

Far West CLSD Program Meeting
27th November | 1.30pm to 3:30pm | Legal Aid NSW Broken Hill

MINUTES

Present: Briar Baily – **IDRS**, Gillian Lambert – **IDRS**, Arthur Nguyen - **SIC Legal Aid NSW**, Barbara Townsend – **Legal Aid NSW**, Caryn Ferguson - **Disability Advocacy**, Desmond Ferguson – **Legal Aid NSW**, Kristy Parker, **Catholic Care**, Perri Arabatzis - **Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre**, Brendan Delahunty - **Mallee Family Care Community Legal Centre**, Justine O'Reilly - CLSD Manager **Legal Aid NSW**, Joshua Scotland – **CLASC Legal Aid NSW**, Claudia Martin-Files – **VANS**, Geena Dellar – **Mission Aust.**, Verena Crawford - **Warra Warra Legal Service**,

Apologies: Karly Fennell – **Revenue NSW**

Agenda item	Discussion	Action/Outcome
1. Opening and purpose	Brendan opened with acknowledgement of the Wilyakali people.	
2. Introducing our new Far West regional coordinator Gillian Lambert	Gillian provided a brief introduction about herself.	
3. Introductions	<p>Group introduced themselves and their organisation and mentioned any issues they are having.</p> <p>Geena Dellar – Program Manager, Mission Australia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mission Aust runs a range of programs to support those struggling in the community. • <i>Issues:</i> lack of safe accommodation available in Broken Hill and issues that impact people being granted housing, e.g. debt, rent, no references etc 	

Far West CLSD Program Regional Coordinator: Gillian Lambert
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 Webpage: IDRS

	<p>Joshua Scotland – CLSAC solicitor, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil law support in Broken Hill, Wentworth and Wilcannia • Assists with matters including discrimination, housing repairs etc • <i>Issues:</i> housing arrears, housing repairs not being done by Land Council, people in Wilcannia needing to pay for drinking water despite paying water rates <p>Barbara Townsend – Family Solicitor, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family law matters. (1/3rd of matters are care & protection) • Attends Wilcannia monthly and Wentworth bi-monthly • <i>Issues:</i> not enough services available for quick access delays processes - including AOD residential rehab, housing, legal processes <p>Arthur Nguyen – Solicitor-in-Charge, Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New to Senior role at Broken Hill Legal Aid • Has a focus on Youth crime and wants to keep it low and look at other management rather than taking young people into custody <p>Justine O'Reilly – State CLSD Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-tier role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Uniting legal and non-legal teams together so that the clients get the best service for their needs ○ Feedback issues to higher levels through the NSW Legal Assistance Forum 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are currently 4 Working Parties looking at how services can be improved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Traffic and Fines – Revenue ▪ Homelessness ▪ Prisoners ▪ Regional and Remote <p>Kristy Parker – Catholic Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a range of programs to the community, including family dispute resolution, support for carers, family intervention support, financial • <i>Issues:</i> not enough services in area <p>Perri Arabatzis – Mallee Family Care Legal Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Solicitor new to Broken Hill – enjoying it so far • Can assist with tenancy, family, traffic, financial hardship, and matters which Legal Aid NSW unable to assist with except for wills, EPOA and EG <p>Desmond ‘Keith’ Ferguson – Legal Aid NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALO for Legal Aid NSW • Provides mentoring for clients and ensures clients have a clear understanding of legal matters and court processes, involved in community engagement • <i>Issues:</i> Recidivism, AOD issues, Violence, Traffic issues, Health, Education <p>Verina Crawford – Warra Warra Legal Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works as a counsellor and supports clients during legal meetings 	
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Issues:</i> legal pathways are not easy to follow, limited services for face-to-face treatment associated to trauma, Solicitors using legal jargon which clients don't understand – needs to be kept simple <p>Brendan Delahunty – Mallee Family Care Legal Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manager of MFCCLC and they offer a range of legal support both civil and criminal • <i>Issues:</i> people wanting services (Wills, POA, Guardianship etc) but unable to provide, (16% of Broken Hill population are age pensioners but only 10% of MFC clients are in that age bracket), There needs to be more support for 1st Nations people and older generation. <p>Natalie – NSW Community Corrections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently filling in Managers role due to recruiting issues • Issues – recruitment and currently needing to work remotely due to issues with office in Argent St 	
<p>4. Guest speakers: Revenue, Disability Advocacy and VANS</p>	<p>Karly Fennell was unable to attend meeting.</p> <p>Caryn Ferguson – Disability Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke about her role in Disability Advocacy and how her role can support people in the community who have disabilities and unable to gain assistance • Lengthy discussion around getting legal support when trying to raise matters through the tribunal. Caryn says clients waiting 4 months to get legal advice. Also, very difficult for her clients to get grants of LA. 	<p>Invite Karly to next meeting</p>

	<p>Claudia Martin Files – VANS (Violence, Abuse and Neglect) Team Leader</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spoke about the services offered by VANS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24/7 telephone services ○ 8:30 am – 5 pm – 6 clinicians ○ Outreach in Wilcannia and Menindee ○ Assistance with: DV, SA, Child protection • Presented the 16 days of Activism and the community workshops that are being held around the area. There is a cultural focus on events this year 	
5. Other Business	Meetings Date in 2026 – everyone agreed that these will be on a Thursday at 1.30 to 3.30 rather than a Tuesday	
6. Next meeting	TBA - The next Meeting is scheduled for 3 rd March – this date will clash with Wentworth Court.	Send out email to participants regarding next date suitable – possible 22 nd February or 12 th March 2026