

Hunter CLSD Program Meeting

20 November 2025 | 10am – 12pm | Newcastle
Legal Services Only

MINUTES

Present: Nissa Phillips (CLSD Regional Coordinator), Justine O'Reilly (CLSD, Legal Aid NSW), Bud Lawrence (Revenue NSW), Keiran O'Sullivan (CLE Unit, Legal Aid), Rose Lamack (ALS), Briony Manning (Senior Family Lawyer, HCLC), Josephine Adamson (Civil Practice Manager, Legal Aid)

Apologies: Taylah Gray (Legal Aid), Sandy Moran (Legal Aid), Nicole Grgas (Hunter Tenants), Diana Brook- Fleming (ALS), Casey Chesworth (Revenue NSW), Christine Frances (WDO Team, Legal Aid)

Agenda item	Discussion	Action
Opening and purpose	<p>Nissa acknowledged this meeting took place on unceded Awabakal Land.</p> <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	

CLSD Program Regional Coordinator: Nissa Phillips
Email: clsdhunter@gmail.com
Webpage: [Hunter CLSD Program Partnership](#)



<p>Introductions and thoughts on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • challenges and opportunities they have had this past year • identified areas of unmet legal need or emerging trends • how collaboration creates value 	<p><u>Josephine (Civil Practice Manager at Legal Aid NSW – Newcastle office)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues around social housing policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social housing providers are not following policies ○ Clients experiencing psychological stress - many evictions ○ Houses are in disrepair - mould an issue causing health concerns for tenants ○ In Upper Hunter – Home in Place is often a difficult social housing provider ○ Josephine has case studies and happy to supply them to the NLAH Housing Working Group Hunter TAAS will also have case studies ○ There is an NCAT Users Forum but LA local officers are not invites <p><u>Briony (Senior Family Lawyer, Hunter Community Legal Centre)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The family division at HCLC mainly deals with parenting and property. Very few people are getting grants of Legal Aid for family law so come to HCLC. • HCLC is doing a regular duty service at FCFCOA on indigenous list day. • Legal Aid’s EIU no longer does duty work at Newcastle FCFCOA, only Legal Aid’s DVU does duty work • There is high DV in the area • CALD clients being misidentified as perpetrators. CALD migrant workers also have many traffic issues, (Legal Aid says they are not seeing many CALD clients since the refugee team closed its outreach in Newcastle) <p><u>Rose (Care & Protection lawyer, ALS)</u></p> <p>Issues seen in ALS’ different monthly outreach clinics:</p> <p>Gateshead – DV and misidentification of who the true perpetrator is. Care & Protection</p> <p>Raymond Terrace – Fines, DV, Family law</p> <p>Singleton and Muswellbrook – problems with housing providers</p> <p>Cessnock and Curry – DV (Police DVLO only takes action if a lawyer accompanies the victim)</p> <p><u>Kieran (CLE Unit, Legal Aid, Sydney)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running ‘Work Ready’ CLE’s at high schools but not getting a lot of traction in the Hunter region • Josephine suggests Newcastle High school would be interested 	<p>CLSD Manager to connect Josephine with NLAH Housing working group so she can share case studies</p>
---	--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bud has contacts in Department of Education and gave Kieran a list of names and emails. • Need for CLEs on Police Powers, and Consent. 	
	<p>Bud Lawrence (Aboriginal Customer Manager, Revenue NSW) Laurence.crawford@revenue.nsw.gov.au - Revenue NSW Outreach team for Central Coast/Hunter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bud had no trends to report but said that a change in policy is going to make matters worse for clients with regards to fines and their licences. • Revenue will now be processing all SDDO fines (eg: TAFE, Council fines, ambulance, Tunnel tolls, Sydney Harbour Bridge, Housing, AEC etc). This means that you can have your licence suspended for non – payment of voting fine or council fine. • However, Revenue will not have the ability with SDDO fines to set up a payment plan or reduce the amount or stay the licence suspension. WDOs are not available for SDDO fines. <p>This link is for all the info about State Debt Fees, your Ambulance, TAFE, Councils etc Fees NSW Government</p> <p>Revenue NSW Data Dashboards:</p> <p>Fines dashboard Provides an overview of the fines issued, top 5 fines trends and resolution indicators by postcode. Data can be broken down by financial year, age band or postcode https://www.apps09.revenue.nsw.gov.au/customer_service/forms/dashboard/fines</p> <p>Overdue fines Shows data and statistics on current fines that have passed their due date and become overdue. https://www.apps09.revenue.nsw.gov.au/customer_service/forms/dashboard/overduedefines</p> <p>Work and Development Order</p>	

	Shows data and statistics relating to the Work and Development Order program such as participation, approval, and First Nations community data. https://www.apps09.revenue.nsw.gov.au/customer_service/forms/dashboard/wdo	
Service Updates	<p>Revenue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WDO updates • Mentoring no longer has an age limit • Court-ordered work activity can now be on a WDO • Revenue can write off fines of \$5000 • Revenue can now text people with fines asking them if they need help in paying fine <p>ALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALS Care and Family services is divided into North and South sections – Newcastle is in the northern region • ALS does outreach at East Maitland, Woy Woy and Broadmeadow Children’s Court • It also does at Newcastle FCFCOA • At select local courts, ALS will assist with AVO matters 	
Review of Hunter CLSD Program Action Plan 2025-2026	<p>Nissa spoke about what had been achieved in the action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raymond Terrace collaborative event. • Maitland event in partnership with We Care NSW. • Muswellbrook collaborative event. • Themed meetings with guest speakers. • Increased advocacy efforts. • Monthly newsletters and updates, including regular networking opportunities. <p>CLSD Legal Partners are really happy with the focused approach in CLSD and with Nissa's organisation of events.</p>	

<p>Mapping priorities for 2026.</p> <p>Remaining tasks from the action plan.</p>	<p><u>Suggestions for completing the action plan include:</u></p> <p><u>Priorities for CLE's:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • CALD • Prisoners <p><u>Themes for meetings:</u></p> <p>Q1 – Multiculturalism and working well with CALD organisations (meeting at MOSAIC)</p> <p>Q2 – Older persons and the law</p> <p>Q3 - Housing (address issue or relationship breakdown between services and social housing provider)</p> <p>Q4 – Legal services only</p> <p><u>Collaborative Events</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivors R Us (SRU) in Cardiff for March next year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ SRU is a warehouse where people experiencing hardship can access free food, Orange Sky Laundry, a food bank, an op shop, counselling, and other services. It is completely volunteer-run and was set up by a woman with lived experience of DFV. ○ Event for Free birth certs, assistance with fines, housing advice legal assistance, etc. ○ ALS could give CLE on AVOs ○ Invite Cardiff AMS (Across road from SRU) • Free birth certificate event with BDM, legal providers and Revenue NSW at Soul Hub in Newcastle • Collaborative event in Cessnock and Singleton (Taylah Gray at Legal Aid) • Law Expo with CLEs and stalls in May • Bring your AVO day? • Idea to have birth certificate/fines days near court on a list day 	<p>Nissa to Invite SRS area caseworkers to meetings</p> <p>Nissa to work with Kieran at CLE unit regarding youth CLEs</p> <p>Nissa to reach out to University's Older Persons Legal Service and Legal Aid Elder Abuse Service</p>
--	--	---