

Q2 Meeting	Hunter CLSD Program. 22nd May, 2025. Maitland Theme: Disability Advocacy
	<p>Present: Nissa Phillips (CLSD Hunter- Chair); Josephine Adamson – Legal Aid NSW; Jessica Woodward-Sciulli - Legal Aid NSW; Geoff Caplin – Hunter Tenants; Brooke Lancaster – Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS); Nadine Farrell – Justice Advocacy Service (JAS); Vicki Weller – Disability Advocacy NSW; Thuy Luong – Disability Advocacy NSW; Josh Caban – We Care NSW; Lisa Matthews – Hunter Primary Care; Mackenzie Cley – Hunter Primary Care; Bronwyn Amborgetti – Hunter Community Legal Centre (HCLC); Casey Chesworth – Revenue NSW; Bud Crawford – Revenue NSW; Kate Voaner – Kurri Kurri Community Service; Will Dooan – Kurri Kurri Community Service; Annalise Iserief – Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ); Nicky Johnson – We Care NSW; Rebecca McKenzie – University of Newcastle</p> <p>Apologies: Adam Checkely (ALS); Emma Colston (Disability Advocacy); Rose Roberts (Legal Aid NSW); Olenka Motyka (University of Newcastle); Debbie Simon's (ITS Lake Macquarie); Dave Belcher (CDAH); Dianne Brooke- Fleming (ALS)</p>
Agenda Item	Discussion
Acknowledgement of country 10:00	Nissa Phillips opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Wonnarua Country, paying her respects to the Traditional Custodians of the land and to Elders past, present, and emerging.
Purpose of meeting 10.05- 10.10	<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: - making better referrals/ referral pathways - working on projects and devising new services, and - coordinating our efforts.</p> <p>B. Meeting Objective: • 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</p>
Introductions 10.10- 10.20	Relational exercise: (Name, service, what value do you see in CLSD partnerships?) 1 Common responses included; meeting new people, networking, building better referrals, working towards collaborative events.

Guest speaker: Nicky Johnson from We Care NSW. 10.20- 10.30

Nicky Johnson – We Care NSW: Advocacy & Community Support

- We Care NSW is an Aboriginal-operated not-for-profit organisation established in 2014.
- Services provided include:
 - Supported Independent Living (SIL)
 - Community supports
 - Allied health services
 - Community engagement programs
- Most participants are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, but the service is inclusive of non-Aboriginal clients.
- In the past two years, We Care has become accredited to provide Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) services.
- The organisation's approach is:
 - Trauma-informed
 - Person-centred
 - Strongly focused on cultural connection, co-design, and advocacy
- Collaborates with:
 - Legal Aid
 - Aboriginal Legal Service (ALS)
 - Domestic violence services
 - Local Elders
- Programs include:
 - "Yarn Up" – Men's group
 - "Sister Circle" – Women's group
- Advocates for inclusive activities through:
 - Risk assessment
 - Safety planning
- Aims to empower participants and support them in achieving personal goals.

More information about We Care can be found here, [We Care NSW - Offering NDIS Services](#)

Guest speaker: Josh from We Care NSW 10.30-10.40

Josh Caban- We Care NSW: Advocacy & Community Support

- We Care's allied health services include:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Five psychologists ○ Speech therapists ○ Behaviour support practitioners ● Operates within: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NDIS framework ○ Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP) framework ● The team includes three Aboriginal psychologists, which is significant given the national shortage. ● Services offered: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cognitive assessments ○ Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) assessments ○ Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) assessments ○ Counselling ○ Support for participants with overdue fines or involvement with the justice system ● Outreach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Travels to Taree to support children in court to reduce reoffending ● 1-8 Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offers free developmental screening for Aboriginal children under 6 ○ Referrals accepted from schools, GPs, preschools, and parents
<p>Guest speaker: Nadine Farrell from the Justice Advocacy Service (JAS). 10.40-11.00</p>	<p>Nadine Farrell – Justice Advocacy Service (JAS)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● JAS is part of the Intellectual Disability Rights Service (IDRS), a Community Legal Centre. ● Provides statewide support for people with cognitive impairments involved in the criminal justice system. ● Services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police station support ○ Court support ○ Legal advice by phone ○ Advocacy for victims, witnesses, suspects, and defendants ● Works closely with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Police ○ Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLOs) ● Diversion Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active in Maitland and other courts

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Includes assessments and support plans for court ○ Has shown better outcomes than community corrections in reducing recidivism ● No formal diagnosis is required for referral. <p>More information about JAS can be found here, Justice Advocacy Service (JAS) - IDRS</p>
<p>Guest speakers: Vicki Weller and Thuy Luong – Disability Advocacy NSW</p>	<p>Vicki Weller and Thuy Luong – Disability Advocacy NSW</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disability Advocacy NSW operates under the Advocacy Law Alliance. ● Offers two programs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Face-to-face advocacy ○ Remote helpline ● The service is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-government ○ Not-for-profit ● Focuses on building self-advocacy skills. ● Supports clients across a wide range of issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education ○ NDIS ○ Healthcare ○ Transport ● The helpline is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Nationwide ○ Time-limited ○ Referrals made through the Disability Gateway ● No diagnosis is required to access services. <p>Advocates are not legal advisors but can refer clients to legal services.</p> <p>More information about DA can be found here, https://www.da.org.au/</p>
<p>Discussion: Working well with disability advocacy services and potential collaborative events. 11.30-11.50</p>	<p>Referral Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendees discussed the importance of having clear, accessible, and well-understood referral pathways to disability services. ● Shared concern that many frontline workers and community members are unaware of:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How to initiate referrals ○ Which services are appropriate for specific needs <p>Collaborative Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The group explored ideas for joint initiatives to strengthen service delivery and community engagement ● Health justice partnerships were highlighted as an important piece, with a focus on collaborating with We Care NSW ● Interest in co-hosting community education events that promote available legal and other supports <p>Community Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A recurring theme was the need to improve visibility and understanding of available services. ● Many clients are unsure where to start when facing issues like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fines ○ Housing ○ Food relief ○ Disability support ● Proposed actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure services are listed and regularly updated on platforms like Ask Izzy ○ Nissa from CLSD to circulate a survey to gather ideas for improving outreach and future collaborative events <p>Discussion: The group discussed the possibility of hosting community information and multi-service days, allowing various services to showcase their offerings in a single, accessible location. Additional suggestions included prioritising advocacy efforts to address systemic issues and improve service coordination.</p>
<p>Upcoming events 11:50- 11.55</p>	<p>A CLSD outreach event will be held in Raymond Terrace on Thursday, 29 May, offering community members the opportunity to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Get assistance with fines

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for a fee waiver NSW birth certificate <p>Posters promoting the event were made available at the meeting for distribution.</p> <p>CLSD partners are encouraged to share details of any upcoming events they would like promoted through the partnership network.</p>
Next CLSD Hunter meeting 11: 55	<p>The next Hunter CLSD Q3 meeting will be held on Thurs 21st of August, in Muswellbrook at the QBE building, from 10am-12pm.</p> <p>Theme: Postcode Justice: Bridging Gaps and Building Support for Upper Hunter Communities.</p>