

Q1 Meeting	Hunter CLSD Program, 20th February 10am – 12pm, Raymond Terrace Theme: Work and Development orders and unpaid fine debt
Attendees	<p>Nissa Phillips (Hunter CLSD Program), Ann Fletcher from Port Stephens Family and Neighbourhood Service, Christine Francis and Laura Buetti from the WDO team, Tash Stent and Kaden Filmer from Wandiyali, Suzanne Thomas from Financial Counselling Hunter Valley Project, Olenka Motyka and Sarah Breusch from the University of Newcastle Legal Centre, Robyn Fraser from Legal Aid NSW crime division, Bud Crawford and Casey Chesworth from Revenue NSW, Lucy Hutchinson and Vera Dwyer from Hope St Hunter Hub, Michael Giles from Hunter Community Legal Centre, Jackie Sales from Legal Aid NSW Family/Care division, Rose Lamack from the Aboriginal Legal Service, Nicole Grgas from Hunter Tenants, Nadine Farrell from Justice Advocacy Service, Brooke Lancaster from the Women's Bail Advocacy Project (Aboriginal Legal Service).</p> <p>Apologies: Adam Checkley (Aboriginal Legal Service), Sandy Moran (Legal Aid NSW).</p>
Agenda Item	Discussion
Acknowledgement of country 10:00	With Bud Crawford from Revenue NSW.
Purpose of meeting 10.05	<p>A. CLSD Program Objective: to work collaboratively to identify and address unmet legal and related non-legal needs of people in the Hunter region. We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making better referrals/ referral pathways - working on projects and devising new services, and - coordinating our efforts. <p>B. Meeting Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Practice identifying legal issues, amongst a range of issues, to ensure services know about other services' eligibility and referral processes ● Plan collaborative CLSD events ● To gain an understanding of the issues being faced by people in the Newcastle and Hunter regions and seek ways for more effective support from services ● Relationship building; for people to get to know one another and work towards justice partnerships
Introductions 10.10- 10.20	Relational exercise: <i>(Name, service, what value do you see in CLSD partnerships?)</i>

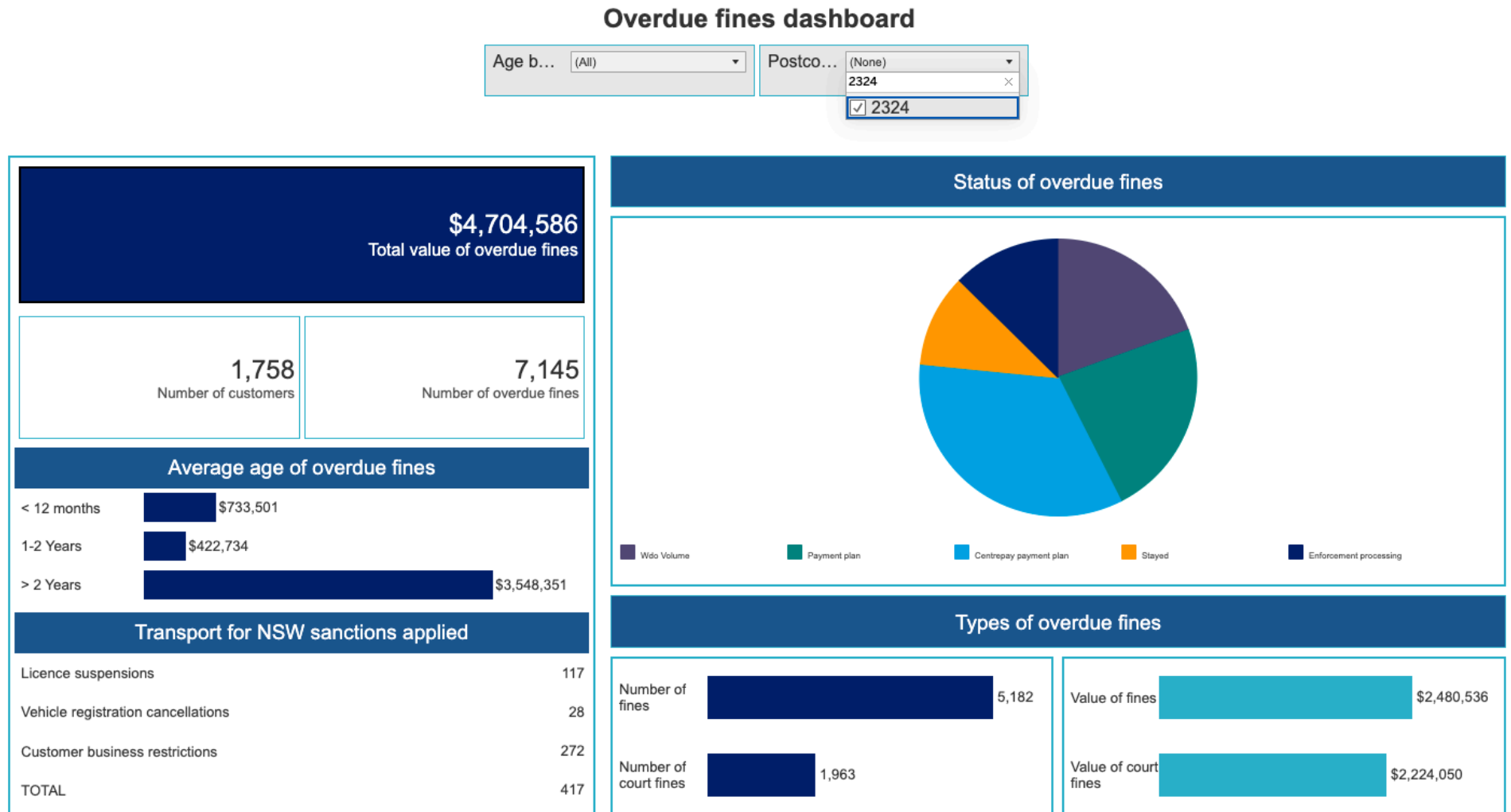
	Common responses included; meeting new people, networking, building better referrals, working towards collaborative events.
Guest speakers: Christine Francis and Laura Bueti from the Work and Development Order Service 10.20-10.50	<p>Presentation – Changes to the Work and Development Order (WDO) Program</p> <p>Speakers: Christine Francis (Community Engagement Officer) & Laura Nueti (Solicitor)</p> <p>Key Points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High Unpaid Debt: Over \$4M in fines in Raymond Terrace, with 1,758 people affected. Majority of the debt is over two years overdue. • Common Fines: Highest fine was failing to stop a heavy vehicle, followed by mobile phone use, speeding, and unregistered vehicles. • Licence and Business Restrictions: 117 licence suspensions, 28 vehicle restrictions, and 272 business restrictions in a small community. • WDO Impact: 115 WDOs approved, clearing \$177K in fines. • Changes to WDO Guidelines (3 Feb 2025): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expanded activities for participation, including mentoring, TAFE/school attendance, and mental health treatment by accredited social workers. ○ Simplified eligibility assessment process with a three-step guide. ○ Increased accessibility for young people (OOHC eligibility extended to 25 years old). ○ Improved record-keeping requirements and support materials. ○ Interstate operability—NSW fines can now be managed while living in another state. <p>Regional Focus & Outreach Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 5 priority regions: Muswellbrook, Newcastle, Tamworth/Gunnedah, Central Coast, Cessnock. • Upcoming outreach efforts: Addressing high-need areas, including Mayfield, Wallsend, Wyndale, Hamilton South, Cessnock, Singleton, and Kurri. • Challenges Identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Many people, especially single parents, are unaware of WDO eligibility. ○ Misconceptions that WDOs only involve volunteering. ○ Difficulty engaging young people and schools. ○ Centrelink clients struggle with unsustainable Centrepay deductions. ○ Many don't realise they have fines due to incorrect contact details or identity theft.

	<p>Next Steps & Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased outreach and stakeholder engagement in high-need areas. • Collaboration with housing services to reach affected families. • Targeted engagement through youth programs and transitional employment services. • Advocacy on youth fines and the issue of uninsured/unregistered driving. • Possibility of a collaborative fines clinic with Revenue NSW in the Hunter valley region. <p>More about Work and Development Orders can be found here.</p>
<p>Rose Lamak from the Aboriginal Legal Service- Legal Assistance for Women (LAW) team</p>	<p>The Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) are currently accepting all referrals for fines and fine-related debt. Many clients initially engage with ALS due to a fine-related issue.</p> <p>More about ALS can be found here.</p>
<p>Guest speakers: Casey Chesworth and Bud Lawrence from Revenue NSW 10.50-11.05</p>	<p>Key Functions of Revenue NSW Outreach Officers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authority to Review Fines: Can issue cautions and remove certain fines on the spot. • Support for Vulnerable Clients: Can assess additional needs (e.g., homelessness) and approve fine write-offs up to \$5,000, which can help clients regain their licences. • Licence Restrictions: Can lift restrictions (not suspensions) immediately if clients engage in a payment plan or WDO. <p>Recent Outreach & Engagement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moree Fines Outreach Day: 54 customers assisted, with support from Revenue NSW, ALS, and Legal Aid. • Successful Text Message Campaign: Increased customer turnout. • Service NSW Partnerships: Cessnock identified as a key outreach location. • Custom Outreach Events: Can collaborate with organisations to deliver tailored support on fines debt options. <p>Additional Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue NSW Advocacy Service: Effective in resolving complex fine issues. • Case Notes on Client Files: Prevents restrictions from being reinstated unnecessarily.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotline for Instant Assistance: Dedicated support for First Nations and vulnerable clients. • Service NSW Payment Issues: Customers often advised to pay \$100 to set up a payment plan, but if not properly managed, sanctions can be reinstated with additional fees. <p>More about the First Nations Revenue NSW hotline can be found here.</p>
Discussion: Fines clinic 11.05- 11.25	<p>Discussions took place about the possibility of running a Fines Clinic in the Raymond Terrace area. There was broad enthusiasm for this proposal from attendees. Discussions were had about planning for a collaborative Raymond Terrace Fines Clinic in May:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Timing: May 2025 – feasibility to be confirmed. • Venue Options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Deck Venue (linked to Raymond Port Stephens Family & Neighbourhood Services). • Senior Citizens Hall (centrally located, good facilities, parking, and transport access). • Key Services to involve: Centrelink, Legal Aid WDO team, Revenue NSW, Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS), Births, Deaths and Marriages. • Effective advertising considerations: SMS messaging is the most effective method. Revenue NSW can contact clients in the region, but this requires at least two months' lead time. <p>Community Engagement & Outreach:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Areas: Consider focusing on Raymond Terrace postcode. • Housing & Community Partnerships: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hume Housing could reach out to tenants (1,000 properties). ◦ Social housing services and Upper Hunter Community Services (QEII Building) could assist. • Revenue NSW could send additional staff if a large turnout expected. • Partnering with organisations that work with clients in debt can help target outreach. • Incentives: Free birth certificates for eligible people could be a key drawcard. • A working group will be established, with Revenue NSW and Legal Aid confirmed as key participants.
Action Plan Stocktake 11.25-11.45	Attendees completed the Hunter CLSD action plan survey.
Upcoming events and current issues in the region 11:45- 11.55	<p>Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS) – Rose Lamack</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach clinics across the Hunter.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toronto: 25 February (Drop-in clinic). • Singleton: 27 February (Drop-in clinic). • Provides on-the-spot advice or intake for further assistance. <p>Hunter Tenants – Nicole Grgas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upcoming tenancy law changes, including new rules on renting with pets (landlords cannot unreasonably refuse). • Will present updates at interagency meetings. • Fair Trading may run a roadshow on these changes. <p>Newcastle University Legal Centre – Sarah Breusch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law on the Beach free legal clinic has restarted (weekly). • Drop-in clinic on Wednesdays during the university semester. • Clients should call ahead to check availability, especially outside semester dates. • No strict eligibility criteria—can provide initial legal advice to anyone. <p>Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) – Nadine Farrell</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports clients with cognitive impairment navigating the criminal justice system. • Section 14 diversion (referrals must come from a legal practitioner or magistrate). • Limited pilot program, with Madeleine Turner as the on-the-ground advocate. • Meeting with Legal Aid on 5 March. • Waiting for Court Users Forum at Maitland (25 February). <p>ALS Women's Bail Advocacy Program – Brooke Lancaster</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams in Newcastle and Redfern. • Provides wraparound support. • Helps women get and keep bail, ensuring conditions are appropriate. • Addresses underlying issues leading to legal system involvement.
<p>Next CLSD Hunter meeting 11: 55</p>	<p>The Hunter CLSD Q2 meeting will be held on Thurs 22nd May, in Maitland, from 10am-12pm.</p> <p>Theme: working well with disability advocacy services, with guest speakers from disability advocacy services.</p>

Overdue fines in the Raymond Terrace postcode: 2324



Source: https://www.apps09.revenue.nsw.gov.au/customer_service/forms/dashboard/overduedefines, accessed 17/2/25