< 12 months	<div style="width: 20%; height: 10px; background-color: #003366;"></div> \$461,439
1-2 Years	<div style="width: 25%; height: 10px; background-color: #003366;"></div> \$421,880
> 2 Years	<div style="width: 55%; height: 10px; background-color: #003366;"></div> \$2,331,661

**Transport for NSW sanctions applied**

**Status of overdue fines**

■ Work and development orders

■ Payment plan

■ Centrepay payment plan

■ Stayed

■ Enforcement processing

**Types of overdue fines**