

Central Tablelands CLSD Program Meeting

20 February 2025 | 2-3:30PM | Online

MINUTES

Present: Carla **Whitehouse** (Justice Advocacy Service), Sarah **Sands** (CTBMCLC), Joel **Palmer** (Orange LALC), June **Golland** (Legal Aid NSW), Arlia **Fleming** (CTBMCLC), Renee **Lees** (CTBMCLC), Keiran **O'Sullivan** (Legal Aid NSW), Ivette **Labib** (Medicare Mental Health Dubbo/Bathurst), Larissa **Edwards** (CPS Program, PHN), Jessica **McCleary** (Legal Aid NSW), Neil **Ingram** (Services Australia), Shanaya **Stapleton** (Verto), Winnecke **Baker** (Legal Aid NSW), Eveleen **May** (Disability Advocacy), Jill **Marshall** (Legal Aid NSW), Georgia **Murphy-Haste** (Sparke Helmore), Gemma **Brotherton** (Central West WDVCS), Carole **Gray** (University of Canberra, Tax Clinic), Scott **Hanrahan** (Veritas House Youth Initiative), Angie **White** (Neighbourhood Central Parkes), Lucinda **Walder** (Legal Aid NSW), Madison **Williams** (Sparke Helmore), Daniela **Wilcox** (Legal Aid NSW)

Apologies: Ben **Armstrong** (PWDA)

Agenda item	Discussion	Action/Outcome
1. Opening and purpose	Acknowledgement of Country Purpose: to work together to assist people in our region who are experiencing deep and persistent disadvantage.	
2. Guest Speakers	Joel Palmer Project Manager, Men's Behaviour Change Orange LALC <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Orange LALC is working towards registration as a provider of Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCP).- The steering committee for this work has agreed on following the 'safe and together' model from David Mandel. This model is being employed by Domestic Violence NSW and NSW Health, through the CHRISTIE Project in 4 LGAs in NSW. Next Steering Committee Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Wednesday 26 February 3:30PM	There was broad support in the meeting for the steering committee to submit a funding request for this project to the CLSD Program at Legal Aid NSW.

CLSD Program Regional Coordinator: Arlia Fleming

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Webpage: [Central Tablelands CLSD Program partnership](#)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Guest speaker from DV West is attending to talk about how they used this model. - Anyone is welcome to join – email Joel.Palmer@olalc.com.au <p>Request for Support to Apply for CLSD Program Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The steering committee is seeking support from CLSD Program partners to apply for project funding to hold ‘train the trainer’ training sessions in this model in Bathurst, Orange, Lithgow and Cowra. - Aim to encourage consistency in language and practice across support services. - Feel it’s timely given the introduction of the coercive control laws in 2024 which support moving away from incident reporting to episodic reporting. - Family Court of Australia staff have been trained in this model. It’s hoped that a person’s history of violence will be considered in relation to their parenting capacity. - The project would involve a representative from Safe and Together training a core group of committed people in these locations who have the support of their organisation to be the champion in their region. <p>Questions</p> <p>Could the training include Parkes and Forbes as well?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those areas are already covered by Catholic Care Wilcannia/Forbes. <p>Some people push back on the introduction of terms like ‘user of violence’ as opposed to perpetrator of violence. Can you provide any advice about this shift?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring these questions around the use of language is a key part of the Safer Together model. One perspective is that labelling someone as a perpetrator creates shame, which can stop people from taking accountability for their actions. <p>Does the program target younger relationships, for example before people have children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Safer Together model is designed to be used by services (lawyers, caseworkers, police, support workers) in their practice. - If Orange LALC becomes an accredited provider of MBCPs they will apply to support people aged 16 years old and older. - 	
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	<p>Does requesting funding for this project impact the ability of partners to request funding for other project ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. The project guidelines state that as far as practicable, funding will be distributed equitably among the 12 regions, however this doesn't preclude multiple funding applications from one region. Requests for funding vary based on the priorities and resources of each partnership and the CLSD Program budget works on the financial year so a separate pool of funding is available in 2025-2026. <p style="text-align: center;">Carole Gray Manager University of Canberra Tax Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The clinics are funded by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), delivered by registered tax agents and focus on helping individuals, small businesses and not-for-profit organisations that are financially vulnerable, including people newly arrived in Australia and people who have been in prison. - The service is FREE, confidential and independent. - They operate on Mondays from 10am – 2pm and Wednesdays from 9am – 1pm. - Staff can prepare and lodge tax returns and business activity statements, manage tax debts, penalty revisions, hardship requests and more. - Interested in opportunities to help more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. - Mostly operate via Zoom but could come to the Central Tablelands in person. - Carole noted that they can support people who can't get income support from Services Australia until they get their tax returns up to date. <p>Questions</p> <p>Is there a threshold for assisting NFPs to receive assistance?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They can be large or small but need to meet vulnerability criteria. The focus is on assisting not-for-profits who can't afford tax advice in the market. <p>Legal Aid's Disaster Response Legal Service is helping people still recovering from floods. Would these clients be eligible for referral?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes, it's very likely that the service can assist and could conduct outreach, Receive many referrals from regional financial counsellors. 	
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	<p>What is the geographic footprint for this service?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Canberra and surrounding regions, however operating online means can access more people. Could do physical outreach within a 3-hour radius of Canberra. - There are now 20 tax clinics around Australia. Mostly located in capital cities. <p>Applications for UC Tax Clinic assistance can be made via the website: https://www.canberra.edu.au/future-students/study-at-uc/study-areas/business/uc-tax-clinic UC Tax Clinic email: taxclinic@canberra.edu.au</p>	
3. Partner updates	<p>Jill Marshall – Disaster Response Legal Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting central west flood recovery. Still dealing with insurance abuse and disputes. - Can help people to understand the Resilient Homes Program. Uptake of the program has been slow, especially in Forbes, so are very keen to speak to people about it and anyone who wants to dispute insurance claims. - Will be at the Recovery event 26 February in Forbes. <p>Larissa Edwards – Commonwealth Psychosocial Support Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Psycho-social program which covers Lithgow, Bathurst, Oberon, Parkes, Forbes, Mudgee, Orange, Cowra, Dubbo, Lightning Ridge, Walgett, Bourke Cobar. - Offer psycho-social supports. Clients need to be over 16, not getting this support elsewhere and able to engage (not incarcerated/not in long term hospitalisation). - Very goal oriented (assist with NDIS assessments, gain employment, obtain housing, pursue education). Engagement is 6-12 months. - Phone: 0447 322 789 Email: larissa.edwards@marathonhealth.com.au <p>June Golland – Work and Development Order Service, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New WDO Guidelines have been released. - View the new guidelines and kit and the training recording here. <p>Daniela Wilcox – Civil Lawyer, Legal Aid NSW (Orange)</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Civil law practice in Orange can help people having issues with Centrelink, Veterans Affairs, employment, human rights, immigration, money matters, the NDIS, housing. - Attend Cowra Neighbourhood Centre once a month for face-to-face appointments. - Attend Forbes on first Thursday of every month for face-to-face appointments. <p>Kieran O’Sullivan – Community Legal Education, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New interactive divorce resource that helps people to complete their divorce online. The guide is best for people who have reasonable literacy and computer skills. <p>Shanaya Stapleton – Verto - https://www.verto.org.au/community-services/tenants-advice-and-advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeing a lot of rent arrears issues now. - Only DCJ really does brokerage for rent arrears, Mary Mackillop does NILS Loans and there is a financial advisor at Verto. <p>Evie May – Disability Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support people with any disability, any age where they are experiencing unfair treatment, discrimination or have difficulty navigating service systems- federal or state, but also businesses and organisations. - We have loads of room for new clients and keen to help new people! - Common problems are education discrimination (exclusion, not enough support), financial issues (scams, signing unaffordable contracts, cost of health care, not getting bulk billed), Centrelink payments (help to gather evidence to support a DSP claim) and NCAT hearings for review/revoke guardianship or fresh applications. - Contact: www.da.org.au or western@daorg.au and you can contact Evie at eveleen.may@da.org.au <p>Carla Whitehouse – Justice Advocacy Service (JAS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JAS operates 24/7, 365 days a week. An indication of cognitive impairment is enough, don’t need a diagnosis. - Education team has just trained police in Orange about recognising CI while people are under arrest and training is going out to Parkes/Forbes. 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To refer please call our intake team – 1300665908 or email carla@idrs.org.au <p>Jessica McCleary – Solicitor in Charge, Legal Aid NSW Orange</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Duty representation for criminal matters at all courts. - Expanding family law and care and protection team. - Changes were made to Legal Aid’s means test last year to help more people who have property disputes following separation. There are lots of people that now qualify. - Orange is a pilot site for a care and protection panel initiative, which aims to get more lawyers on the panel. <p>Arlia – CEO, Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains CLC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Moved orange office to Bathurst last year. Still do outreach in Orange. - Open day at new office in Bathurst on 14 March. Judge Penny Musgrave is attending – all welcome link to RSVP - https://forms.office.com/r/nfrCsqW7pK - Have a meeting room available for visiting services. - Warm referral form - https://ctbmclc.org.au/intake-form 	
4. Outreach events this year	<p>Bathurst Uniting Support Services – legal and birth certificate clinics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wednesday 26 March during lunch service and Friday 28 March at the McDonald’s breakfast. Contact CTBMCLC with any enquiries. - Eligibility for a birth certificate. <p>Women’s Health Centre Conference Bathurst</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 11 and 12 March. Centred around sexual assault responses. Empower Responses Professionals — Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre <p>Inaugural meeting of Ageing and Disability Interagency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26 Feb 10am at Orange Police Station. - We are piloting an interagency meeting with Health, Legal Aid, Police, Ambulance, NDIS providers and some other stakeholders to discuss at risk clients to see/identify any holes in their care. - Contact: Sara Tabb - tabb1sar@police.nsw.gov.au 	

	<p>Wills Clinic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sparke Helmore planning a wills workshop this year in partnership with Mudgee LALC. Will also be going to Coffs Harbour, Maclean and Walgett. - Can discuss opportunities for a Wills clinic in the CT in 2026. - Angie noted that there is high demand for a wills workshop in Parkes/Forbes. - Winnie noted it is possible other pro bono partners might come on board to assist <p>CLSD partners are encouraged to reach out at Arlia with any issues or suggestions for training/guest speakers, or events.</p>	CLSD unit to advise
6. Next meeting	22 May 2025	