

# CLSD e-update

August 2011

## CLSD PROGRAM UNIT NEWS

### ***CLSD Planning Meetings***

The CLSD Program Unit has been working with the regional partnerships on Action Plans to guide the work of the each CLSD over the next 18 months-2 years. We have recently held Planning workshops in Albury, Wagga Wagga and Dubbo and in the next few months will hold workshops in the Central Tablelands, Northern Rivers and Far West NSW.

### ***CLSD Regional Profiles***

The CLSD Program Unit produces "Regional Profiles" for each of the CLSD regions to guide the CLSD Planning workshops. These profiles provide an analysis of each CLSD region and include data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, LawAccess NSW, the Law & Justice Foundation's Data Digest Online, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR), Local Courts, Aboriginal Affairs and where appropriate and/or available, data from the Roads & Traffic Authority, Victim's Services and the Department of Immigration & Citizenship. We also summarise the emerging needs as reported by CLSD partners over previous meetings. The profile provides a useful snapshot of each region. If you would like a copy of a CLSD Regional Profile, please contact the CLSD Program Unit on [clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:clsd@legalaid.nsw.gov.au).

### ***New CLSD Regional Coordinators***

Sadly, Ned Cutcher has left the Central Coast Regional Coordinator role. In his place, we welcome Tennille Ferguson Brown, working out of the Central Coast Community Legal Centre. Tennille can be contacted by email on [Tennille\\_FergusonBrown@clc.net.au](mailto:Tennille_FergusonBrown@clc.net.au). Welcome Tennille!

We also welcome Rennie Gay to the role of Regional Coordinator in the Central Tablelands. Rennie is the new Manager of the Elizabeth Evatt Community Legal Centre. Rennie can be contacted on [Rennie.Gay@eeclc.org.au](mailto:Rennie.Gay@eeclc.org.au). Welcome Rennie!

## CLSD PROJECTS

### ***Financial Counselling Services and Nowra Legal Aid at Nowra Correctional Centre***

The CLSD Program has funded a year long pilot which involves a Legal Aid civil solicitor attending the newly opened Nowra Correctional Centre with a Financial Counsellor from Life Line South Coast Financial Counselling Services each fortnight. The aim is to provide a multi faceted service to inmates to ensure the most appropriate and timely assistance is given in dealing with debt matters.

## LEGAL AID NSW NEWS

### ***The Bulk Debt Project***

The Project is for people in long term financial hardship who need their Centrelink income for food, housing etc. The current phase of this Project is aimed at such clients, who owe debts to:

- debt collectors – ACMS, Baycorp and Credit Corp
- credit providers – GE Finance
- household bills – Telstra and AGL

This Project has already helped 425 disadvantaged people clear away \$3.75million of debts owed to banks and other lenders through a 'bulk debt' negotiation process.

Can you please let your staff know that if they have clients who look like they might fit into this project, they can refer the client to a Julie Maron of the Wagga Wagga Legal Aid NSW office, who is coordinating this Project.

More information about the Project is available on the consumer intranet page

<http://intranet/Practice/Civil/consumer/Pages/BulkDebt.aspx>. Lawyers can also go directly to [Bulkdebt.org](http://Bulkdebt.org)

It is a very simple and quick process to register a client, and the Project will take it from there. Any queries, please contact Julie Maron on [julie.maron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au](mailto:julie.maron@legalaid.nsw.gov.au) or 0427 493 651.

## SECTOR NEWS & REPORTS

### ***'Doing Time: Time for doing'***

*Doing Time: Time for Doing* is the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs report of its inquiry into the high level of involvement of Indigenous juveniles and young adults in the criminal justice system. The Committee was concerned to find that the overrepresentation of Aboriginal young people is worse than it was 20 years ago when the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody report was published. The Committee has made 40 recommendations. See the Report at

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/sentencing/report.htm>. A summary pamphlet of the Report is available at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/atsia/sentencing/report/pamphlet.pdf>

### ***Work and Development Orders – expansion***

The original Work & Development Order (WDO) trial which concluded on 10 July 2011 will now be made permanent and extended to include people with serious addictions to alcohol, illicit drugs and other volatile substances. See media release at:

[http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Corporate/ll\\_corporate.nsf/pages/LL\\_Homepage\\_lawlink\\_news\\_archive\\_2011#300611](http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lawlink/Corporate/ll_corporate.nsf/pages/LL_Homepage_lawlink_news_archive_2011#300611)

### ***Aboriginal Gambling Education Project***

Ashley Gordon is an Aboriginal Gambling Educator with the NSW Aboriginal Safe Gambling Program and is running workshops around NSW. The workshops cover the history of gambling and Aboriginal people, problems with gambling and services to Aboriginal people. Ashley's Workshops take him across NSW including the South Coast, Bourke, Brewarrina, Bathurst and Orange and Wyong – and he can be contacted for a yarn on 0409 245 597.

### ***Exposure to domestic violence a form of child abuse***

A new Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) report, *Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia*, says witnessing domestic violence should be recognised as a form of child abuse.

The report underlines the harm to children from growing up in a violent household and emphasises the need for reforms to the family law system to protect children at risk of family violence and child abuse. The study finds that there is growing local and international recognition that hearing or seeing domestic violence is damaging to children and constitutes abuse. The report also looks at measures to better assist children who have grown up in violent household.

Attorney-General Robert McClelland said the Government's *Family Law Legislation Amendment (Family Violence and Other Measures) Bill 2011* contains key measures to create a safer and fairer family law system and prioritise the safety of children. The Bill is currently being considered by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee, and will then be considered in the Senate.

Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia documents the effects that exposure to domestic violence can have on children, including psychological, behavioural, health and socio-economic effects, as well as the link with the intergenerational transmission of violence and re-victimisation. *Children's exposure to domestic violence in Australia* is available at [www.aic.gov.au](http://www.aic.gov.au)

### ***Disaster assistance for NSW communities affected by July storms***

Attorney-General Robert McClelland announced Wollongong, Kiama and Lithgow Local Government Areas are now eligible for disaster assistance following the severe weather that hit New NSW in July, following natural disaster declarations in these areas. Other regions declared are Blue Mountains, Shoalhaven, Lithgow, Wingecarribee and Oberon.

Commonwealth assistance will be provided to the NSW Government through the Natural Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements (NDRRA). Under NDRRA, assistance may be available for individuals, businesses and primary producers including payments for individuals and assistance for small businesses and primary producers.

Joint Commonwealth/State assistance made available under the NDRRA includes:

- personal hardship and distress grants to eligible individuals and families whose homes and essential household items have been damaged or destroyed. Enquiries should be directed to NSW Community Services, Disaster Welfare Services on 1800 018 444;
- concessional interest rate loans of up to \$130,000 for eligible small businesses and primary producers. Enquiries should be directed to the NSW Rural Assistance Authority on 1800 678 593;
- concessional interest rate loans of up to \$25,000 for voluntary, non-profit organisations. Enquiries should be directed to NSW Treasury on (02) 9228 5198;
- transport freight subsidies of up to 50 percent to assist primary producers for the carriage of livestock and fodder. Enquiries should be directed to the Industry and Investment – NSW office on 1800 814 647; and
- restoration or replacement of essential public assets and certain counter disaster operations.

### ***Do Not Call Register***

Mobile phone numbers are going public; if you want to keep your number out of the reach of telemarketers you can list your home, personal mobile or fax number with the *Do Not Call Register*. Once your numbers are listed on the register, telemarketers and fax marketers must not contact you. Register on line at <https://www.donotcall.gov.au> . The *Do Not Call Register* is managed by the Australian Communications and Media Authority on behalf of the Australian Government and is a free service.

## **RESOURCES**

### ***Information on resources for newly arrived migrants and refugees***

The New South Wales Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF), in consultation with a number of Government and NGO agencies has developed a catalogue that lists legal resources targeted at newly arrived migrants and refugees. The catalogue includes information about the type of resource, topics covered, languages, intended audience, name of agency that produced the resource, links to websites and information about the settlement process for newly arrived migrants and refugees.

Accompanying the catalogue is a flowchart that maps the settlement process in Australia. See [http://www.nlaf.org.au/reports/flowchart\\_settlement\\_process.pdf](http://www.nlaf.org.au/reports/flowchart_settlement_process.pdf) to download a copy of the flowchart.

It is envisaged that the catalogue can be used in a number of ways including:

- by migrant support workers / settlement workers / community workers to identify resources that may be appropriate to provide to clients; and
- as a strategic tool in order to map existing resources and highlight gaps in the provision of information or lack of appropriate resources.

The catalogue and flowchart are available at [http://www.nlaf.org.au/reports/new\\_arrivals.html](http://www.nlaf.org.au/reports/new_arrivals.html)

### ***Utilities bills – Factsheets***

Managing utility bills is an ongoing issue in regional NSW . See attached Factsheets from the Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWON). All these Factsheets are downloadable from <http://www.ewon.com.au/index.cfm/publications/factsheets/>. Individual Factsheet links are below.

## Getting high bills?

This Factsheet is a guide on what to do when your bill shows a higher usage of energy or water. It covers charges on bills, appliances, meter readings, estimated bills, disputing a high bill, low cost energy and water saving tips and how EWON can help. See

[http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Publications/EWON\\_Factsheets/Final\\_HighBills\\_A4\\_web.pdf](http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Publications/EWON_Factsheets/Final_HighBills_A4_web.pdf)

## Help for energy and water customers

This Factsheet gives information on accounts, issues for tenants, customer assistance, rebates, emergency assistance, energy disconnection, water restriction, facing disconnection, getting reconnected and how EWON can help. See [http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Final\\_Help\\_A4\\_web.pdf](http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Final_Help_A4_web.pdf)

## Making a claim for compensation

This Factsheet is a guide to standard connection contracts, how to make a claim, offers of settlement, what to do if a claim is unsuccessful, the EWON investigation process, dealing with supply interruptions and rebates for electricity outages. See [http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Final\\_Compensation\\_A4\\_web.pdf](http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Final_Compensation_A4_web.pdf)

## Switching energy retailers

This Factsheet explains the issues in choosing an energy retailer, types of contracts, comparing energy offers, energy marketers, how to avoid marketing, about the transfer process and how EWON can help. See [http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Publications/EWON\\_Factsheets/Final\\_Switching\\_A4\\_web.pdf](http://www.ewon.com.au/ewon/assets/File/Publications/EWON_Factsheets/Final_Switching_A4_web.pdf)

## *The Brotherhood of St Laurence*

The Brotherhood of St Laurence (BSL) began during the Great Depression, as the vision and creation of Father Gerard Tucker, a man who combined his Christian faith with a fierce determination to end social injustice. Based in Melbourne, but with a national profile, the Brotherhood continues to work for an Australia free of poverty.

BSL undertakes research, develop and deliver services, and engage in advocacy. BSL's aim is to address unmet needs in innovative ways and translate learning from research and services into new policies, new programs and practices which can be implemented by government and others. More information about BSL is available from its website at <http://www.bsl.org.au/About-the-Brotherhood.aspx>. BSL also podcasts events and talks. To get updates on the work of BSL, go to <http://www.bsl.org.au/getupdates.aspx>.

## *'Employment and the Law' – new from the State Library of NSW*

New 'Hot Topics' publication from the State Library examines the area of employment law since the Fair Work legislation, and looks at the responsibilities of the national and state systems. Areas covered include getting a job, entitlements, work arrangements, discrimination, bullying, health and safety and leaving work. See

[http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/hot\\_topics/](http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/hot_topics/)

## *New Legal Aid NSW publications*

Any of these publications can be downloaded or ordered at <http://laxtra.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/publications/publications.aspx>



Also available in Arabic, Chinese (Traditional) and Vietnamese



New edition with Consumer Credit Legal Centre (2011)