

Riverina CLSD Program Meeting

5 November 2025 | 3 – 4pm | In person

MINUTES

Present: Chair - Melissa Van Lierop (Riverina CLSD Coordinator), David McLennan (One Door), Timothy Ngu (LANSW), Marisol Kroiter (Anglicare), Leesa Adams and Jacquie Jennings (Services Australia) Geraldine Higgins (Intereach), Billie-Jo Johnson (Intereach), Alison Seidel (LANSW), Danielle Plumb (LANSW), Kim Busutil (LANSW), Minute/note taker - Justine O'Reilly – CLSD Program Manager (LANSW)

Agenda item	Discussion
1. Opening	Mel welcomed and thanked everyone for attending. Acknowledgement of country.
2. Purpose of today's meeting	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To celebrate the collaborative work of the past year• To discuss the Junee Community Service Day and to identify current legal and non – legal issues affecting people in the community.
3. Introductions	Group introduced themselves and their organisations. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• David from One Door is a mental health carer advocate. He works 3 days a week (doesn't work Thursday). One Door merged with MIND Australia. His area includes Wagga Wagga, Tumut, and Young• Tim Ngu is a homelessness specialist solicitor at Legal Aid NSW in Wagga Wagga. Legal Aid has clinics every Tuesday and Wednesday with 5 civil solicitors.• Marisol is a financial consultant with Anglicare supporting financial literacy and financial problems• Mel is the CLSD Riverina Coordinator and the Program Manager for Intereach' s Family and Mental Health (Community Strengthening) program

Melissa Van Lierop CLSD Riverina Program Coordinator:

Email: melissa.vanlierop@intereach.com.au

Phone: 1300 488 226

Webpage: [CLSD Riverina Program Link](#)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leesa and Jacquie are Community Outreach workers with Services Australia • Billie-jo is an Intereach community outreach worker based at the Community Hub in Cootamundra • Gerri is an Intereach community outreach worker based in Leeton. She also is the Chair of the Murrumbidgee Murray River Council. • Alison is a solicitor with Legal Aid's Statewide Workplace Rights Service and she is based in Wagga Wagga • Kim Busuttil is the acting Managing Solicitor of the WDO Service at Legal Aid • Danielle Plumb is a WDO Community Engagement Officer at Legal Aid
<p>4 Junee Community Service Day</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mel thanked everyone for being so inclusive at today's community service day in Junee • The community organisations which offered assistance at the Junee Community Service Day were: Intereach, Services Australia, Anglicare, Services NSW, Legal Aid, WDO (legal Aid), Revenue NSW • Some of the outputs included: 10 – 15 legal advices, 25 – 30 birth certificate applications, including 3 birth registration applications, approximately 10 Medicare/Centrelink enquiries, 8 WDO applications. 4 clients for case management and mentoring/advocacy through Intereach. Services NSW spoke to many people about rebates
<p>5. Legal and non- legal Issues in community</p>	<p><u>Centrelink/Services Australia</u> Leesa and Jacquie are seeing a lot of homelessness, youth crime, drugs and alcohol issues, and mental health issues. There is a housing crisis in the area. West Wyalong town is 'dying', Tumut also deserves attention. Younger people are moving there for housing but not a lot of services in Tumut. Grandparents are having to take care of young children. Problem with children not being registered at birth. Jackie mentioned that there are pilots in ACT and Qld in which the government is registering births in the hospital. This could be</p>

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	<p>something NSW does. Literacy is also an issue making completing paperwork difficult for clients. In Cootamundra, housing is a big issue. There are also a lot of PALM workers who are unsupported. They have no transport and have to walk 6 km out of town for the work. Many experience sexual exploitation. PALM workers are better regulated in Qld and Victoria.</p> <p><u>Anglicare Financial Counselling</u> Marisol thinks the main issues affecting the people she assists are housing, DV and transport. Centrelink can be slow with DV payments, and women are often out of time to claim victims' compensation payments.</p> <p><u>Legal Aid NSW</u> Tim is concerned about clients who leave jail into homelessness. Also bail applications are failing because there is no family to go to. There is also no due diligence on how safe the nominated bail home is. Riverina Aboriginal Medical Service is going to the jail to support those in custody.</p> <p>Alison would like services to refer exploited workers to her, such as the PALM workers</p> <p><u>One Door</u> David says he thinks the most pressing issues that his clients are dealing with is cost of living, family separation, an aging population looking after adult children, alcohol and drug issues, and people moving from the cities for cheaper housing putting more stress on the local housing situation.</p>
<p>Discussion about events in 2026</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mel held 4 CLSD/Service Provider legal community service events this year which may not be sustainable in future years. In 2026 the plan is to hold 1-2 Legal Community events, a Legal Services only meeting and 2 ALL CLSD Riverina partners online meetings.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion around which towns. All agreed that it would be good to possibly hold events in Tumut and Griffith, suggestions made to consider venues to ensure we attract both First Nations and non-First Nations clients.
Next meeting	5 March 2026

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