

CLSD e-update

April 2012

CLSD PROGRAM UNIT NEWS

CLSD Regional Coordinators Workshop

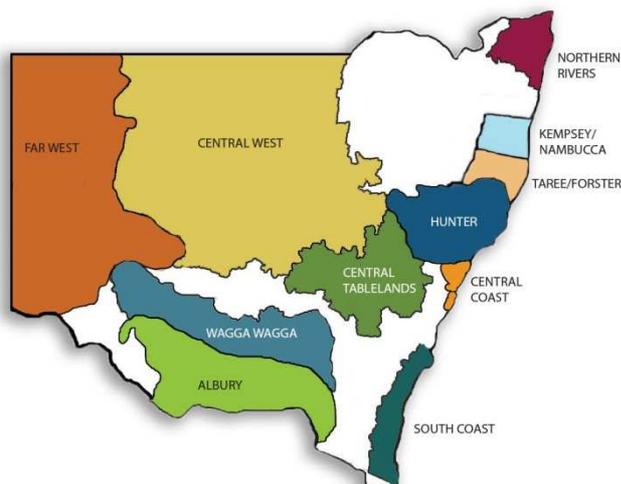
The CLSD Program Unit convened a 2-day Workshop for the nine CLSD Regional Coordinators on 1-2 March. The Workshop gave the Coordinators an opportunity to meet face-to-face and discuss common issues and priorities.

Following suggestions for speakers, the CLSD Program Unit invited Kelly Smith, one of Legal Aid NSW's Aboriginal Field Officers and Maree Jennings and Annette Hennessy from the Aboriginal Programs Division with the Department of Attorney-General and Justice (DACJ) to discuss working with Aboriginal clients. We also had sessions with Meredith Osborne and Andrew Taylor from Legal Aid's outreach team with a focus on the regional work of Legal Aid NSW's fines and Work & Development Order initiatives, and a presentation from Mike Roelandts from the State Debt Recovery Office; as well as sessions with Mary Gleeson, Matthew Greenaway from Legal Aid NSW's family and crime divisions, LawAccess NSW, and the NSW Legal Assistance Forum. The Coordinators also had a face-to-face session with Penny Ryan, the independent consultant currently reviewing the CLSD Program.

Most valuable of all, was the discussion between the CLSD Regional Coordinators on what are the strengths and challenges of their roles, systemic issues in regional NSW, and the benefits of these get-togethers to share ideas and expertise. A big thank-you to CLSD Program Co-Coordinator Kim Gabler for organising the whole shebang.

CLSD Program Unit activities

The CLSD Program Unit has been busy with setting up the new CLSD partnerships on the Mid-North Coast. See the map below for the current CLSD regions.



The CLSD Unit has also been working with various agencies to discuss regional initiatives, including:

- FAHCSIA and Aboriginal Affairs (NSW) staff on the Local Implementation Plans under the COAG 'Closing the Gap' Remote Service Delivery Partnership covering Wilcannia and Walgett
- Financial Counselling Service of NSW to discuss Financial Counsellor's involvement in Work & Development Orders in regional NSW NSW

- Department of Premier & Cabinet (DPC) to discuss how CLSD partners can better work with the Regional DPC offices
- Foodbank NSW to discuss food security initiatives in western NSW (and WDOs)
- Centrelink Mobile Unit to discuss how our CLSD partners can get involved in the outreach work of the mobile units
- Aboriginal Community Justice Group Coordinator to discuss how the Justice Groups and CLSD can work closer on our common shared priorities around Young Offender's Act, bail and policing issues in CLSD regions

The CLSD Program Unit is also continuing its engagement in the NSW Legal Assistance Forum Working Groups. Please contact Jenny Lovric at the CLSD Program Unit if you would like to discuss any of the above: jenny.lovric@legalaid.nsw.gov.au

CLSD PROJECTS

- *Discrimination Toolkit Workshops* – held in Albury & Wagga.
- *Planning Ahead issues for carers of people with disabilities* in Albury with pro bono lawyers from Ashurst (formerly Blake Dawson) and Hume Riverina Community Legal Service.

In development:

- *Get CourtSmart* (to complement *Get StreetSmart*) - children's crime brochures on court, sentencing and related topics. Thanks to Hunter Community Legal Centre.
- Brochure on domestic violence and spouse visas for women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds with the message "you can complain about the violence and not get sent home."
- Care publication: revision of '*Children, Court Court, DOCS and Me*' – plain English resource for families. Thanks to Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre.
- *Discrimination Toolkit Workshops* – Central, Far West and South Coast
- *DV AVERT* training in the Northern Rivers and Central Coast.

LEGAL AID NSW NEWS

Legal Aid Fines Days in Far West, North West and Mid North Coast NSW

Legal Aid NSW is working with local agencies to deliver a number of "fines days" across regional NSW. People who owe money to State Debt Recovery Office can lose their licences or registration. Driving unlicensed can have serious consequences. There are ways to deal with fines to get licences back. Send your clients and come along to the fines days at the times and places below.

Far West

Tues 27th March Broken Hill	11:00am – 3:00pm Broken Hill Centre for Community
Wed 28th March Wilcannia	10:30am – 2:30pm Centacare Office
Thurs 29th March Menindee	10:00am – 2:00pm Menindee Enterprise Park

North West NSW

Tues 17th April Brewarrina	10:00 am – 2:00pm with the Centacare Roadshow
Wed 18th April Bourke	10:00 am – 2:00pm with the Centacare Roadshow
Fri 20th April Walgett	10:00 am – 2:00pm Mission Australia offices

Mid North Coast

Mon 30th April Taree	12:00pm – 4:00pm Ormsby House Taree
Tues 1st May Purfleet	10:00am – 2:00pm Purfleet-Taree Local Aboriginal Land Council Office
Wed 2nd May Kempsey	1:00pm – 4:00pm Kempsey Family Community Centre
Thurs 3rd May Bowraville	10:00am – 12:00pm Miimi House
Thurs 3 May Nambucca Heads	1:00pm – 5:00pm Nambucca Entertainment Centre

Legal Aid NSW/Community Legal Centre Partnership Program

Applications for funding for projects under the Legal Aid NSW/Community Legal Centre Partnership Program are now open. Applications for projects to commence in 2012-13 must be submitted by cob **30 April 2012**.

Projects funded under the Partnership Program must be a collaboration between one or more community legal centres (CLCs) **and** Legal Aid NSW. The Partnership Program favours innovative projects, and projects that will make a real difference to access to justice for disadvantaged people in NSW. The funding is for defined projects only and there is no provision for ongoing funding for the project through this program. Projects funded under the program must commence in the financial year in which funding is paid but do not necessarily have to be completed within that year. All projects must have an agreed completion date.

To be considered for funding under the Partnership Program, applications addressing the criteria at section 6.2 of the attached guidelines should be submitted to clcprogram@legalaid.nsw.gov.au by 30 April 2012 and must be signed or formally endorsed by the partners from **both** the CLC and Legal Aid NSW.

More information about the Legal Aid NSW/CLC Partnership Program is contained in the attached guidelines. If you are considering submitting an application or require any further information, please contact me on 9219 5086 or email bronwyn.mccutcheon@legalaid.nsw.gov.au or clcprogram@legalaid.nsw.gov.au.

Muldrock and sentencing fallout

In October 2011 the High Court handed down its decision in *Muldrock v The Queen*. Until the *Muldrock* decision, sentencing courts in NSW applied the principles declared in the 2004 case of *R v Way* when sentencing offenders for standard non-parole period (SNPP) offences. Given that *Muldrock* determined that *Way* was wrongly decided, Legal Aid NSW has been considering what the impact would be on all persons sentenced since 2004 in relation to charges involving an SNPP.

Thousands of people have been sentenced for offences involving an SNPP since *Way's* case. Of these, at least 3000 were people who applied for legal aid for a CCA appeal and were refused or who were granted aid and lost their appeal. There are also those clients who were subject to a Crown Appeal. And finally, there is also that group of people who were sentenced and did not seek to appeal.

The concern was and still is that there could be a significant number of sentenced prisoners whose sentences are infected by error. This will not be easy to identify.

Legal Aid NSW has decided to set up a team of 6 lawyers and 2 support staff to review the 3000 matters in which Legal Aid NSW has been involved since 2004. This team may also have to review a number of matters which have never previously been the subject of an application for legal aid. This review team will also be working with 2 public defenders. There will also be matters that may have to be assigned for reasons of conflict and or workload and these matters will be assigned and counsel will be briefed in the usual manner.

This is an exciting opportunity for Legal Aid NSW to identify matters where clients are in custody, have no knowledge of this change in the law and may have a remedy in relation to the length of their sentence.

SECTOR NEWS & REPORTS

NSW Housing Register policy – updating contact details

Housing applicants whose contact details are not up to date as of May 1st 2012 will have their application closed. If they reapply, they will start again at the bottom of the list, unless they can prove they had a good reason for not keeping their details up to date (eg hospitalisation for mental illness)

From **1 May 2012**, applicants who do not respond to a request for contact from Housing NSW or a participating community housing provider by the date specified on their correspondence, will have their application closed. This means the applicant's name will be removed from the NSW Housing Register and they will no longer receive any offers of social housing.

When a client's application is closed because they have not responded to contact and they wish to be re-listed on the NSW Housing Register, they will need to complete a new application form. The client's waiting time will commence from the date of their new application. **Relisted applications will no longer be backdated to reflect an earlier waiting time.** According to Housing NSW, Housing and participating community housing providers will develop guidelines covering situations where a client has a valid reason for not responding to correspondence such as illness or homelessness.

Please circulate this information to anyone who may come in contact with social housing applicants and have not updated their contact details is greatly appreciated.

A factsheet, *New obligations for Housing Pathways applicants* is available at <http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/>

New Work and Development Order (WDO) Guidelines released

The State Debt Recovery Office has released the new Work & Development Order Guidelines. The WDO Scheme was recently made permanent by the NSW Government after a successful two year pilot. A world first, the WDO Scheme allows people experiencing particular disadvantage to clear outstanding fines through a broad range of activities.

Legal Aid NSW and the Aboriginal Legal Service are working in close partnership with the State Debt Recovery Office (SDRO) and the Department of Attorney General and Justice (DAGJ) to promote and expand the WDO Scheme throughout NSW.

Individuals are eligible for a WDO if they are homeless, have intellectual disability, cognitive impairment or mental health issues, serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances or if they are experiencing acute financial hardship. Their debt can be cleared through activities such as unpaid work, vocational, education or life skills courses, counselling (including financial counselling), mentoring programs (for young people under 25) and medical, mental health or drug and alcohol treatment programs.

A WDO must be 'sponsored' by an approved organisation or health service provider. Examples include drug and alcohol rehabilitation services, charities, youth services, neighbourhood centres and other community organisations, financial counsellors, psychologists, GPs and many others.

The impact of cumulative fines debt on people who are unable to pay cannot be underestimated. Enforcement action, including licence sanctions, can be crippling and have a disproportionate effect on people living in remote or isolated communities. Unpaid fines can impact on people's health and lead to secondary offending and incarceration.

The WDO Scheme provides an alternative way of dealing with fines for disadvantaged people. When a person is approved to undertake a WDO, enforcement action is suspended and their licence reinstated. Depending on the activity, the debt is worked off at \$30 or \$50 per hour (up to \$1000 a month) or, in the case of a treatment program, \$1000 per month for full compliance. These benefits provide a real incentive to participation.

See the new Guidelines at http://www.sdرو.nsw.gov.au/lib/docs/misc/wdo_guidelines.pdf. Please contact the CLSD Program Unit if you would be interested in participating in the scheme – especially if you are an organisation who wishes to consider sponsoring clients through the scheme.

Penalty Notice Report (NSW Law Reform Commission) released

The Attorney General has tabled the LRC's report on penalty notices, with the government considering the recommendations. NSW has over 7,000 penalty notice offences, created by 110 different statutes. In 2009/10, 2.83 million penalty notices were issued in NSW, with a total value of more than \$491 million.

The Lead Commissioner for the report, Professor Hilary Astor said people were far more likely to have contact with the justice system through a penalty notice than via a court, with the number and seriousness of penalty notices steadily increasing.

"The Commission has found that penalty notice offences, and the penalties that apply, have developed in ways that are not always consistent and fair," Professor Astor said. "Steps need to be taken to improve the system, and the Commission makes proposals for guidelines to govern the kinds of offences that may be dealt with by a penalty notice and the penalties that apply."

The Commission recommends establishing a small Penalty Notice Oversight Agency within the Department of Attorney General and Justice.

The Commission's report identifies problems with penalty notices for some vulnerable groups, including young people, homeless people and people with a cognitive or mental health impairment.

"While penalty notices are generally an effective and appropriate response to minor offending behaviour, they can compound social and economic marginalisation for vulnerable people, who are significantly more likely to receive a notice and significantly less likely to be able to pay," Professor Astor said.

The Commission recommends cautioning people in appropriate cases, instead of issuing a penalty notice, and improving mechanisms for reviewing notices that might have been wrongly issued. The Commission also recommends improvements to help people who are struggling to pay penalty notice debts, including the expansion of the successful Work and Development Orders.

The Penalty Notice report and a summary are available online at www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/lrc

Centrelink Mobile Unit

The Department of Human Services has two Mobile Offices. These offices travel to rural and remote locations bringing a full range of services to these communities. The staff on each Mobile Office comprises of a Mobile Office Manager, Customer Service Advisors, Specialist staff who have knowledge of the local community, a Social Worker, a Medicare representative and periodically Child Support and Australia Hearing will be present.

Many of you have been able to tour the Mobile Office in the past, at this time we discussed the broad range of services that the Mobile Office can offer your clients and how they can work together to support rural and remote communities. The Mobile Office team is happy to accommodate your organisation at any of the chosen locations. After reviewing the attached Mobile Office schedule I would be happy to start to liaise directly with you and connect you with the appropriate Service Centre Manager.

In the next quarter, the mobile units will be covering large parts of the state, including Far West of NSW, Northern Tablelands and the South Coast of NSW. See http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/individuals/mobile_office_schedule.htm for the schedule. If you are interested in participating, contact Rebecca Woodrow, Mobile and Outreach Services Team, Federal Dpt of Human Services-Centrelink on (02) 49743481 or by email on mobile.office@humanservices.gov.au

NSW Courts and Tribunal Services - new website

This new website will help court users resolve enquires more efficiently, without the need to attend a registry. It provides comprehensive, up-to-date and user-friendly information about courts and tribunals, the court process and alternative dispute resolution options.

The website allows users to: link to:

- [courts and tribunals](#);
- read about [going to court](#)
- find out if a jury panel is needed for [jury service tomorrow](#).

See <http://www.courts.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/> .

Social bonds to pay for services

A joint development phase for the trial of social benefit bonds has been announced for the areas of Out-Of-Home-Care (OOHC) and recidivism.

In a joint announcement the Treasurer, Mike Baird, Attorney General, Greg Smith and Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward, said three proponents had been selected after the Government called for proposals for the development of the bonds.

The Ministers said Social Benefit Bonds were new financial instruments in which private investors provided up-front funding to help community organisations deliver improved social outcomes, savings the Government money and earning returns to investors.

The two non-Government organisations Social Finance and Mission Australia had been selected to develop the bonds to counter recidivism which would help 500 repeat offenders released from Junee and Parklea prisons. According to the Ministers, due to the strength of the proposals, two proponents had been selected to partner with the Government to develop social benefit bonds in the area of OOHC with the first being a consortium of the Benevolent Society, Westpac Corporation and the Commonwealth Bank of Australia in a proposed bond of about \$10 million to support 550 families over five years.

The second was with UnitingCare Burnside which would work directly with children aged 0-5 years and their parents across 10 locations, paid for with another bond of around \$10 million over seven years.

Watch this space...

Community Placement Network – hosting asylum seekers

The Community Placement Network (CPN) offers interested people the opportunity to host an eligible asylum seeker in their home for a six-week period. The program is designed to select and train people who are interested in assisting asylum seekers to support themselves in the Australian community.

CPN is an initiative of the Australian Homestay Network (AHN), to make short-term home-stay accommodation accessible to asylum seekers exiting immigration detention on a bridging visa. The Australian Homestay Network (AHN) will provide all approved hosts with information, training, insurance and support services throughout their involvement with the Australian Homestay Network (AHN). Anticipated costs to the host of providing accommodation will be reimbursed through AHN.

The Community Placement Network complements the Australian Red Cross capacity to deliver short-term accommodation support to eligible asylum seekers exiting immigration detention.

There has been much goodwill in the community over a number of years to support asylum seekers. Members of the public interested to help by becoming a host may wish to visit the Community Placement Network (CPN) website (<http://homestaynetwork.org/cpn>) to apply and to find out more information.

Australian Human Rights Commission - Social Justice Report released

The AHRC has released its latest Social Justice Report. The focus of this report is on "lateral violence". According to the Report:

"Lateral violence is a significant problem facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Lateral violence, also known as horizontal violence or intra-racial conflict, is a product of a complex mix of historical, cultural and social dynamics that results in a spectrum of behaviours that include gossiping, jealousy, bullying, shaming, social exclusion, family feuding, organisational conflict and physical violence."

In the words of Social Justice Commissioner, Mick Gooda:

"Lateral violence is a very sensitive topic. When I first raised this issue I was concerned that some would accuse me of airing our dirty laundry in public. The last thing we need is for certain sections of the society to add lateral violence to the litany of dysfunctions associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. However, I reckon the benefits of speaking out about lateral violence far outweigh the risk of doing nothing. Leading me to this conclusion is the encouragement I have received whenever I have raised this issue with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders around Australia. There seems to be a considerable appetite within our communities to confront and deal with lateral violence."

To read the Report, go to http://humanrights.gov.au/social_justice/sj_report/sjreport11/pdf/sjr2011.pdf

Stand for Freedom – campaign against extension of the NT Intervention

The Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory are fighting for their freedom. The *Stronger Futures* legislation proposes to extend key elements of the Northern Territory Intervention until 2022. The Northern Territory Intervention has been condemned by the United Nations as racially discriminatory and against international human rights principles.

The *Stronger Futures* legislation consists of three bills introduced by Indigenous affairs Minister Jenny Macklin on 23 November 2011. They are: *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory Bill 2011*, *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2011* and *Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 2011*.

The *Stronger Futures* legislation plans to replace the *Northern Territory National Emergency Response Act 2007* (otherwise known as the "Northern Territory Intervention") which was due to expire in August 2012. The Northern Territory Intervention has attracted national and international condemnation for its racial discrimination against Aboriginal people and their culture. However, the new legislation plans to maintain many elements of the Northern Territory Intervention for a further 10 years, and will further increase Government control over Aboriginal people and their lands.

See more information about the campaign being run by 'Our Generation' in partnership with AnTAR at <http://standforfreedom.org.au/>

Over-policed youth: stories wanted

PIAC is embarking on a new project to examine the impact of over-policing of bail conditions on children and young people. The study will complement an existing PIAC and Legal Aid NSW project, known as the Children in Detention Advocacy Project (CIDnAP).

PIAC intends to collect stories about young people with criminal proceedings in the Children's Court, who have been put on multiple bail conditions, and then had those conditions heavily monitored by police. Such policing often results in police harassment and arrests for breaches of bail. The collected stories will be used to draw attention to the impact of multiple bail conditions on young people, and to help PIAC lobby for change within the police force. For more information, please contact PIAC solicitor Laura Brown on (02) 8898 539 or PIAC senior policy officer Chris Hartley on (02) 8898 6522.

Fair Work Australia increases community sector workers' wages

Fair Work Australia has ordered that the wages of a large number of community sector workers should increase by between 19 and 41 per cent. Last year the workplace tribunal found that workers in the community and disability sectors were underpaid compared to public service workers doing similar jobs. It found gender was one the reasons for workers being undervalued.

In its ruling, Fair Work Australia said the highest paid employees would receive a 41 per cent, or \$24,000 pay rise, bringing their annual salary to \$83,000. Workers on the lowest award rates will receive a rise of 19 per cent, an increase of around \$6,000 per year.

The changes will affect more than 250,000 workers across Australia. The new rates will be phased in over an eight-year period beginning on December 1.

'One Gov' one-stop-shops

The rollout of 'One-Stop Shops' to deliver Government services across the State has been announced by the Premier, Barry O'Farrell.

The *One Gov* initiative had already been implemented in 24 locations. Under the initiative, a range of Government Services can be accessed at Fair Trading offices across the State, ranging from Seniors Card applications and fishing licences to the purchase of national park passes and applications for birth, deaths and marriage certificates.

Offices in the Sydney CBD, Blacktown, Hurstville, Liverpool, Parramatta, Penrith, Gosford, Wollongong, Newcastle, Port Macquarie, Coffs Harbour, Grafton, Lismore and Tweed Heads were among those now equipped to offer extended services including applications for Births, Deaths and Marriages; applications for Seniors Cards; the purchase of passes to National Parks; applications for NSW Housing; applications for and renewals of Fishing Licences; and the payment of fines to the Office of State Revenue. The lodgement of Retail Tenancy Bonds and a Justice of the Peace Service was also available.

Other locations where the services were available also included Armidale, Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Bathurst, Goulburn, Queanbeyan, Wagga Wagga, Albury, and Broken Hill.

ACCC court action against energy retailers' door-to-door sales tactics

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has filed proceedings against three energy retailers and the marketing companies engaged by them in relation to their door-to-door selling practices.

The ACCC has previously put energy retailers on notice that it is closely watching their use of door-to-door selling practices and the conduct of their door-to-door salespeople. The ACCC has stated that it will not hesitate to take swift action to enforce compliance with the laws that are specifically designed to protect consumers in this area.

The ACCC instituted proceedings in the Federal Court of Australia against AGL Sales Pty Ltd, AGL South Australia Pty Ltd, and marketing company CPM Australia Pty Ltd. The ACCC has also instituted separate proceedings against Neighbourhood Energy Pty Ltd (which is part of the Alinta group) and its former marketing company Australian Green Credits Pty Ltd.

The ACCC alleges that each of the respondents engaged in misleading and deceptive conduct, and that AGL Sales and CPM Australia made a range of false representations to consumers in the course of door-to-door selling. The proceedings also allege contraventions Australian Consumer Law which is designed to protect the rights of consumers in door-to-door transactions. These provisions came into force on 1 January 2011.

With the exception of AGL Sales, the ACCC alleges that each of the respondents breached the Australian Consumer Law (the ACL) by failing to immediately leave the premises at the request of an occupier. The ACCC contends that consumers requested the salespeople to leave by placing a 'do not knock' sign on their door. It is further alleged that by the conduct of their salespeople, each of the respondents breached the ACL because their salespeople did not clearly advise the consumer, at all or before starting to negotiate:

- that the dealer's purpose was to seek the person's agreement for the supply of services
- that the dealer would be obliged to leave immediately upon request, and
- the name of the marketing company and the name and address of the supplier of the services being offered.

The ACCC is seeking declaration, injunctions, pecuniary penalties, and costs.

The matters are being heard in May and June 2012. As part of the ACCC's ongoing work in this area, the ACCC and the Australian Energy Regulator have recently signed agreements with State and Territory energy ombudsmen that will allow greater scrutiny of dubious door-to-door marketing of energy products.

RESOURCES

LawAccess/LawAssist resources.

LawAccess has produced new wallet cards 'Are you Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and Need Legal Help?' You can view the new wallet card at:

http://info.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/lawaccess/lawaccess.nsf/pages/publications#Aboriginal_0 and order the new wallet cards using the LawAccess NSW publications order form:
<http://info.lawaccess.nsw.gov.au/lawaccess/lawaccess.nsf/pages/publications>

The two newest topics from LawAssist are on reading and writing legal documents and mediation. LawAccess also have three new interactive guides on dealing with a fine, going to court when you have a fine and Fencing/boundary disputes. See:

http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/Lawlink/lawaccess/ll_lawassist.nsf/pages/lawassist_index

Consumer Credit Legal Centre updates

The Consumer Credit Legal Centre publishes great updates. See their website and sign up at <http://www.cclcnsw.org.au/>

Planning Ahead Tools Website

The *Planning Ahead Tools* website is a new NSW Government resource, developed to be a central point for information about Wills, Powers of Attorney, Enduring Guardianship and Advance Care Planning in NSW. The website can be found at website at www.planningaheadtools.com.au



Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) – resources in your library and online

The Find Legal Answers Tool Kit, a collection of approximately 20 plain language books is available in all NSW public libraries. Recent additions to the collection include

- *Rest assured: a legal guide to wills, estates and funerals in New South Wales (5th ed)* by Rosemary Long and Trudy Coffey, published by Federation Press, 2011. *Rest Assured* is a plain language guide to wills,

estates and funerals, dealing with issues such as how to make a will, how to change a will, how to make a power of attorney, planning ahead, probate, and how to arrange a funeral. An online edition is also available on the Find Legal Answers website under the Legal Books Online tab:

<http://www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au/guides/>

- *You and your lawyer* (Hot Topics no.78). Having a legal problem can be intimidating. This issue will help readers understand the role of lawyers, and the help provided by other organisations in the legal services sector. It includes practical information about how to work with a lawyer, lawyers, duties, ethics, costs and complaints.
- *Australian legal system* (Hot Topics no.79) An overview of the elements of our system and how it developed, covering how law is made, what the law deals with and the roles of the legislature, judiciary and executive. Information on the Australian legal system is rarely to be found in a single publication and in a reader-friendly accessible format.

The two Hot Topics will also be available in full text on the new Find Legal Answers website, due to go live by the end of April.



New NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAf) website

NLAf has a new website which sets out the work of NLAf and information on their membership and working groups. See <http://www.nlaf.org.au/>

Most recently, NLAf has developed an online list of plain language law resources for victims of natural disasters and emergencies. The list links to resources on topics such as:

- financial assistance;
- personal documents;
- employment;
- renting and tenancy;
- insurance; and
- domestic violence and parenting issues.

The resource list may be useful starting point for locating information relevant to community workers and their clients and is available at http://www.nlaf.org.au/cb_pages/victims_of_natural_disasters.php

ASIC launches multilingual financial resources

ASIC has produced multilingual resources for people who migrated to Australia on humanitarian grounds to help them learn about Australia's financial system. The resources include fact sheets, audio and video content and teaching resources. Topics include household budgeting, saving money, paying bills, contracts, banking, credit, debt, insurance and superannuation.

Mr Khem Khanal from Bhutan, who has been in Australia for 18 months, has experienced the problems first hand and said, 'People have problems borrowing and paying bills. They don't know how to save the money and

don't know how to plan – they don't know the concept. Many people don't know about contracts, so they get into trouble. They don't know where to get information. People are lost'.

Mr Said Sharaft Sultani from Afghanistan wished the materials had been available when he arrived in Australia. He said, 'When I first got here it was hard to understand how things worked. Getting information in my language, Dari, would have helped me because I would have understood it 100%. In English I would've understood about 5-10%. My mum, she wouldn't understand anything if it wasn't in Dari'.

The resources can now be downloaded for free from ASIC's consumer website at <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/> and go to the link "We speak your language".

NEW LEGAL AID RESOURCES



Who gets my stuff after I die? This brochure explains why wills are important for Aboriginal people.

REGIONAL OUTREACH CLINIC PROGRAM

The CLSD Program is working closely with the Regional Outreach Clinic Program (ROCP). Where possible, we are working to more closely align the outreach work of Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service, Community Legal Centres and ROCP solicitors, so that clinics are more regular and accessible to our clients in regional and remote NSW.

In the last few weeks, we have combined Legal Aid outreach solicitors and ROCPs in Orange and Lithgow – so that clinics are now weekly in each location. So from July:

- Orange advice clinic, each Tuesday from 10 – 1 pm at Legal Aid Orange. Bookings through Orange Legal Aid on (02) 6362 8022
- Lithgow advice clinic, each Thursday from 12- 4 pm at Lithgow Information and Neighbourhood Centre (LINC). Bookings through LINC at 6352 2077.

Other ROCP clinics at Bega, Boggabilla, Bowraville, Brewarrina, Dareton, Lightning Ridge, Macksville, Moree, Nambucca Heads, Tenterfield and Wentworth continue. See <http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/community-partnerships/regional-outreach-clinic-program> for more information on the ROCP.