This Guide focuses on the pro bono work undertaken by 22 of the largest law firms in NSW. In response to increasing interest from young lawyers and law students, it has been developed to provide up-to-date information about the structured and organised programs and community services offered by these firms.

Profiles of these firms, their pro bono philosophy, the range of opportunities they offer for pro bono and community service work are detailed along with ‘insider’ comments from lawyers within the firms.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

A guide to the pro bono practices of NSW's largest law firms

2008

PUBLISHED BY NEW SOUTH WALES YOUNG LAWYERS
AND THE NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE
New South Wales Young Lawyers (NSWYL) is a vibrant organisation of lawyers under 36 years of age, or in the first 5 years of practice, and all law students. While our organisation is a division of the Law Society of NSW, we are a very distinct group of lawyers with our own energy and voice in the profession and the community. NSWYL is committed to engaging in pro bono and community services work. This is organised through the Pro Bono and Community Services TaskForce (Taskforce). The Taskforce compiled and wrote this publication in order to inform the broader legal community about the opportunities for pro bono work in our profession and to encourage greater participation for the benefit of our community.

The Taskforce brings together volunteer lawyers and law students from diverse backgrounds, all of whom share a common goal of using their legal and personal skills to benefit the community by improving access to justice. We encourage you to visit our website (www.younglawyers.com.au) to find out more about NSWYL and the work of the Taskforce.
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Foreword

The Hon Justice Michael Kirby AC CMG
Justice of the High Court of Australia
Patron of NSW Young Lawyers

When I was a young lawyer, pro bono practice was haphazard, unpredictable and largely dependent on the individual inclinations of legal practitioners. I did a lot of it. But this was also somewhat accidental. Part of my brilliant campaign to be re-elected President of the Sydney University SRC, rested on my early work as Honorary Solicitor for the students. The cases ranged from winning student appeals against exclusion; beating charges of fare evasion; upholding student efforts to desegregate cinemas in outback towns of the State; to (later) defending conscientious objectors against the Vietnam War. My noble efforts were rewarded with re-election as SRC President and later election to the University Senate.

I discovered that pro bono work could be interesting and worthwhile. It could also help to make one's name. Later, I accepted a lot of pro bono cases for the NSW Council for Civil Liberties. Fortunately, the senior partners of my firm, Bruce Holcombe and Roger Lakeman, brilliant lawyers, encouraged this work. They knew that it kept up my interest in law. They also supported paying back to society for the advantages they derived from a prosperous legal business.

Nowadays, pro bono work in the legal profession is more organised and on a much larger scale. It is an important part of a contemporary legal practice. The High Court avails itself of pro bono assistance in many cases. Sometimes, where a refugee applicant or some other litigant with little if any means appears to have an arguable case, the Court explores the availability of pro bono representation through the professional associations. Rarely does it prove impossible to help the needy. In an important recent case before the High Court, Roach v Electoral Commission [2007] HCA 43, an Aboriginal Australian, serving a term of imprisonment, challenged the validity of federal legislation that purported to exclude all prisoners serving a term of imprisonment from participation in the federal elections. The challenge, which could otherwise probably not have been brought, was supported with pro bono assistance provided by one of the legal firms mentioned in this book. The challenge succeeded in part. I pay tribute to the standard of presentation which the Court received of very important constitutional issues concerned with the basic rights of prisoners as electors of the Commonwealth.

Our system of justice does not really work very well in most court cases unless the parties are legally represented. In courts and tribunals, it often depends upon the availability of equality of arms. The decision of the High Court in Dietrich v The Queen (1992) 177 CLR 292 effectively ensures that, at trial, in all serious criminal charges, most accused will be competently represented. However, the same is not true of appeals. Nor is it true in civil litigation. Proper representation in such cases should not depend on charity. Yet, in many cases, it depends, in practice, on a public spirited attitude on the part of busy lawyers who are prepared to represent litigants with proper cases, so as to ensure the chance of getting justice.
I praise the members and staff of the legal firms mentioned in this book for their participation in making equal justice under law a reality in many cases where access to justice might otherwise have been denied. I praise NSW Young Lawyers and the National Pro Bono Resource Centre for their initiatives in compiling this useful book. However, we should not allow the pro bono work, described in this guide, to deflect us, as members of the legal profession in Australia, from solving the problems of access to justice more conceptually.

Access to justice is one of the great challenges that our profession faces. We must all help to put access to justice on a firmer foundation. Meantime, the availability of pro bono programmes in leading firms is undoubtedly a most useful and honourable expedient. As I discovered, so many years ago, it is also fulfilling and stimulating for the participants. When the mists of time envelop the routine cases, and one thinks back on the hard fought “triumphs” of one’s past, more often than not the cases that spring to mind are those that were performed pro bono. And that teaches us the important lesson that rewards, in life, are frequently non-material and spiritual. The law is a profession concerned with a deep spiritual wellspring: the quest for equal justice under law for all.

High Court of Australia
Canberra, 1 December 2007
Introduction

The Young Lawyer of today is the face of the profession tomorrow. She and he will determine what the public thinks of the legal profession and their faith in our legal institutions.

An integral part of the profession is the selfless work done by countless lawyers for those individuals and organisations who could not otherwise obtain access to legal services.

Undertaking pro bono work enables lawyers to contribute positively to their communities and often provides immense personal satisfaction. For young lawyers it can offer important opportunities to extend legal knowledge and skills and, through ‘hands-on’ involvement, bridging that gap between law in theory and law in practice.

All lawyers have a professional responsibility to aid access to justice. Involvement in delivering pro bono services to the disadvantaged and/or in the public interest is an important way in which the legal profession fulfils this responsibility.

Lawyers do this in a number of ways. Many play a vital role as volunteers at community legal centres (CLCs), often as part of an evening advice session. Law students contribute as paralegals, often through law school’s clinical legal education programs. Other lawyers contribute to law reform, community legal education programs and policy work. Individual lawyers, from sole practitioners and in larger firms to barristers, in-house government and corporate lawyers, also provide a range of services in many areas of law through in-house programs and other service delivery programs (such as Homeless Person Legal Clinics). In all, they make a significant contribution to the many hours of pro bono assistance given each year throughout the state.

Methodology

The Guide was created by the Taskforce to provide more information about the pro bono practices of large firms. In 2005, the Taskforce saw that while many firms offered pro bono opportunities within their commercial practices, there was a need for an independent and comprehensive guide so that lawyers and law students could compare and contrast them. The Guide aims to address this problem by collating up-to-date details of all the largest firms and their pro bono practices. It began with a survey which included questions capturing the types of pro bono work undertaken by the firm, the level of staff participation in pro bono, and eligibility criteria for the provision of pro bono work.

This survey was sent out to 55 firms, with responses being received from 16. Although a draft Guide was produced from the responses, no final publication was created due to a lack of resources.

Earlier this year the project was reinvigorated by the Taskforce and the Centre, with the assistance of its two social justice intern students, Sonya Redman and Hai-Van Nguyen (the interns).

A slightly different approach was taken. The 40 largest firms in NSW (by number of lawyers) were invited to participate. Instead of mailing out surveys, the interns under supervision, undertook the task of creating draft profiles of the firms.

1 A full list of CLCs nationally and opportunities to assist can be found at the CLC volunteers website at www.clcvolunteers.net.au
For the firms that had responded in 2005, the profiles were created from 2005 survey responses, the corporate knowledge of the Centre and the Taskforce and from firm websites. For firms that had not previously been contacted, or had not provided a response in 2005, a template profile was created. The purpose of creating these draft profiles was to make it easy for firms to update/provide the required information. Once completed, the profiles were mailed out to the relevant firms who were asked to peruse and comment on the profiles as required.

The interns spent several weeks conducting follow up telephone calls to encourage firms to finalise their profiles. Some firms indicated early on that they were not in a position to participate.

This first edition of the Guide contains details of the pro bono programs of 22 of the state’s largest law firms as well as some analysis to assist readers with an overview of key elements of a pro bono program. It is hoped this will encourage greater familiarity and participation in pro bono work by all lawyers as well as permitting firms to specialise their practices. Law students, graduates and young lawyers in the job market will also be able to use the guide as a standard reference to make an informed choice by using a firm’s pro bono practice as a criterion of distinction.

In the coming years, we anticipate the Guide will become a regular periodic publication that will include more firms and become more comprehensive with each edition.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the following people for their contribution. In 2005 to 2006, the Taskforce members who worked with Davyd on the survey and publication were Peta Dean, Marie Filippeli, Helen Gregoriou, Tory Kakoischke, Stacey Kelly, Sarah-Jane Morris, Rebecca Ordish, Mariko Ralph, Elizabeth Ricossa, Irem Sevinc and Sharon Wang. In 2007, the Centre’s Lynne Spender and Amanda Lennestaal and the interns, Hai-Van Nguyen and Sonya Redman.

We also thank Rebecca Ordish, Leah Gubecka, Robert Ishak and Claire Prenter for reviewing the proof and Natasha Galea for getting the text ready for publication. While we are grateful for each person’s contribution, ultimate responsibility for the text must lie with us. In that respect, we would be grateful for any comments or feedback.

Davyd Wong  
Director  
Taskforce  
NSW Young Lawyers

John Corker  
Director  
National Pro Bono Resource Centre
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Analysis

This section provides an overview of the information provided by the participating firms and identifies
commonalities and differences between the various programs.

Size

Of the 22 firms that provided entries for the Guide, approximately half of them have over 45 partners
and over 150 lawyers. Amongst the remaining firms, there is a fairly even spread between those with
35 to 45 partners and 100 to 150 lawyers; and those with fewer than 10 partners and fewer than
20 lawyers.

Size, however, is not necessarily an indication of a firm’s commitment to pro bono activities. The
information provided reveals that smaller firms often have pro bono practices that are just as extensive
as those implemented by the larger firms.

Mandatory or Voluntary

All 22 firms indicated that they have formal, written pro bono policies. However, only one firm
indicated that they make pro bono work a mandatory requirement amongst their lawyers. In a similar
vein, only five of the 22 firms in the Guide are signatories to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target².

Lawyer Participation Rate

Estimates of the level of lawyer participation in pro bono work within their firms was provided by 16
firms. The data is set out in Table 1.1 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Pro Bono participation</th>
<th>No. of Firms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>71-100</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-70</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-49</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-25</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 – Levels of participation in pro bono

Gender

One of the early issues identified by the Taskforce was an apparent gender imbalance between
participants engaged in pro bono work, with an apparent tendency for women to be more likely to
participate. Unfortunately only five firms provided estimates of the gender divide of pro bono work
performed which limits the statistical veracity of the survey results, however three of the four firms
confirmed a clear imbalance. Two firms indicated that the ratio is approximately 75:25 in favour of
female lawyers; one firm estimated the ratio to be 63:35 in favour of female lawyers; and two firms
suggested that there is a roughly even split.

Types of Pro Bono Work

Most of the firms provide similar types of pro bono work. Nearly all firms (19 firms) indicated that
they provide free or discounted legal advice to individuals and nonprofit organisations. Roughly half

² The National Pro Bono Aspirational Target was launched by the National Pro Bono Resource Centre on 26 April 2007. The target is a voluntary
and encourages lawyers to perform at least 35 hours of pro bono legal work per lawyer per year. Signatories to the target include individual solicitors
and barristers, law firms and chambers of barristers.
of the firms indicated that they undertake other forms of pro bono work for the ‘public good’ or in the ‘public interest’. These include: writing law reform submissions (10 firms); conducting external community legal education (CLEs) and seminars (10 firms); offering secondments to community organisations and / or CLCs (eight firms); and participating in evening advice sessions at CLCs (six firms).

**Areas of Pro Bono Legal Assistance**

The most common areas of pro bono legal assistance are:

- Administrative Law
- Association Incorporation
- Commercial/Tax
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial Relations
- Environmental/Planning
- Fines/Debt Recovery
- Housing/Tenancy
- Litigation
- Victims Compensation

It was also interesting to note that (much like their commercial practices) half of all responding firms indicated particular areas they were targeting with their pro bono and community services programs.

**Eligibility Criteria**

Most firms have similar eligibility criteria for assessing applications for pro bono legal assistance. Eight firms apply general criteria, while 12 firms apply different criteria for specific types of pro bono work. Generally, firms with specific eligibility criteria adopt a means and merits assessment when determining whether or not to provide assistance to individuals. Assistance for nonprofit organisations is often determined by reference to the type of work those organisations do. Four firms indicated that they provide assistance to organisations that work on behalf of ‘disadvantaged or marginalised’ individuals, while three firms indicated that they assist organisations that work to promote social justice or the ‘public interest.’

**Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff**

Thirteen firms recognised pro bono work done as part of a lawyer’s billable hours and in annual performance reviews. Four firms only counted the work as part of a lawyer’s billable hours and three firms only considered it as a performance criteria in annual reviews. One firm provided neither. In future, it would be interesting to determine in depth whether budget recognition improves participation rates.

**Community Service**

Most firms also perform some form of community service; 13 firms have written community service policies and 15 firms have ‘workplace giving’ programs. Only four firms provide their staff with one day of community service leave per year.

**Growth**

Encouragingly 15 firms reported they were either actively looking to grow their pro bono practices or maintain the current level of commitment. No firm responded with an intention to decrease their commitment to pro bono work within their firms.
The Firms
Allens Arthur Robinson ‘AAR’

Sydney Office Location
Level 28, Deutsche Bank Place
Corner of Hunter & Phillip Streets
Sydney NSW 2000

P: (02) 9230 4000
F: (02) 9230 5333

The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth

The Contacts
National Co-ordinator
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P: (03) 9613 8338
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“The benefits of participating in pro bono work include the opportunity to contribute to the community, increased job satisfaction and diversification and development of skills.”

SNAPSHOT
✔ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
✔ Has written pro bono policy
✔ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
✔ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
✔ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
✔ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
✔ Has a workplace giving program
✔ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Administrative
- Incorporation of Associations
- Commercial Litigation/Corporate/Tax/Compliance
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Defamation
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial
- Environment/Planning
- Immigration
- Insurance/Superannuation
- Intellectual Property
- Privacy
- Property

Overview

AAR is a foundation signatory to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target and has a written pro bono policy. Responsibility for coordinating pro bono work lies with a Committee of 10, a dedicated National Pro Bono Co-ordinator and four part time local co-ordinators.

AAR does not require all lawyers to do pro bono work, but every lawyer is encouraged to participate. An average of around 40% of lawyers and partners perform pro bono work each year. Lawyers with less than four years of experience do the highest proportion of pro bono work. The gender split of those who perform pro bono work at AAR is unknown.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

AAR’s pro bono efforts prioritise legal issues relating to Indigenous Australians, those who require protection of their human rights, including refugee rights, those with a mental illness and the disadvantaged, including the homeless.

The firm does pro bono work mainly in the following areas:

- Commercial /Tax
- Employment/Industrial
- Incorporation of Associations
- Property
- Discrimination
- Homelessness issues

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

AAR carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Free or discounted legal work for persons or groups who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Free or discounted legal work for nonprofit organisations (e.g. charitable and community organisations);
- Non-fee work (regardless of whether a person is eligible for legal aid) for matters which meet public interest criteria;
- Free or discounted legal work for public good or public interest (e.g. community legal education or law reform);
- Secondments;
• Advice nights at community legal centres; and
• Work at the Homeless Persons Legal Clinics.

Eligibility Criteria
The work must:
• Establish or preserve the rights of individuals or nonprofit organizations in need; or
• Seek to further a particular public good or address an issue of broad community concern.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The firm will generally cover up to $300 in disbursements. AAR will assist clients to seek waivers for filing fees if appropriate.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Pro bono opportunities are communicated to employees through the firm’s intranet and at induction sessions, as well as via individual requests from the senior practitioners and pro bono co-ordinators.

The firm encourages lawyers to undertake pro bono work by giving pro bono work the same status as work for fee-paying clients in the time recording and billing systems, by establishing a pro bono practice group, providing messages of support from the Managing Partner, and introductory talks to all new graduates, articled clerks, summer clerks and vacation clerks.

The pro bono work undertaken by AAR is counted as a part of lawyers’ billable or target hours and goes towards their annual budget. There is a separate section in the lawyers’ annual review or review process which refers specifically to their pro bono work.

Sources of Referral
AAR receives most of its pro bono work through:
• Direct requests from community organisations
• Referrals from staff members
• the various Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) organisations, and Law Society and Bar referral schemes

Community Service
AAR does not have a formal, written community service policy. However, the firm supports a range of charitable and community activities each year, including fund raising drives, such as Jeans for Genes Day, and the Smith Family Ride Around the Bay.

In Sydney, AAR participates in the Learning for Life program and the Literacy Enhancement Action Program (LEAP). Lawyers from AAR’s Sydney office have the opportunity to assist children from disadvantaged schools to learn to read and/or mentor high school students within the structured framework of the LEAP program.

Outlook
The firm plans to continue to seek pro bono projects that fall within its priority areas.
Arnold Bloch Leibler

Sydney Office Location
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2 Chifley Square
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9226 7100
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The People
1 to 5 Partners (Sydney Office)
11 to 20 Lawyers (Sydney Office)
(excluding Partners)

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Sydney Office Co-ordinator
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prubenstein@abl.com.au

Pro Bono Philosophy
“A commitment to giving back to the community has always been an essential value at Arnold Bloch Leibler … The work that we do has never been and will never be regarded by the firm as the ‘after hours’ stuff … it is no mere ‘feel good’ adjunct unrelated to our core business. … we do the work because it is the right thing to do and are mindful of the many intangible benefits, such that it is integral to our business plan and inextricably linked to our culture and identity as a firm.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☐ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☑ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Encourages and undertakes community services
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☐ Has a workplace giving program
☐ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

- Commercial
- Property
- Commercial Litigation
- Tax
- Employment & Industrial Relations

Overview
Arnold Bloch Leibler is a signatory to the National Pro Bono Resource Centre’s Aspirational Target of 35 hours of pro bono work per lawyer per year. The firm exceeds the target by undertaking 51 hours per lawyer per year. Approximately 75-80% of Arnold Bloch Leibler’s lawyers engage in pro bono work.

The firm does not set a budgetary limit to its public interest law work. In the 2005/06 financial year the firm undertook over $2 million of pro bono work and community contributions, an impressive contribution, particularly for its size. The firm spent approximately 4,265 hours on pro bono work in the 2005/06 financial year.

Arnold Bloch Leibler has a written pro bono policy and a committed staff member who co-ordinates the program. Mr Peter Seidel, the National Pro Bono Co-ordinator, was awarded the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission’s 2006 Human Rights Award in the Law Category.

Arnold Bloch Leibler’s key pro bono projects include:
- Thamarrurr Regional Council
- Jirrawun Arts & Health
- Jewish Holocaust Museum & Research Centre

Arnold Bloch Leibler also works with Indigenous Australians and environmental and cultural groups, particularly the Jewish community.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Arnold Bloch Leibler carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Corporate governance advice
- Tax concession advice for nonprofit organisations
- Test case litigation
- Human rights defences

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The firm provides unlimited internal disbursements for pro bono work. However, it does not cover any external disbursements.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Pro bono work is encouraged by its prominence within the Arnold Bloch Leibler culture. Lawyers are regularly reminded of the pro bono practice opportunities through their intranet service, emails, bulletins and induction sessions.
Sources of Referral
Arnold Bloch Leibler receives most of their referrals from:

- Word of mouth, client referrals
- Staff
- PILCH

Community Service
Arnold Bloch Leibler has a formal community service policy.

Current community service initiatives run by the firm include:

- Make-a-Wish Foundation
- Reconciliation Australia
- First Nation Foundation
- Yachad Accelerated Learning Project
- Australian Conservation Foundation
- Greening Australia
- Voiceless
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation

Outlook
The firm has consistently been contributing to public interest causes for the past three years. The firm expects to continue to contribute the same level of commitment into the future.
Baker & McKenzie

Sydney Office Location
Level 27, A.M.P. Centre
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Sydney NSW 2000
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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Melbourne

The Contacts
National Co-ordinator &
Sydney Office Co-ordinator
Jennifer McVicar
Director – Pro Bono &
Community Service
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E: jennifer.mcvicar@bakernet.com

Pro Bono Philosophy
“Our commitment to pro bono is genuine. At Baker & McKenzie, we believe that being a successful corporate lawyer and making a difference should not be mutually exclusive concepts. We believe that the provision of pro bono legal service is a fundamental professional responsibility of the legal profession.

We equip our lawyers with the support and mentoring needed to ensure that they can make pro bono and community service a part of their professional lives. Every lawyer at Baker & McKenzie is expected to undertake pro bono work. It facilitates the development of key skills such as leadership, judgment, project management and client relationships. Moreover, it’s challenging, creative, interesting, optimistic and meaningful – and makes a difference.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☑ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work on case-by-case basis
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Administrative
- Incorporation of Associations
- Banking and Finance
- Commercial
- Litigation/Corporate/Tax/Compliance
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Defamation
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial
- Environment/Planning
- Intellectual Property
- Privacy
- Property

Overview

Baker & McKenzie first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator in 2002. Responsibility for coordinating pro bono work lies with the dedicated National Pro Bono Director, who is supported by two full time staff.

Baker & McKenzie reports that it offers a diverse array of pro bono opportunities, requiring differing levels of experience, skill and time commitment. This ensures that every lawyer has the opportunity to perform pro bono work. Lawyers are given the opportunity to undertake large or small matters, for charities, the homeless, cancer patients or street kids, or undertake challenging research and analysis tasks to support the rule of law.

Baker & McKenzie has a written pro bono policy which states that every lawyer is expected to work on at least one pro bono matter each year, with an aspirational target of 50 hours per lawyer per year. All pro bono work is counted towards each lawyer’s billable hours budget. All lawyers are assessed on pro bono work as part of their performance reviews and pro bono work is factored into bonus entitlements.

The percentage of lawyers who perform pro bono work is around 75%, with the majority of the pro bono work being done by lawyers with two to five years experience. The gender ratio of those who perform pro bono work at Baker & McKenzie is 65% female and 35% male.

Great emphasis is placed on supervision, support and training. Key features of Baker & McKenzie’s pro bono program are that all pro bono matters are supervised by an experienced senior lawyer, frequent training sessions are held, and team work and mentoring are encouraged.

Baker & McKenzie’s key pro bono projects are:

- Homeless Persons’ Legal Service (HPLS)
- Youth Fines Project
- Cancer Patients’ Legal Service
- Public International Law projects
- Law reform initiatives
Areas of Specialisation or Interest
Baker & McKenzie has a particular interest in assisting in:

- Fines/State Debt Recovery Office matters
- Early access to superannuation and powers of attorney for cancer patients
- Public International Law/Rule of Law

The areas of greatest demand for Baker & McKenzie’s pro bono work are:

- Incorporation of Associations, including setting up deductible gift recipient status
- Challenging fines
- Powers of Attorney/Early access to superannuation
- Housing/Tenancy issues
- Public International law projects

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Baker & McKenzie carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Free legal work for persons or groups who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Free legal work for nonprofit organisations (e.g. charitable and community organisations);
- Non-fee work (regardless of whether a person can get legal aid) for matters which meet public interest criteria;
- Free legal work for the public good or in the public interest (e.g. community legal education or law reform);
- Through various projects (e.g. HPLS).

Eligibility Criteria
Baker & McKenzie acts for disadvantaged or marginalised individuals, charities and community organisations.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The firm meets disbursements for pro bono work and while this is unlimited in some cases, prior approval must be sought from the pro bono co-ordinator and managing partner.

Baker & McKenzie’s Sydney office covers all internal disbursements, and covers external disbursements on a case by case basis.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

- Baker & McKenzie states that pro bono is a part of the infrastructure of the firm, with a clearly communicated expectation from the National Managing Partner that all lawyers should work on at least one pro bono matter each year.
- Participation in pro bono work is encouraged through regular staff briefings, intranet, firm inductions, ad hoc communications, weekly newsletters and is reported on during practice group retreats.
- There is an aspirational target of 50 hours of pro bono each year for every lawyer.
- Pro Bono work is a dedicated section in all lawyers’ annual reviews.
- Pro Bono is considered a relevant factor when awarding bonuses.
- Pro Bono work is counted towards a lawyers’ billable hours budget.
**PRO BONO PRACTICES**

**Sources of Referral**

The majority of Baker & McKenzie’s pro bono work is referred from the Homeless Persons’ Legal Services, Cancer Patients’ Legal Service and Youth Fines Project. Other pro bono requests also come directly from community organisations.

**Community Service**

Baker & McKenzie has a written Community Service policy which is communicated to staff members through the intranet, internal article/reporting, weekly newsletters, on induction to the firm and occasional firm briefings. All lawyers and administrative staff are encouraged to undertake community service.

Baker & McKenzie’s policy is grounded in the belief that every member of Baker & McKenzie – lawyer and non-lawyer alike – has the energy, enthusiasm, ability and compassion to help those in need. Accordingly, their Community Service program is designed to provide all staff with the opportunity to participate in meaningful, rewarding community service activities, that can fit in with work and personal priorities and allow staff to use their skills to benefit those in need.

Priority areas are youth, education, disability and asylum seekers.

Community Service is undertaken through the following programs:

- Reach Out And Read! Primary School Reading Program;
- Lawyers Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students (LEAPS!) Mentoring Program for high school students;
- Willing & Able Mentoring Program for law students with disabilities;
- Pen Pal Program with regional primary schools;
- Asylum Seekers English Language Assistance Program;
- Fund raiser volunteering;
- Community awareness seminars.

**Outlook**

Baker & McKenzie reports that its pro bono program is still very much in its growth phase and will be expanding throughout the next 12 months, to respond to need in the community. This will be done by setting up new projects which match community need with the skills-sets and interests of its staff at every level, including senior lawyers.

**The Insider**

*Liz Day – Associate*

“I was introduced to pro bono on my first week at starting at Baker & McKenzie. My supervisor also had a number of pro bono client matters on which I was encouraged to work. Baker & McKenzie has a dedicated pro bono program and team. I have felt very encouraged to undertake pro bono work.

My experience in undertaking pro bono work has been very positive and rewarding, both on a personal and professional level. As a junior lawyer, I have gained great legal experience in being able to have a more active role with pro bono matters. Time spent on pro bono matters is recognised by the firm in meeting individual budget targets. Pro bono also involves working for some really interesting matters and clients.

Recently, I was involved in providing legal advice and drafting carbon sequestration contracts for a nonprofit organisation that is involved in planting and managing carbon sinks and selling carbon credits to customers to offset their greenhouse gas emissions.”
Blake Dawson

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The People
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Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

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Sydney Pro Bono Co-ordinator
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“Pro bono work is part of a lawyer’s professional obligation and should therefore be part of our lawyers’ day to day practice. Pro bono work allows our lawyers to fulfil that obligation while gaining knowledge of new areas of law, improving interview and case management skills and providing opportunities for personal growth.

We work closely with the community legal sector and with our not-for-profit clients to understand the legal needs affecting people in our community and to identify clients who may benefit from our services.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☑ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☑ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

- Anti-Money Laundering
- Banking & Finance
- Commercial Property
- Company Law & Governance
- Competition & Consumer Protection
- Construction and Infrastructure
- Debt Capital Markets & Securitisation
- Employment
- Environment
- Equity Capital Markets
- Funds Management and Superannuation
- Government
- Health & Aged Care
- Hotels, Tourism & Gaming
- Intellectual Property
- International Arbitration
- IT, Communications & Media
- Litigation and Dispute Resolution
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Native Title
- Patents
- Private Equity
- Product Liability
- Project, Asset & Structured Finance
- Resources & Energy
- Restructuring & Insolvency
- Retail Financial Services
- Tax
- Trade & Transport
- Workplace Training

Overview

Blake Dawson has a strong tradition of pro bono work and has had a formal national pro bono program since 1999. In 2007, Blake Dawson became a foundation signatory to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target, undertaking to do an average of at least 35 hours of pro bono work per lawyer per year.

The firm nationally dedicates an average of 2,000 hours per month to pro bono services. Of this figure, approximately 830 of those hours are performed by the NSW office. In the 2007 financial year the firm assisted 407 people and organisations in-house, and around 1400 people through its external programs.

Blake Dawson has a dedicated National and State Pro Bono Partner, as well as National and State Pro Bono Co-ordinators. Blake Dawson’s first National Pro Bono Co-ordinator, Anne Cregan, was appointed in 1999 and made a pro bono partner in July 2007.

The firm encourages all lawyers to be involved on pro bono work, but pro bono work is not compulsory. In 2007 in Sydney 87% of lawyers worked on a pro bono matter.

Key pro bono projects currently undertaken by the firm are:

- Victims Compensation applications
- Estate planning for parents and carers of people with disability
- Secondments to: Mount Druitt and Area Community Legal Centre, Lou’s Place, The Exodus Foundation and the Northern Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency in Katherine (NT).

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Blake Dawson has a particular focus on issues affecting:

- People with intellectual disability or mental illness and their carers;
- People and organisations in rural, regional and remote areas; and
- Indigenous Australians.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Employment and industrial law
- Victims Compensation
- Wills and Estate for people with disabilities
- Incorporation advice and other legal assistance for nonprofit organisations
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Blake Dawson carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Secondments to community legal centres and welfare organisations;
- Acting in major legal projects and test case litigation as well as day to day matters;
- Legal opinions and advice to individuals and nonprofit organisations;
- Drafting of contracts and other documents;
- Law and policy reform;
- Community legal education;
- Research and negotiation on behalf of pro bono clients;
- Legal clinics at welfare organisations run both by Blake Dawson (in Sydney) and through PILCH (in Brisbane and Melbourne).

Eligibility Criteria

The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

- People who are disadvantaged or marginalised;
- Organisations assisting people who are disadvantaged or marginalised; and
- Work for the public good on matters of broad public or community concern.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

Blake Dawson meets the disbursements for pro bono work up to $100,000 per annum. Internal disbursements are not charged in pro bono matters.

If the client (particularly where the client is an organisation) can pay disbursements, Blake Dawson will ask the client to pay. Alternatively, Blake Dawson will attempt to find assistance with disbursements from Legal Aid or the Law Society trust fund, but can at its discretion also carry disbursements on pro bono matters.

In litigation matters in costs jurisdictions, Blake Dawson will attempt to recover disbursements from the other party if it is successful.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

All lawyers are encouraged to become involved in pro bono work from the time they commence working for the firm. Lawyers are engaged in providing a range of legal services from advice, to acting in litigation and transactional work, to law reform and policy work.

In line with the firm’s philosophy that pro bono work is part of its lawyers’ professional responsibility, pro bono work is supervised and credited in the same way as for commercial matters, meaning that pro bono work is counted as part of lawyers’ billable or target hours and goes towards their annual budget.

The firm’s pro bono program is governed by formal policies, guidelines and procedures. The policy is communicated via the intranet, internal articles and reporting, firm briefings and on induction to Blake Dawson.

Work performed on pro bono matters forms part of the appraisal process for lawyers.

Sources of Referral

Blake Dawson receives most of their pro bono work through:

- Direct requests from community legal centres and Legal Aid; and
- Referrals from staff members
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Community Service
Blake Dawson has a formal Volunteering and Charitable Donations Policy as part of its broader Corporate Social Responsibility Policy. This is administered by the Charitable Donations and Volunteering Committee. The firm encourages and supports staff-backed initiatives for wider community services. Blake Dawson also provides the wider resources of the firm to support community organisations including the provision of meeting rooms, training, library support, graphic design and administrative support.

Outlook
Over the next 12 months Blake Dawson aims to meet or exceed its obligations under the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target of an average of at least 35 hours per lawyer per year. Blake Dawson hopes to continue to work closely with the community legal sector and with nonprofit clients to understand the legal needs of people in the community and to identify clients who may benefit from pro bono services.
Clayton Utz

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The People
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Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

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Pro Bono Philosophy
“It is part of each lawyer’s inherent professional responsibility to be involved in pro bono work. Acting for pro bono clients makes for better, more well-rounded lawyers.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☑ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
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PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Administrative
- Incorporation of Associations
- Commercial Litigation/Corporate/Tax/Compliance
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Constitutional
- Defamation
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial
- Environment/Planning
- Housing/Tenancy
- Immigration
- Insurance/Superannuation
- Intellectual Property
- Privacy
- Property
- Professional Regulation
- Public Utilities and Services

Overview

Clayton Utz formalised its pro bono program in 1997. Since then, the firm has acted in more than 3,200 pro bono matters, and contributed more than 200,000 hours of pro bono work. In November 2005, Clayton Utz promoted its Pro Bono Director to Pro Bono Partner. The Sydney office also has a full time Pro Bono Senior Associate.

Clayton Utz is a foundation signatory to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target.

Clayton Utz’s key pro bono projects in Sydney include the Our Place Legal Clinic, Discrimination Law project, Victims Compensation Tribunal project and the Coronial Inquest project.

Clayton Utz performs approximately 2,800 hours of pro bono work each month across all its offices.

Pro bono work is mandatory for every solicitor as part of their ordinary practice, forming part of their annual review.

Around 76–90% of Clayton Utz lawyers engage in pro bono work. Male and female lawyers are represented equally the firm’s pro bono work.

In December 2003, the firm launched the Clayton Utz Foundation, and in early 2004 it branded all of its community activities ‘Community Connect’. This encompasses the firm’s pro bono legal practice, its community involvement programs and the Clayton Utz Foundation.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Clayton Utz’s pro bono efforts target individuals who are unable to obtain Legal Aid and nonprofit organisations or charitable bodies unable to afford appropriate legal representation. The firm has a significant focus on providing pro bono assistance in regional and rural areas.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Discrimination Law
- Commercial/Tax law
- Employment/Industrial law
- Incorporation of Associations
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Clayton Utz carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Free legal work for persons or groups who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Free legal work for nonprofit organisations (e.g. charitable and community organisations);
- Free legal work for public good or public interest.
- Secondments; and
- A number of external legal clinics.

Eligibility Criteria

As a guideline, the firm does not ordinarily accept work on behalf of individuals who earn more than $35,000 per annum, and families who earn more than $60,000 per annum. Pro bono clients must also have $30,000 or less in net assets (excluding the individual’s principal place of residence and superannuation).

Clayton Utz specifically excludes free work undertaken for business development purposes, private educational institutions, or for employees, their family acquaintances or paying clients.

Pro bono assistance is not available to religious organisations in relation to their core religious activities. However, essentially secular community activities conducted by a religious organisation can be considered for pro bono assistance.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

Clayton Utz will cover the first $200 of internal disbursements (e.g. Photocopying, faxes, telephone calls and the like), and $150 of external disbursements (e.g. Counsel fees, court filing fees, and the like) incurred on each pro bono file.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

The pro bono policy is communicated to the firm through the intranet, internal articles and on induction into the firm. Pro bono work is recognised as part of each solicitor’s professional performance and is billed like other legal work.

Sources of Referral

Clayton Utz receives most of its pro bono work from direct requests from community organisations, referrals from community legal centres, referrals from the Anti-Discrimination Board and from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

Community Service

Clayton Utz has a formal written Community Service policy. Through ‘Community Connect’ Clayton Utz provides opportunities for all partners and staff to become involved in the community via the provision of volunteering opportunities and fund raising initiatives. The firm’s community involvement focuses on encouraging reading in children and young people. To that end, Clayton Utz has established community partnerships with a number of charities such as Ardoch Youth Foundation, Daystar Foundation, UnitingCare Burnside, Adult Multicultural Education Services and Indij Readers with whom the firm develops programs to support these initiatives.

Through the Clayton Utz Foundation, the firm provides financial grants to those charities that have a
connection to Clayton Utz. Those charities may be a pro bono client, a community partner or may be actively supported by a Clayton Utz partner or employee.

Each office has a committee which co-ordinates volunteer programs for all partners and staff to participate in. In addition to pro bono legal work opportunities, there are many other programs which do not require legal knowledge. All partners and staff are entitled to one Community Leave Day each year to participate in volunteer work outside the office, above and beyond pro bono legal work. Each office also regularly runs fund raising drives for specific charities which all partners and staff are encouraged to support.

Clayton Utz communicates its Community Service policy through its intranet, on induction to the firm, regular Community Connect e-newsletters, Community Connect Reports (2004 and 2005), and regular briefings held in each office.

Outlook

Clayton Utz expects to exceed its 35 hour per year National Pro Bono Aspirational Target this financial year. The firm also reports that participation in Community Service is increasing each year, and that it plans to increase its involvement in community activities over the next 12 months.

The Insider

Jacqueline McStay – Solicitor

“My experience with pro bono has been a positive experience. The pro bono work I have undertaken has been very different to the work experienced in the ordinary course of corporate law. I was given a greater level of responsibility on files and learnt new skills in different areas of law.

Recently I was involved in the first ever application brought under the new missing persons provisions of the NSW Protected Estates Act 1983 (NSW). In late 2004, the legislation was amended to permit the Court to make a special order in relation to access to someone’s estate, if they have been a missing person for more than 90 days.

We acted for the mother of three children, whose husband disappeared in December 2004. Our client needed access to her husband’s estate in order to support her children. The application was heard in the Protective List of the Equity Division of the Supreme Court of NSW and we were successful in gaining access to the estate for our client. It was a very interesting, challenging and rewarding experience.

Clayton Utz encourages everyone to get involved in pro bono work as it is a great experience. It represents over 2.5% of Clayton Utz’s practice and our goal is for each lawyer to conduct an average of 35 hours pro bono work annually.

Performance reviews also take into account lawyers’ performances through a combination of both their billable and pro bono time. Lawyers who work on significant pro bono cases or schemes are commended either through firm-wide emails, the pro bono newsletter or at team meetings.”
Greg Williams – Senior Associate

“My experience [with pro bono] has been positive. Apart from the satisfaction that obtaining a result for a needy client brings, pro bono work is discussed during section meetings and is also the subject of regular reports sent around the firm by email. The reports and discussion recognise significant pro bono results which, I think, reinforces in all lawyers the idea that such work is valued. In addition management, on an ad hoc basis, give time to pro bono in presentations to the firm, reinforcing the idea that they personally regard the work as important.

Because of my practice expertise, I tend to get the matters involving personal injury claims. It is difficult to discuss these without risking disclosure of sensitive information. However, I have been involved in several matters in which we have achieved good results for seriously injured (and, in one case, intellectually disabled) clients. These matters are obviously satisfying. It is often particularly satisfying that the application of just a little bit of skill and time can make a great difference to someone. From a legal perspective they are interesting because we usually act for defendants, rather than plaintiffs, so the pro bono matters allow me to see litigation from the other side, as it were.

For most of my time at Clayton Utz [the firm] has had a formal pro bono program which aims to see each solicitor in the firm work on at least one pro bono file each year. That has meant that the pro bono co-ordinator regularly refers matters to me which are suitable to my level of expertise. Those I work for have consistently supported the work on pro bono files, in particular by stressing that the pro bono clients are to get attention as thorough as the paying clients.

I think the pro bono program at Clayton Utz is pretty good. That being said, I think one area where we can improve (and, in fact, are improving) [is through] more long term partnerships with community organisations. These I think allow us to work out how our skills and resources can be most effective in a particular environment.”
Corrs Chambers Westgarth

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**The People**
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Over 100 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

**Other Australian Offices**
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**Pro Bono Philosophy**
“We regard ourselves as having a professional responsibility to undertake pro bono work, allowing our lawyers to be more hands on, more reactive and visible in the community.”

**SNAPSHOT**
- Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
- Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
- Has written pro bono policy
- Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
- Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
- Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
- Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
- Has a charitable foundation
- Has a workplace giving program
- Has a community service program

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Practice Areas of the Firm

- Competition & Trade Practices
- Construction
- Corporate
- Finance
- Information Technology
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation
- Planning Environment & Local Government
- Property & Infrastructure
- Public & International
- Revenue
- Telecommunications
- Workplace Relations

Overview

Corrs first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator approximately five years ago. The firm has a National Pro Bono Partner, as well as State Pro Bono Partners in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth. While there is no mandatory requirement to undertake pro bono work at Corrs, there is a written pro bono policy in place.

Corrs’ lawyers carry out approximately $250,000 of pro bono work every month across Australia. Approximately 6–25% of Corrs’ lawyers voluntarily participate in pro bono work. The bulk of the work is performed by lawyers with 2–5 years post admission experience and about 75% of the work is conducted by female members of staff.

Corrs’ key pro bono projects are:

- Provision of pro bono legal services to disadvantaged individuals and groups who might otherwise not have access to legal representation (these services require legal and administrative support);
- Pro bono legal services to charitable and nonprofit organisations;
- Secondments of graduates to the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) and Community Legal Centres (CLCs);
- A Workplace Giving program;
- Homeless Persons Legal Service (HPLS) and
- Charitable donations, fund raising activities and involvement in community programs.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Corrs’ pro bono efforts are directed towards particular disadvantaged groups including the homeless, refugees, disadvantaged youth, Indigenous business ventures and Indigenous childcare.

The ‘Corrs Giving Back Program’ focuses on five key areas of need: access to housing for low income Australians, issues facing indigenous Australians, employment law issues, access to justice for homeless persons and education.

The greatest demand for pro bono services occurs in the areas of employment and industrial law. The firm also performs pro bono work in the following areas:

- Public interest;
- Incorporations of Associations;
- Commercial Tax;
- Defamation;
PRO BONO PRACTICES

- Employment and Discrimination Law;
- Environment and Planning;
- Property; and
- Professional Regulation.

Type of Pro Bono Work

Corrs carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Work done for free for those persons or groups who do not qualify for Legal Aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Substantially reduced fees for those persons or groups who do not qualify for Legal Aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Work performed for nonprofit organisations (for example charitable and community organisations);
- Non-fee work (regardless of whether an individual qualifies for legal aid) for matters which meet public interest criteria;
- Work performed for the public good or in the public interest (for example community legal education or law reform); and
- Secondments to various public interest organisations.

Corrs recently has become involved in the HPLS in NSW. The HPLS operates on a partnership model with PILCH member firms and provides free legal advice and casework to individuals at a number of crisis and welfare agencies which provide other direct services (such as accommodation, food etc) to people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

As part of the Corrs Sydney HPLS Program, Corrs lawyers are seconded to PIAC and staff a free legal clinic at Norman Andrews House, which is a drop-in centre in Bondi.

The clinic operates one lunchtime per week and Corrs lawyers meet with clients and provide advice to clients during the clinic at Norman Andrews House. A range of legal issues are dealt with at the clinic including social security issues, fines and victims compensation.

Eligibility Criteria

Corrs provides pro bono services to a range of community groups and nonprofit organisations and accepts referrals from CLCs, PILCH and other members of the legal profession. The firm does not usually represent clients in litigious matters outside the Sydney CBD, but may consider requests to perform such work.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

Corrs does not charge for legal services for matters that meet pro bono criteria. Unless otherwise agreed, the firm only charges for out of pocket expenses actually incurred (for example, court fees, if charged).
Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Corrs’ pro bono policy is available to all staff via the intranet. Pro bono work is treated and allocated to lawyers in the same manner as commercial matters. Time spent on pro bono matters is counted as billable hours as well as being offset in annual budgets. Additionally there is a separate section in the annual performance reviews for pro bono work undertaken.

The firm believes that their lawyers do not require any encouragement to participate in pro bono work because they have a strong ethos that drives the pro bono program to support the ideal that lawyers have a professional responsibility to undertake pro bono work.

Sources of Referral
Corrs receives most of its pro bono work from:
- PILCH (NSW) referrals;
- Direct requests from community organisations; and
- Direct approaches in Court.

Community Service
Corrs encourages staff to undertake community service work. The current priority areas are homeless persons and youth and disadvantaged groups. The firm currently anticipates an increase in the amount of community service work which will be performed by staff in the next 12 months. While there is no formal policy, the community services aspect of the firm is co-ordinated by the National Pro Bono Partner. Additionally, disbursements and costs associated with community service work are met by the firm. Currently graduates and most lawyers are involved in community services work.

Outlook
The firm is looking to increase its pro bono activities in the next 12 months by increasing the number of pro bono hours allocated in the firm’s budget, particularly by way of referral from a number of sources including PILCH and the Law Society Referral Scheme amongst others.
Melissa Brunning – Lawyer

“Corrs pro bono has come along in leaps and bounds over the last 12 months and I have been lucky enough to be involved in the firm’s Giving Back program. Our program has a number of elements including:

- HPLS – I am one of the Team Leaders of this service and together with one of my colleagues, Elaine Johnson manage the program for around 30 staff, including fee earners and support staff. The response to the program, amongst the wider firm, has been impressive.

- National and State Giving Back Committees – I am a member of both the National and State committees. These committees are dedicated to delivering a comprehensive program for all staff to participate in. The members of the committee from various levels and areas in the firm are essentially conduits for wider input from all Corrs staff to our Giving Back program. Our Giving Back program has been delivered to staff in a number of State based launches over the last few months and at the practice group level around the firm. I will be involved in delivering the program launch to my litigation/workplace relations practice group in the near future.

- PILCH Relationship – We have also been developing our relationship with this organisation through an increased number of referrals of legal work, a dedicated graduate level secondee to PILCH and Corrs’ contribution to various fund raisers such as the annual PILCH trivia night which I attended earlier in the year which was a fantastic night.

- Other initiatives – We have also been supporting and guiding our paralegals in a pro bono initiative they have been developing with the National Children’s Youth Legal Resource Centre. Further, the Corrs summer clerkship program this year will have a strong pro bono focus. I am currently involved with several colleagues in developing a pro bono project for the clerks to be involved in during their time with the firm over the summer. This project will have both a written and a ‘hands on’ element.

Our Giving Back program, in my opinion, is an extensive platform to allow staff from all parts of the firm to get involved. I have enjoyed being a part of many of the current initiatives. It is my firm belief that it is our duty as practitioners to give back and that is just what we are trying to do.”
Deacons

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Pro Bono Philosophy
“It gives access to legal services to many disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of the community and promotes a fairer, more equitable society.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
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PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Administrative
- Incorporation of Associations
- Commercial
- Litigation/Corporate/Tax/Compliance
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Constitutional
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial
- Environment/Planning
- Immigration
- Insurance/Superannuation
- Intellectual Property
- Personal Injury/Negligence
- Privacy
- Property
- Professional Regulation
- Public Utilities and Services

Overview

Deacons dedicate $8,000 to $15,000 worth of pro bono services per month from their Sydney office. Pro bono work is undertaken on a voluntary basis. It is considered a non-financial contribution to the firm for remuneration purposes. Deacons have a written pro bono policy.

Deacons’ key pro bono projects are many and varied. This year Deacons have started to staff a homeless person’s legal centre that operates each Monday morning from the Wayside Chapel.

Approximately 5 to 25% of lawyers in the firm engage in pro bono work contributing approximately 20 hours per lawyer from the Sydney office in the 2006/2007 year. The gender breakdown is unknown.

Pro bono work is co-ordinated by a National Co-ordinator of pro bono work, plus State Co-ordinators in each city office who manage most issues on an office basis. Deacons first appointed a National Pro Bono Co-ordinator in 2001.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

The firm devotes most of its pro bono work to transactional assistance to nonprofits in the areas of:

- Assisting corporate governance including setting up and compliance;
- Commercial / Taxation;
- Employment;
- Leases; and
- Environment and planning.

Deacons also provide:

- Volunteer assistance and advice in relation to receiving a grant or gift; and
- Representation at inquests where no other assistance is available
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Deacons carry out pro bono work in the following ways:

• Free or discounted legal opinions, advice, research and negotiation;
• Free or discounted legal drafting of documents;
• Free or discounted involvement in law and legal policy reform and community legal education;
• Free or discounted provision of premises;
• Free or discounted IT support;
• Free or discounted secretarial / paralegal assistance;
• Secondments; and
• Advice nights at community legal centres.

Eligibility Criteria
Based on the merits of the matter and the resources available, Deacon’s undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

• When a matter comes within the firm’s definition of a pro bono matter.
• The firm has appropriate skills and capacity to undertake the matter and see it through to its conclusion.
• When there is no other appropriate avenue or assistance available to the client.
• When there is no conflict of interest.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The Sydney Deacons office covers unlimited internal disbursements (e.g. photocopying, faxes, telephone calls and the like), but does not cover external disbursements (e.g. Counsel fees, court filing fees, and the like).

For litigious matters, the firm would normally only engage counsel who are prepared to act on a similar pro bono basis and would ensure such counsel was available at the time the firm first accepted the pro bono work.

Where the client does not have sufficient financial resources to pay any or all of the internal and external disbursements, the co-ordinator may attempt to utilise other mechanisms for funding disbursements. For instance, the Law Society of New South Wales maintains a Disbursement Fund and Legal Aid is sometimes payable for disbursements if the matter is taken on a pro bono basis.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Pro bono work is encouraged by counting it toward lawyers’ annual budgets. Pro bono opportunities are communicated to employees through the firm’s intranet, internal memorandum, internal publications, occasional firm/company briefings and on induction to the firm.

Sources of Referral
The firm gains most of its pro bono work from:

• Staff members;
• Direct requests from individuals; and
• Direct requests from community organisations.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Community Service
While Deacons does not have a formal, written community service policy, it actively encourages its partners and staff to engage in community service programs. The firm is presently considering the preparation of a formal community service policy.

Outlook
Deacons is looking to increase the amount of pro bono work it performs during the next 12 months. It recently started staffing a homeless persons legal service in Sydney and will be considering whether similar arrangements can be put in place in other cities. The firm is also looking at ways of providing pro bono assistance outside of major capital cities.

The Insider

Jennie Govey – Solicitor
“I undertook pro bono work whereby we were instructed by a school that was seeking advice on their current policies concerning anaphylaxis. Specifically, a child with allergies to many kinds of foods was enrolled in the school, and the school had developed a food restriction policy. The school sought advice on liability issues, and whether the school or other parents could be held liable based on the school’s current policies, if the child had an anaphylactic reaction as a result of coming into contact with a restricted food. The advice involved a large amount of research on anaphylaxis and the policies that are employed in other schools in Australia and the world. It was really interesting work and very relevant, given the recent media exposure to anaphylaxis.

I believe my experience in undertaking pro bono work was positive. I really enjoyed the subject matter (essentially about children and their rights versus the rights of the community) and the fact that I was able to help others, especially a nonprofit preschool who could not have afforded legal fees. I am not entirely aware of the firm’s policy, so I am not quite sure how or if they recognise someone who has undertaken pro bono work, as this was not a big consideration for me.

The firm has encouraged us to undertake pro bono work. When I was a summer clerk at Deacons, Mitchell Mathas, pro bono partner gave a presentation on pro bono work at Deacons, which was very informative. Within two months of starting at Deacons as a graduate, I was given the opportunity to work on a pro bono matter in my business unit, Insurance.

I think that greater emphasis on the need for pro bono is necessary – this could be done through promoting the stories of types of pro bono work that others have done. In an ideal world, I think that it should be compulsory for everyone to undertake pro bono work at least once every couple of years. This may reduce the attitude that some have, namely of pro bono work not being billable, and thus is not career enhancing.”
DLA Phillips Fox

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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

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The Contacts
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Sydney Office Co-ordinator
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“DLA Phillips Fox and its lawyers have a long-held commitment to performing pro bono legal work. Pro bono is an important aspect of the firm’s past and is an increasingly important part of our future. Our culture and policies encourage pro bono service and volunteerism because community involvement is an essential part of who we are. Our goal is to be a leader in the area of pro bono service delivery. We have appointed dedicated pro bono lawyers to work in and with our communities, to identify areas of legal need, to develop pro bono projects to address legal need, and to ensure that the firm’s resources are collectively focussed on an effective and productive pro bono effort.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☑ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Banking & Finance
- Commercial Dispute Resolution
- Competition & Trade Practices
- Corporate
- Funds Management & Superannuation
- Health & Government
- Insurance & Risk Management
- Planning & Environment
- Pro Bono & Public Interest
- Real Estate & Construction
- Taxation
- Technology, Media & Commercial
- Transport & Trade
- Workplace Relations & Employment

Overview

DLA Phillips Fox has a formal, written pro bono policy. Responsibility for managing and co-ordinating the firm’s pro bono activities lies with its National Pro Bono Director and the Pro Bono Co-ordinators in each state office. In addition to the firm’s Pro Bono Co-ordinators, DLA Phillips Fox employs two full-time pro bono lawyers who undertake public interest case work in the areas of Human Rights and Environmental Protection.

DLA Phillips Fox states that in the previous 12 months approximately 69% of its lawyers engaged in pro bono work.

The firm is currently involved in the following pro bono projects in Sydney:

- The Women’s Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme at Newtown Local Court in partnership with Marrickville and Wirringa Baya legal centres;
- Homeless Persons Legal Clinic at Newtown Mission in partnership with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) and the Public Interest Legal Clearing House (PILCH) and others;
- Arts Law Telephone Advice Service in partnership with the Arts Law Centre of Australia;
- Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Model in partnership with the Legal Aid Commission and various service providers in the Orange/Bathurst area, to improve access to legal services in regional NSW;
- Access to justice project with the Huntingtons Disease Association;
- Outreach Access Community Legal Education Program in partnership with TAFE NSW;
- Austcare Protection Chapter in partnership with Austcare and others;
- Artists in the Black project in partnership with the Arts Law Centre of Australia to protect the legal rights of indigenous artists;
- Pro Bono Winter and Summer Clerkship programs.
Areas of Specialisation or Interest
DLA Phillips Fox’s pro bono efforts target prisoners (including those recently released), the homeless and Indigenous Australians. The firm also targets its pro bono efforts at addressing the following issues:

- Environmental and animal protection;
- Human rights;
- Building pro bono capacity in the legal profession in Australia and New Zealand.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
DLA Phillips Fox carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Case work for individuals and nonprofit organisations;
- Out-reach projects such as the Homeless Persons Legal Clinic;
- Pro bono secondments to Community Legal Centres and nonprofit organisations;
- Community legal education.

Eligibility Criteria
The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

- Access to justice matters (individuals) are typically assessed by reference to means and merit;
- Public interest matters are assessed on merits;
- All matters are taken on only in circumstances where the firm has the expertise and capacity to provide excellent service levels;
- Matters are taken only if there is no other more appropriate form of assistance available to the client, such as Legal Aid, for example.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
DLA Phillips Fox will cover unlimited internal disbursements. The firm pays external disbursements on behalf of pro bono clients in most cases, on a discretionary basis.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
DLA Phillips Fox has asked each of its lawyers to adopt a personal target to undertake at least 50 hours of pro bono work each year. The firm also encourages increased involvement in pro bono work by dedicating resources to building projects in areas where legal assistance is most needed. All lawyers are given the opportunity to participate in meaningful pro bono work and the firm encourages its lawyers to do pro bono work in areas that they feel passionate about.

Pro bono work is given the same recognition as full-fee legal work, and lawyers who undertake pro bono work are given appropriate recognition by senior management and fellow employees.

DLA Phillips Fox communicates its pro bono opportunities through its induction program and on an ongoing basis by email and on the firm’s intranet.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Sources of Referral
DLA Phillips Fox receives most of their referrals from:

- Community legal centres;
- Public Interest Law Clearing Houses;
- Law Society Pro Bono Referral Scheme;
- Outreach services established by the firm to access pro bono matters;
- Existing clients; and
- Other law firms.

Community Service
DLA Phillips Fox has a formal written community service policy. It encourages its employees to participate in community service activities by providing them with 2 days paid community service leave each year.

The firm’s community services activities are implemented under its Community Care program. The primary motivation behind the program is to make an impact on and achieve outcomes for the most disadvantaged individuals in the community. DLA Phillip Fox’s approach is to develop corporate partnerships with like-minded organisations. The firm’s Community Care Manager works closely with a number of community organisations to provide a range of opportunities for staff to participate in meaningful community service initiatives.

The primary focus of the firm’s community service program is on supporting initiatives that help people to help themselves, and therefore bring about enduring change. DLA Phillips Fox has put this philosophy into practice through the following initiatives:

- Developing local office relationships with organisations that provide support to the homeless, the elderly, the disabled and children;
- Supporting organisations that work to eliminate poverty in our region and educate children in our region; and
- Supporting natural disaster relief in our region.

Outlook
DLA Phillips Fox will continue to build its pro bono practice in its focus areas. It aims to increase pro bono hours across the firm and the pro bono team will work with lawyers to build opportunities for lawyers to undertake pro bono work in areas that they feel passionately about.
Ebsworth & Ebsworth

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P: (02) 9234 2366
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The People
36–45 Partners (Sydney Office)
61–80 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Brisbane, Melbourne

The Contacts
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“Ebsworth & Ebsworth’s pro bono program focuses on assisting the most marginalised and disadvantaged members of our community. We have always had a commitment to acting with integrity and being a good corporate citizen. We recognise that one of the most valuable contributions a law firm can make to the community is the provision of high quality pro bono legal assistance.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
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☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Arts & Entertainment
- Aviation
- Construction & Infrastructure
- Corporate & Commercial
- Credit/Debt
- Dispute Resolution & Litigation
- Financial Services
- Health
- Immigration
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property
- Local Government
- Native Title
- Maritime
- Property
- Tax
- Technology & Communications
- Tourism
- Trade Practices
- Transport
- Workplace Relations

Overview

Ebsworth & Ebsworth established a formal pro bono program in 2001. Co-ordinators in each office, with the support of a National Pro Bono Committee, run the program. Lawyers are encouraged to take part in the program and receive credit towards their billable hours for all approved pro bono work. In the 2007 financial year, about 50% of lawyers performed pro bono work.

Ebsworth & Ebsworth provides legal assistance in a wide variety of areas for both individuals and organisation. It also takes part in a number of projects including:

- Homeless Persons Legal Service (HPLS);
- Predatory Lending Project, which assists people at risk of losing their homes because of loans from sub prime lenders; and
- Stolen Wages project, which assists Indigenous clients recover unpaid wages and benefits held by the Aboriginal Welfare Board.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Ebsworth & Ebsworth offers a broad range of legal assistance and does not target particular areas of need.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Ebsworth & Ebsworth offers pro bono legal assistance at no or substantially reduced cost. It provides most of the assistance in-house. The pro bono work undertaken by the firm covers a wide range of areas, including discrimination, unfair contracts, migration and refugee appeals, consumer credit, and corporate and tax advice for non-profit organisations.

As part of the Homeless Persons’ Legal Service, the firm provides advice at a drop-in centre called The Station Ltd, which is located near Wynyard train station in Sydney.
Eligibility Criteria

Subject to conflict and capacity, Ebsworth & Ebsworth provides pro bono assistance to marginalised or disadvantaged people who cannot afford legal services, nonprofit organisations working on behalf of these groups, and in matters of broad public concern. The firm does not have a strict means test but does assess a potential client’s financial circumstances.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

Ebsworth & Ebsworth assesses the client’s ability to pay third party disbursements. In appropriate cases, the firm will pay for disbursements on behalf of individuals. Ebsworth & Ebsworth usually require institutional pro bono clients to pay third party disbursements.

The firm enters into contingency fee agreements with many of its pro bono clients in litigious matters. This means it charges pro bono clients the amount they can recover from the other party, but only if they are successful in the litigation.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

All lawyers are encouraged to participate in the program through Partner-led support, a credit towards billable hours and internal promotion of pro bono activities and opportunities. Participation in pro bono work is considered as part of annual performance reviews.

Community Service

Ebsworth & Ebsworth has a dedicated Corporate Social Responsibility Committee, which oversees its community service activities.

The firm has developed long-term partnerships with cultural, educational, sporting and charitable organisations, including Sydney Theatre Company, the Australia Business Arts Foundation (ABAF), the Australian Lung Foundation, the Sisters of Good Samaritan Foundation and the University of New South Wales, to name a few.

Ebsworth & Ebsworth is also a proud sponsor of The Big Issue’s soccer program for disadvantaged and homeless persons in the lead up to the Homeless World Cup, which will be hosted in Melbourne in 2008.

Ebsworth & Ebsworth also participates in the Law Firms Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students program, which aims to increase students’ engagement in learning, break down stereotypes and broaden students’ experiences. This is achieved through “shadowing” a mentoring lawyer at work, interactive group sessions and team-building excursions.

“Worth Giving” is the firm’s workplace giving program that encourages staff members to become more involved in their community. This program enables staff to donate directly to charities through salary deductions and to do volunteer work with nominated charities. The firm matches all staff donations.

Ebsworth & Ebsworth’s Worth Giving charities are:

- ARV Access Fund
- Australian Red Cross
- Inspire Foundation
- Plan Australia
- Redkite
- The Station
- RSPCA
- The Cancer Council
- WWF Australia.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

As part of its program, staff are entitled to one day’s Volunteer Leave each year to participate in activities with Worth Giving charities.

Outlook

Ebsworth & Ebsworth aims to consolidate and strengthen the existing pro bono program and involve a wider range of lawyers in pro bono work.

The Insider

Lorinda Hokin – Lawyer

“Pro bono work and community service have made a significant contribution to my personal and professional development. Personally, I have been involved in meaningful work that has a real impact on people, and I have had the opportunity to connect with, and know people in an empathetic way. Professionally, I have had the opportunity to learn about diverse areas of law, and to put that learning into practice. I believe this has enriched my experience as a lawyer, and encouraged me as a person.

I have recently been encouraged to become involved in a street soccer programme run by the Big Issue which is in the early stages of planning for Sydney. Participants are homeless persons and the aim of the project is to facilitate their reconnection with services and rehabilitation. It has been incredibly fun to have a game of soccer, and to see some of our clients from HPLS come along. It is also incredibly rewarding as on the soccer field, we are all equals, and it is exciting to see the sense of community between the players, and their willingness to embrace all comers as friends. It adds a new dimension to my work at HPLS and I believe enhances my understanding of persons affected by homelessness.

I also find it rewarding because it is an opportunity to connect on an informal and personal level, and take on a mentoring, supportive or encouraging role. I find it inspiring to hear the players’ stories and feel absolutely privileged to have the opportunity to get to know them.

In relation to pro bono work, the firm advertises the opportunity by issuing a general invitation. In my current practice group my participation in pro bono is encouraged. Our pro bono hours are also counted in our budget targets. My supervisor has supported and assisted me in obtaining the firm’s support for a community service project (including funding) and has also taken a keen personal interest in the project. I would not have taken the idea so far if she had not encouraged me to do so and been so enthusiastic about the opportunity.

I think the pro bono program can be improved by increased communication across the firm about the things we deal with, including the successes and the sadder stories. This will get the program on the radar of all staff, and encourage more involvement. Understanding the human side of what we do is really important – for example, there is no such things as just a “fines” matter, it is a make or break moment for a homeless person. I also think that participation in these programs is about creating a culture in a workplace. I think creating the mindset which takes people beyond the “what a great idea” to actually doing something about, it is beneficial. I also wonder whether there is a risk of the people involved in pro bono work becoming a little burnt out as they try to balance all the demands of their daily work load, as a core group of people seem to drive the initiative. I think it’s important to spread the load through recognition and understanding of the value of what being involved in pro bono really means.”
Freehills

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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
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The Contacts
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“It gives access to legal services to many disadvantaged and marginalized sectors of the community and promotes a fairer, more equitable society.”

SNAPSHOT
√ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
□ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
√ Has written pro bono policy
√ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
√ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
√ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
√ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
√ Has a charitable foundation
√ Has a workplace giving program
√ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Banking & Financial Services
- Board & Executive Solutions
- Communications, Media & Technology
- Competition & Market Regulation
- Corporate
- Employee Relations
- Environment & Planning
- Foreign Investment
- Energy & Resources
- Patent & Trade Mark
- Healthcare
- Infrastructure
- Intellectual Property
- Litigation
- Property
- Regulatory & Government Affairs
- Taxation

Overview

Freehills has a written pro bono policy. It first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator in 2001. Responsibility for co-ordinating pro bono work lies with a dedicated pro bono counsel.

Current pro bono projects undertaken by Freehills are charity law, the Shopfront Youth Legal Centre, secondments and legal clinics.

In the 2006/2007 year, 48% of the firm’s lawyers performed pro bono work. Pro bono work is fairly evenly spread among lawyers of all ranks. The firm’s total pro bono hours for the last financial year averaged out at 28 hours per lawyer.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Charity Law (including constitution, structuring, taxation etc)
- Employment/Industrial Law
- Environmental Law
- Corporate Law
- Litigation
- Intellectual Property
- Commercial/Tax Law
- Discrimination
- Property

Pro bono work that is undertaken externally by Freehills lawyers at the Shopfront Youth Legal Centre, on secondment or at legal clinics, fall into the usual community law categories.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Freehills provides free legal advice and representation, secondments, advice sessions at legal clinics, pro bono seminars and law reform.
Eligibility Criteria
Freehills will consider taking pro bono matters which are in the public interest. We also take into account the following factors:

- Whether there is no practical alternative source of legal assistance;
- Whether the matter involves the provision of legal services to either a disadvantaged person or an organisation promoting public interest objectives.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Generally:

- All internal disbursements are carried by the firm
- External disbursements are decided on a case-by-case basis.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
The firm encourages pro bono work by ensuring that all pro bono work is billable.

The message that pro bono work is an integral part of the practice is clearly communicated through the induction process, staff training, the firm’s intranet and the very pervasive presence of the Freehills Foundation.

Sources of pro bono work
Freehills receives the majority of its requests from:

- Staff members;
- Community organisations;
- Community legal centres.

Community Service
Freehills has a written community service policy.

The firm encourages participation in community programs by offering legal and non-legal staff members a Volunteer Day, which is a day of paid leave to be taken when participating in a staff volunteering event.

Current community service initiatives run by the firm include:

- Student mentoring program;
- Workplace Giving Program;
- Fund raising activities and gift-matching of funds raised dollar-for-dollar;
- Small Grants Scheme;
- Volunteering.

Outlook
Freehills will:

- Achieve an average of 31 hours of pro bono work per lawyer this year;
- Consolidate its national program; and
- Develop its commitment to pro bono work at a global level.
The Insider

Brooke Massender – Senior Associate

“I am a Senior Associate in Freehill’s commercial litigation group. I have been fortunate enough to have had the opportunity to be actively involved with a range of pro bono matters.

Two years ago my supervising partner encouraged and supported my application for a secondment to Freehills Shopfront Youth Legal Centre, run in partnership with The Salvation Army and Mission Australia. Established in 1993, the Shopfront is a legal service for disadvantaged young people who are typically under 25, homeless and/or drug or alcohol affected and/or dealing with mental illness. The six-month secondment involved the provision of legal advice and representation in a variety of criminal law, debt, family law and victim’s compensation matters.

I gained excellent advocacy experience through daily court appearances in the Local Court and District Court for criminal matters – including mentions, bail applications, applications under the Mental Health (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1990, defended hearings, pleas and sentencing.

Another beneficial aspect of the secondment in terms of building professional confidence was the opportunity to liaise with police, prosecutors, youth workers, health care professionals and rehabilitation services to ensure holistic client care.

Since returning to Freehills I have been able to build upon my experiences at the Shopfront and have continued to be involved in assisting with victims compensation claims. Claims before the Victims Compensation Tribunal typically involve stages such as client interviews, telephone advice and collation of evidence in respect of victim’s compensation matters involving domestic violence and sexual abuse. We have been able to gradually extend this assistance to the point where over 10 solicitors are now assisting with claims in-house.

I have always been encouraged to take on pro bono matters and give them equal attention alongside commercial work. Notably I have been involved with a series of claims before the Aboriginal Trust Fund Repayment Scheme (ATFRS). My involvement began with a request to provide ongoing pro bono advice and preparing submissions for a government inquiry in relation to unpaid Aboriginal wages held in trust. Since then we have represented a number of clients with claims before the ATFRS. These claims typically involve collating evidence, taking statutory declarations and making submissions to the ATFRS Panel.

I am also actively involved with the work of the Freehills Foundation in the community. Freehills encourages this involvement by allowing me to spend significant amounts of time co-ordinating volunteering opportunities and other community-based projects. I consider the pro bono work and community activities of the Freehills Foundation to be a significant aspect of my role at Freehills.”
“I am a Senior Associate in Freehills’ commercial litigation group and have had the opportunity to be involved in a number of pro bono activities, both through a secondment to the Public Interest Law Clearing House (PILCH) and by working on pro bono matters within the firm.

In late October 2006, I did an 11-week secondment at PILCH. PILCH is an assessment and referral service for legal matters that are in the public interest where requests for legal assistance are assessed against eligibility criteria and eligible requests are referred to its members, who provide assistance on a pro bono or reduced fee basis. PILCH members include New South Wales law firms, barristers, corporate lawyers and university law faculties. PILCH also undertakes project work in relation to legal needs of disadvantaged marginalised groups. This work is aimed at systematically addressing the legal needs of an identified group. My secondment to PILCH involved meetings of the Predatory Lending Project, which was a project designed to reform the lending practices of non-mainstream institutions to people who could not afford loan repayments, which would often result in the borrower losing their house.

My primary duties while on secondment were to administer the PILCH referral scheme under the immediate supervision of the PILCH co-ordinator. In the course of administering the scheme I was required to form relationships with clients from diverse backgrounds, which tested my interpersonal skills. I encountered a wide range of legal problems presented by clients which led me to improving my knowledge of the law in a number of different areas. My secondment also allowed me to develop relationships with members of PILCH, while at the same time providing me with the opportunity to deal with clients who would otherwise have struggled to find legal representation.

Since returning to Freehills I have continued to be involved in assisting with pro bono matters. I am one of a number of solicitors who have participated in training that allows Freehills to assist with claims before the Victims Compensation Tribunal. I have also participated in pro bono matters where we were able to take advantage of the firm’s large resources to meet requests for pro bono assistance. In early 2007 one such request involved assisting with the preparation of a review of Australian domestic violence issues, which formed part of an international brief provided to the American Civil Liberties Union and Human Rights Clinic at Colombia Law School who were preparing an amicus curiae brief for an Inter-American Commission on Human Rights domestic violence case.

I look forward to pro bono work and activities through the Freehills Foundation being a continuing part of my employment at Freehills.”
Gadens

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The People
26 to 35 Partners (Sydney Office)
80 to 100 Lawyers (Sydney Office)
(excluding Partners)

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The Contacts
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“We recognise our role in the community and our ability as a substantial and influential organisation to make a real difference. We support our staff to provide a tangible benefit in whatever field about which they feel passionate. For us, it is entirely about what we do, not what we say.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☐ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☐ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
Practice Areas

- Banking and Finance
- Commercial Litigation (including Trade Practices, Cross Border Disputes Resolution, Aged Care and Workplace Relations)
- Corporate Advisory and Tax
- Financial Services Recovery and Insolvency
- Insurance
- Planning, Environment and Government
- Property – Commercial
- Property – Construction

Overview

Gadens does not have a national pro bono co-ordinator. Each office determines what pro bono projects it will undertake on a case by case basis and independent of the other offices.

Currently, Gadens’ key pro bono projects are providing ongoing legal services to the following three charities:

- Australian Youth Orchestra
- Griffin Theatre Company
- Cure the Future (Cell and Gene Trust)

In addition, lawyers from different areas of the firm undertake specific pro bono projects.

Gadens has a written pro bono policy and all pro bono work is authorised by the Managing Partner. It is not mandatory for lawyers to undertake pro bono work.

Pro bono work is not counted towards the lawyers’ billable hours, however, a lawyer’s pro bono work is tracked and reported on separately by the firm.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Gadens does not target or prioritise particular areas for its pro bono work. Instead, it strives to provide legal assistance in as many areas as possible.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Commercial/Tax;
- Environmental Planning;
- Association Incorporation; and

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Gadens carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Free or discounted legal services for persons or groups who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Work done for nonprofit organisations (e.g. charitable and community organisations); and
- Free work (regardless of whether a person can get legal aid) for matters which meet public interest criteria.
Eligibility Criteria
Gadens encourages its lawyers to bring in opportunities for pro bono work that they feel passionate about and for organisations they specifically would like to work with. Gadens then assesses the availability of resources and the prospective outcome of each matter before taking on a pro bono case. It also considers the lawyer’s reasons for wanting to undertake the pro bono work in question.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The firm meets internal disbursements for pro bono work with no set limits, but does not meet external disbursements.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Pro bono work is not singularly advertised throughout the firm. Instead, opportunities for pro bono work are communicated through the intranet or directly by the Managing Partner. The firm’s pro bono policy is accessible via the intranet.

Sources of Referral
Gadens receives most of their pro bono work from:

- Referrals from staff members;
- Direct requests from individuals; and
- Direct requests from community organisations.

Community Service
Gadens has a formal, written community service policy.

Gadens lawyers runs a closely co-ordinated community involvement program with the umbrella charity United Way, involving corporate assistance as well as volunteering opportunities and donations via salary deduction from staff. All staff donations are matched by the partners. Gadens’ Community Service Program is part of the Third Dimension program. All staff are encouraged to participate in the Third Dimension program as the program is not limited only to professional staff or pro bono legal work.

Gadens’ commitment to the community extends to Papua New Guinea, through its support for Susu Mamas. This is a non-government organisation that provides health care services and education [on infant and material health] to the local community.

Gadens also supports the fight against HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea through its involvement on the Advisory Council to the Asia Pacific Business Coalition on HIV/AIDS. This program was initiated by Hon. Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs and also has the support of the Clinton Foundation.

Gadens lawyers played a pivotal role in the launch of the Cell and Gene Trust, a charity that supports cell and gene therapy research, through the provision of pro bono work and financial support. Gadens maintained support to the Cell and Gene Trust throughout 2007, with financial support and members of staff on the Board of the Cell and Gene Trust.

As part of Gadens’ Charity Bonanza, in 2007 the firm has pledged $1,000 for each Partner and staff member to go to a nominated charity or charities of their choice in the 2007/2008 financial year. This provides an opportunity for staff to directly support charities whose work they have a personal connection with.
Outlook

The firm will continue its support for those who wish to undertake pro bono work and encourage staff to bring their ideas and interests into their work at Gadens. The Third Dimension program remains pivotal in connecting all staff to opportunities to engage with the arts, community and environment.

The Insider

*Albert Yung – Solicitor, Corporate Division*

“I recently had the opportunity to set up the Cell and Gene Trust, a charitable fund raising awareness and funding for cell and gene therapy to cure potentially 4000 diseases. When I was initially asked to draft a memorandum to the then proposed board of directors, I would not have imagined that it would take me on the journey that I have experienced over the past two years that brought the Cell and Gene Trust into life.

With the assistance of my senior associate, I was able to be closely involved in the structuring and the formation of the Trust, applying for and obtaining recognition of the Trust’s charitable and deductible gift recipient status.

I would like to stay closely involved with the activities of the Trust by providing ongoing advice in relation to company secretariat, corporate, intellectual property and other regulatory issues for the Board and the Trust. Not only does it give me a chance to support the Trust’s fascinating work in cell and gene therapy with the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, it also provides me with a perspective of how my role as a lawyer could impact on the running of an organisation. My opportunities with the Cell and Gene Trust have certainly helped me to become a better lawyer.

Many of my colleagues at Gadens also participate in a wide variety of pro bono legal work and community service work. As Gadens’ focus is to build longer term relationships with a small selected group of organisations, my colleagues and I have been able to provide long term commitments and develop genuine interest in the organisations which we provide our time and service to. Colleagues are given the opportunity to promote and share stories in relation to their community service involvement through organised lunchtime seminars, the intranet and firm reports, which also brings recognition to our work.

Gadens advertises much of its pro bono work and community services opportunities on the intranet, firm notice boards and common areas, and encourages staff to participate. Although the firm does not provide chargeable time relief in relation to undertaking pro bono work, I do not believe that this is an issue as the pro bono community service opportunities provided by the firm are meaningful. Most staff, including myself, would be willing to devote their own time into supporting the great causes of nonprofit organisations.”
Gilbert + Tobin ‘G+T’

Sydney Office Location
2 Park Street
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9263 4111
F: (02) 9263 4110

The People
43 Partners (Sydney Office)
140 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

The Contacts
Michelle Hannon
Director of Pro Bono Services
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E: mhannon@gtlaw.com.au

Practice Areas of the Firm
• Competition & Regulation
• Corporate, Communications & Technology
• Corporate Transactions
• Intellectual Property
• Litigation & Dispute Resolution
• Tax
• Property
• Finance

Pro Bono Philosophy
“We believe undertaking Pro Bono work is part of a lawyer’s ethical and professional obligation. Our pro bono practice aims to assist marginalised and disadvantaged individuals and communities who would not otherwise have access to legal assistance to pursue or defend their legal rights.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☐ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☑ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☐ Has a workplace giving program
☐ Has a community service program
Overview

In 1996, G+T became the first law firm in Australia to appoint a full time in-house pro bono lawyer. The firm has three positions dedicated solely to pro bono work. The firm actively encourages its lawyers to undertake pro bono work. G+T has a written pro bono policy. Responsibility for the coordination of pro bono work lies with a dedicated Director of Pro Bono Services. There is also a pro bono committee made up of lawyers, partners and support staff.

Although there is no mandatory requirement for participation in the pro bono, the firm has a 90% participation rate among its lawyers. In 2006/2007 G+T undertook more than 10,000 hours of pro bono work, that is an average of more than 50 hours per lawyer.

G+T is a signatory to the National Pro Bono Aspirational Target.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

G+T’s pro bono efforts target Indigenous people and communities. The firm also prioritises matters for people with disabilities and children and young people and undertake many matters for refugees.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Administrative Law
- Association Incorporation for Non-profit organisations
- Commercial/Tax Law
- Constitutional Law
- Consumer/Trade Practices Law
- Litigation
- Employment Law
- Refugee Law
- Privacy Law
- Property Law
- Public Utilities & Services
- Intellectual Property
- Victims Compensation work

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

G+T carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Advice and representation in a range of areas including litigation, corporate advisory, intellectual property and regulatory law
- Writing submissions
- Policy work
- Community legal education
- Outreach Advice sessions

Eligibility Criteria

G+T assesses eligibility for pro bono assistance according to the following criteria:

- Means – income, benefits, sources of financial support, assets
- Personal circumstances – vulnerability, marginalised/disadvantaged person or organisation that works with such people
- Area of law – whether we have expertise
- Duplication of services – we will not take on matters where legal aid has been granted or where another solicitor is already acting
- Merit
Costs and Disbursements Policy
Costs agreements in litigious matters are set up so that the firm charges fees and reserves the right to waive them. This is necessary to recover costs from the other side in litigation if successful. The firm takes this approach because they do not believe an opponent should benefit (by not having to pay adverse costs) because a client has pro bono representation. Internal disbursements, for example, photocopying, couriers, are not charged. Organisational clients may be asked to cover other disbursements depending on their means; however we seek external funding for disbursements where available.

In non-litigious matters, the firm does not charge fees but may recover some disbursements depending on the means of the client. Where possible, G+T attempts to recover disbursements from other sources and often meets them itself.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
The firm encourages lawyers to undertake pro bono work in a number of ways. It is very much part of the culture and participation is expected. Lawyers are assessed on their pro bono activities in written performance reviews, high performers are rewarded with the opportunity to attend the Garma festival, Australia’s leading Indigenous Cultural Celebration and a celebratory dinner.

Pro bono opportunities are communicated to lawyers through the intranet, team briefings, during the annual presentations on the practice and on induction to the firm.

Sources of Referral
G+T receives most of its pro bono work through:

- Referrals from other law firms
- Direct requests from community organisations
- Direct requests from community legal centres.

The Insider

*Lara Renton – Lawyer*

“The firm generally encourages all lawyers to undertake pro bono work – the encouragement of individual partners depends on the partner. None of my supervisors has particularly encouraged me either way but as I’ve always been involved of my own initiative it’s hard to know whether that’s because I’ve already been actively participating or because they’d rather I didn’t! Feedback from reviews and general comments has always been positive though.

I really enjoyed the pro bono work I do – it offers an interesting and challenging break from the bulk of the work I do day to day and you can’t help but get a little warm fuzzy from doing it – especially when you’re successful! The firm’s approach to pro bono is one I really admire – we focus on certain worthwhile causes but generally accept a broad range of work for a broad range of clients. Pro bono contribution is recognised in different ways, from positive feedback in performance reviews through to invitations to external events.

My most rewarding matter so far has been a successful application for victims compensation. There were a number of issues of concern in our client’s case and we thought it would be quite difficult to meet the requirements that the Act establishes as a threshold to compensation but in the end, after 18 months and two interim rejections, Victims Services accepted the application and our client was granted a substantial award of compensation.

Generally I think the program is really effective and offers interested lawyers a variety of different ways to contribute.”
Harmers Workplace Lawyers

Sydney Office Location
Level 28
31 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9267 4322
F: (02) 9264 4295

The People
6 to 10 Partners (Sydney Office)
21 to 40 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Brisbane, Melbourne

The Contacts
National and Sydney Coordinator
Jenny Inness
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“The provision of pro bono assistance is an important feature of Harmers guiding principles, which include achieving fair outcomes in the workplace for all. Harmers recognises that employment can give rise to cases of gross injustice and human rights abuse. Given the legal expertise and resources which Harmers can utilise, we are in a position to redress many cases of injustice which may be under-serviced by other legal representatives.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☐ Has a workplace giving program
☐ Has a community service program
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Industrial Relations
- Employment Law
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Human Rights & Equal Opportunity
- Change Management
- Legal Risk Management

Overview

Harmers reports that all of its lawyers will have the opportunity to engage in pro bono work.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Harmers carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

- Lawyers from Harmers volunteer at the Kingsford Legal Centre; and
- Lawyers from Harmers provide advice and representation to a variety of nonprofit community organisations, and individual clients, on a pro bono basis.

Eligibility Criteria

The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

- If the matter is in the public interest;
- If the case has reasonable merits;
- If the client has insufficient financial resources;
- If the matter is unable to be readily conducted by other representatives at an affordable cost;
- If Harmers has available resources; or
- If the matter provides an opportunity for training.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

Harmers does not cover internal or external disbursements when undertaking pro bono work.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

Lawyers at Harmers are encouraged to take part in pro bono work consistent with Harmers principles of undertaking worthwhile pursuits in furtherance of fairness in the workplace. This is encouraged by Harmers recognising pro bono work towards billable hours, and pro bono work being taken into account during performance appraisals.

Pro bono work is communicated to staff via induction sessions and regular reports from the Pro Bono Committee at team meetings.

Sources of Referral

Harmers receives most of their referrals from:

- PILCH;
- Law Society of NSW;
- Other law firms; and
- Word of mouth.
Henry Davis York ‘HDY’

Sydney Office Location
44 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9947 6000
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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

The Contacts
Melanie Tully
Pro Bono Co-ordinator
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Kathy Merrick
Pro Bono Partner
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E: kathy.merrick@hdy.com.au

Pro Bono Philosophy
“Community responsibility; opportunities for skill development.”

SNAPSHOT
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PRO BONO PRACTICES

Practice Areas of the Firm

- Banking & Finance
- Banking Dispute Resolution
- Building & Construction
- Commercial & Dispute Resolution
- Competition
- Corporate & Commercial
- Environmental & Planning
- Financial Markets & Derivatives
- Fraud Prevention & Recovery
- Funds Management
- Insolvency & Restructuring
- Insurance
- Intellectual Property
- Major Projects & Infrastructure
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Occupational Health & Safety
- Private Equity
- Property
- Property Funds
- Public Sector
- Retail, Electronic Banking & Finance
- Superannuation
- Taxation
- Technology & Communications
- Workplace Relations

Overview

HDY first appointed a Pro Bono Committee in 2003 and a Pro Bono Co-ordinator in 2004. The firm has a formal pro bono policy and encourages all its lawyers to undertake pro bono work. Responsibility for coordinating pro bono work lies with a committee of lawyers from each practice group and a Co-ordinator. A designated partner also oversees the program.

Pro Bono work is voluntary. In the 2006/2007 year, about 75% of lawyers across the firm performed pro bono work. The gender divide of lawyers who undertake pro bono work is about 50:50.

Current pro bono initiatives run by the firm are: Homeless Persons Legal Service (HPLS), Predatory Lending Project and the Homicide Victims Support Group.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

HDY is currently focusing on assistance to the Homicide Victims Support Group, which provides counselling and other service to families and friends affected by homicide. The partnership provides clients with access to pro bono legal services, particularly for those participating in coronial inquests, as well as assisting with a broader range of legal issues such as wills and compensation for family members. This partnership was recently awarded the Law and Justice Foundation’s National Pro Bono Partnership Award for 2007.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Administrative Issues
- Incorporation of Associations
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Pro bono work comprises the provision of free and discounted legal advice, participation in programs such as the Homeless Persons Legal Service (HPLS), secondments and advice sessions at community legal centres. Lawyers and staff from the firm also provide non-legal community support in the form of mentoring to high-school students (Lawyers Encouraging and Assisting Promising Students) and a reading program to primary school students (Reach Out And Read).

Eligibility Criteria
HDY generally takes on pro bono work where the matter:
- Does not involve a conflict of interest;
- Falls within HDY’s area of expertise;
- Raises issues of broad public concern, or particularly impacts on disadvantaged or marginalised groups; or
- Is one in which a client under a disadvantage would suffer serious consequences

And where the client:
- Cannot afford legal representation without experiencing financial hardship; or
- Is a nonprofit organisation which works for the benefit of members of the community who are disadvantaged or marginalised or works for the public good.

The firm is able to represent clients outside the Sydney CBD area, subject to capacity.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
HDY will generally meet all costs and disbursements. However where there is demonstrated capacity to pay, the firm may pass on disbursements for payment. HDY aims to recover costs from the opposing party in any litigious matters, therefore a costs agreement will be implemented when the client is first retained.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
The firm encourages pro bono work by ensuring that all lawyers who perform pro bono work receive a credit against their billable hours’ budget. HDY also has a separate section in the lawyers’ annual review process which specifically relates to pro bono work. Furthermore, HDY provides training to assist lawyers on matters which are outside their usual areas of expertise.

Pro bono work is encouraged and communicated to staff through the intranet, occasional briefings and on induction to the firm.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Sources of Referral
HDY receives most of its pro bono work through:

• PILCH (NSW) referral;
• Community Legal Centres;
• Referrals from staff members; and
• Direct requests from community organisations.

Community Service
HDY does not have a formal, written community service policy.

Outlook
The firm is looking to increase its pro bono activities in the next 12 months by developing and participating in new projects for delivery of pro bono legal assistance.

The Insider

Haley McEwen – Solicitor

“I am the co-ordinator for HDY’s involvement in The Homeless Persons’ Legal Service (HPLS). I help to manage the training and rosters for participating lawyers, to open and close client files, to review advices and to liaise with our partner law firm and the co-ordinating body of HPLS, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

I have been involved with pro bono work and HPLS in particular since I commenced as a graduate lawyer with the firm in 2004. Since that time, the team of lawyers involved in HPLS has increased significantly. From my experience, lawyers are increasingly keen to become involved in pro bono work and show a long-term commitment to specific pro bono activities.

HDY grants budgetary relief for all pro bono work and encourages those involved in pro bono matters to record all time as if it were billable and of the same priority as fee-paying clients. This approach enables individuals’ contributions to be acknowledged in work-flow management systems and annual reviews and significantly, emphasises the importance of performing pro bono work in a timely and professional manner.

HDY encourages firm-wide participation and supports individuals who are involved in bono matters. In return, the ongoing training, networking opportunities and exposure to a broader client base and issues than they ordinarily encounter with fee-paying clients greatly increases lawyers’ knowledge of social justice issues, experience in dealing with broader legal issues and potential to use individual cases to promote law reform and develop policy in certain areas.”
Melanie Tully – Senior Associate and Pro Bono Co-ordinator

“I find that my supervising partners encourage lawyers to get involved in pro bono work. Emails are circulated regularly about new pro bono matters, so everyone has the opportunity of getting involved. Pro bono work is generally well promoted within the firm.

I was involved in two applications to the Federal Court seeking the release of two applicants who had been in immigration detention for nearly five years. During the course of the proceedings, both applicants were released and are now living in the community. It was very rewarding to be able to assist in the release of these applicants, and definitely a career highlight for me.

Our experience has been really positive and rewarding, although the onus is very much on the individual lawyer to balance the demands of pro bono work with those of paying clients. Sometimes this can get a little tricky.

We think that there needs to be an even greater awareness of what doing pro bono work actually involves, and the need for pro bono legal work which exists in the general community. Pro bono work offers lawyers the opportunity to work in areas of law they may not normally have a day to day practice in, and to deal with a range of different clients. We would like to see a wider range of lawyers across the firm getting involved in pro bono work.”
Holding Redlich ‘HR’

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Sydney NSW 2001
P: (02) 8083 0388
F: (02) 8083 0399

The People
11–15 Partners (Sydney Office)
41–60 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Brisbane, Melbourne

The Contacts
National Co-ordinator
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Director Pro Bono
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“Pro bono work is one means by which the firm’s partners and employees can use their legal skills to make a contribution to a fairer and more just society. HR is prepared to take on issues that might be controversial or which challenge established interests – whether public or private.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☐ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☑ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☐ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

- Property
- Commercial Litigation
- Discrimination
- Media, Arts & Entertainment
- Corporate
- Dispute Resolution
- Construction and Infrastructure

Overview

HR’s commercial legal practice, is underpinned by a strong commitment to human rights and social justice, values which reflect its origins as lawyers for the labour movement. HR is also well known for its longstanding support for the arts in all its forms.

Pro bono work is one means by which the firm’s partners and employees can use their legal skills to make a contribution to a fairer and more just society and HR is prepared to take on issues which might be controversial or which challenge established interests – whether public or private.

HR recognises that pro bono work is useful in attracting and retaining staff who find this work particularly personally and professionally satisfying.

HR has allocated a specified percentage of the firm’s annual turnover to its pro bono or public interest work.

Eligibility Criteria

The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

- For a client who would not otherwise have access to justice and whose case has legal merit;
- In matters which involve significant issues of public interest;
- For nonprofit organisations working to promote human rights, social justice and/or the arts; and
- HR will accept pro bono referrals only if the firm has the skills to ensure that the work is done to a high standard.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

The firm covers unlimited internal disbursements. However, it does not cover external disbursements other than by specific agreement.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

Pro bono work is recorded and is taken into account in lawyers’ performance reviews. Pro bono opportunities are communicated to employees through a monthly email report, which provides updates on pro bono work currently being undertaken by the firm.

Sources of Referral

HR receives most of its referrals from PILCH.
Hunt & Hunt

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Level 13, Gateway
1 Macquarie Place
Circular Quay NSW 2000 and
Level 2, 33 Rowe Street
Eastwood NSW 2122
P: (02) 9391 3000 and 9804 5700
F: (02) 9391 3099 and 9804 5799

The People
16 to 25 Partners (Sydney Office)
41 to 60 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, Hobart, Darwin, Newcastle.

The Contacts
National and Sydney Office Co-ordinator
John Kell
Partner
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E: jkell@hunthunt.com.au

Pro Bono Philosophy
“Hunt & Hunt has a long history of providing pro bono assistance to disadvantage or marginalised individuals of the community and not-for-profit organisations that support them. We actively encourage our lawyers to engage in pro bono work.”

SNAPSHOT
✔ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
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✔ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
✔ Encourages and undertakes community services
☐ Has a charitable foundation
✔ Has a workplace giving program
☐ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

- Corporate and Commercial
- Property
- Employment
- Dispute Resolution

Overview

Hunt & Hunt’s current pro bono activities include acting for disability discrimination complainants, advising in connection with the Boxing Day Tsunami relief effort, and board representation for nonprofit organisations. Each of its four offices has associations with local community legal centres and some offices are members of the Public Interest Law Clearing House.

At any moment in time, approximately 5% of Hunt & Hunt’s lawyers are engaged in pro bono work. Hunt & Hunt does not target its pro bono work at any groups in a strategic way. Rather, the firm responds to the needs of individuals and groups on a case-by-case basis, and offer their services when they have the resources necessary to respond.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Hunt & Hunt carries out pro bono work for:

- Community legal centres
- Nonprofit organisations
- Individuals on a case-by-case basis; and
- Indigenous groups

Eligibility Criteria

The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

- Where the matter satisfies the firm’s definition of a pro bono matter;
- Where it has the appropriate skills and capacity to undertake the matter – and to see it through to its conclusion;
- Where there is no other appropriate avenue of assistance available to the individual or organisation in need;
- There is no conflict of interest.

Costs and Disbursements Policy

The firm does not cover internal or external disbursements for pro bono matters.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff

Hunt & Hunt encourages pro bono work amongst its lawyers by monitoring the interest of staff members in pro bono work. Once a staff member has expressed a desire to become involved in pro bono activities, the firm will assess how the staff member can best become involved.

The firm promotes its pro bono activities internally, primarily via the firm’s intranet.

Sources of Referral

Hunt & Hunt receives most of its referrals from an established network of contacts and clients.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Community Service
While Hunt & Hunt does not have a formal community service policy, the firm is currently involved in several community service initiatives particularly in the areas of education and welfare. For instance, in 2007, through Victor Kelly (Insurance Partner), Hunt & Hunt was named Honorary Lawyers to Clean Up Australia, the nation’s largest community-based environmental event.

Similarly, Catherine Logan (Partner) is the Company Secretary of the Financial Markets Foundation for Children, a benevolent institution that provides grants for medical research into Children’s health issues.

Outlook
The firm’s Executive is developing a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy that will encompass environmental and social goals, which will be approved and monitored at Board level. The Corporate Social Responsibility Policy will be implemented in 2007/2008. This policy will formalise and centralise many of the behaviours and attitudes that have been informally applied across the business for many years, including their pro bono strategy and corporate giving program.

The Insider
Nieva Connell – Partner
“I believe that pro bono work can lead to a range of opportunities that boost your career. These can include developing new social and professional networks, maintaining and updating existing skills and gaining work experience in areas not normally associated with your day job.

My pro bono experience has been a very positive experience. As a result of a significant pro bono matter I have been involved with for the past seven years, I found myself in the heady world of the High Court and in the orbit of a former Federal Court Judge, Ron Merkel QC.

In that matter, I represented a woman by the name of Heather. Heather was sentenced to 14 & 1/2 years jail after being found guilty of murdering her husband. She said she had been abused for over 13 years, and acted in self-defence. Her son, who struck the fatal blow, was also charged with murder but was acquitted. Heather made unsuccessful appeals against her murder conviction. In 1999, she lodged a petition for mercy to the Victorian Government but was refused a pardon. In early 2000, she lodged a Freedom of Information (FOI) request, seeking access to the documents related to the denial of her petition for mercy. I took over conducting the FOI request later that year. Finally, in 2005, after serving nine & 1/2 years, Heather was released on parole for five years. Two months after her release, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal ruled that it was in the public interest for Heather to have access to the documents. The government immediately appealed the decision to the Court of Appeal and was successful. Subsequently, Heather applied to the High Court for special leave to appeal. The application will be heard in December 2007.”
Mallesons Stephen Jaques

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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
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The Contacts
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“Providing pro bono legal assistance gives our lawyers a new perspective, practising areas of law and working with clients not usually within the scope of our commercial work. The valuable experience increases our awareness of important social issues.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
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☑ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
Pro Bono Practices

Practice Areas

- Advertising & Marketing
- Anti-Money Laundering
- Applied Legal Technology
- Asset Finance
- Aviation
- Banking & Finance
- Capital Markets
- Climate Change & Clean Energy
- Competition/Anti-Trust
- Construction
- Copyright
- Corporate & Commercial
- Dispute Resolution
- Employment Law & Industrial Relations
- Energy & Resources
- Environment & Planning
- Funds Management
- Government Business
- Information Technology
- Infrastructure
- Insolvency & Reconstruction
- Intellectual Property
- International Arbitration
- Life Sciences
- Media & Entertainment
- Mergers & Acquisitions
- Patents & Trade Marks
- Privacy
- Superannuation & Pensions
- Taxation
- Telecommunications

Overview

In 2001 Mallesons formalised its contribution to pro bono legal advice work through its “Mallesons in the Community” program.

During 2006 over 62% of the firm’s lawyers volunteered their time towards approximately 350 pro bono cases.

Mallesons has a dedicated pro bono Board who are responsible for coordinating pro bono work and community service initiatives. The firm’s “Mallesons in the Community” program predominately provides free legal advice, legal representation, workplace giving and charity donations.

Key pro bono projects currently undertaken by the firm are:

- ASK! A legal service for Youth in the Randwick and Parramatta areas;
- Secondments to the National Children’s & Youth Law Centre; and
- Legal representation for two Barnardo’s cases in the NSW Supreme Court.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Mallesons’ Sydney office has a particular focus on issues affecting:

- Children, the youth and disadvantaged individuals;
- Nonprofit organisations that assist the needy and disadvantaged; and
- Matters of public interest that affect a significant number of people.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Youth related legal issues such as adoption, housing, crime and family law
- Debt and social security; and
- Victim compensation claims.
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Mallesons carries out pro bono work in the following ways:

• Legal representation in court cases;
• Support for the National Children’s & Youth Law Centre, including rotating 3 month secondments;
• Free legal advice to not-for-profit organisations such as the Australian Red Cross and the AIDS Trust;
• Free legal assistance in regard to complex tendering processes for the Department of Community Services Early Prevention Program;
• Participation in the Sydney Downing Centre Duty Solicitor Scheme providing legal advice, referrals and representation to those who are unrepresented; and
• Partnership with the Ted Noffs Foundation to provide a free legal service for 14 to 21 year olds in Sydney.

Eligibility Criteria
The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:

• People who are disadvantaged or marginalised who cannot access legal aid;
• Organisations assisting people who are disadvantaged or marginalised; and
• Work for the public good on matters for children and the youth.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Internal disbursements are not charged to the client in pro bono matters. External disbursements are to be met by the client. However, Mallesons will, where appropriate, assist in identifying a barrister who will act pro bono or on a Legal Aid grant.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged
Mallesons believes that pro bono work is part of a lawyers’ professional responsibility. Pro bono work is supervised and credited in the same way as commercial matters, meaning that pro bono work is counted as part of lawyers’ billable target.

Sources of Referral
Mallesons receives most of their pro bono work through:

• Direct requests from community legal centres;
• Direct requests from the public; and
• Referrals from staff members.

Community Service
Mallesons has a formal Volunteering and Charitable Donations Policy as part of its “Mallesons in the Community” initiative. In 2006, the firm donated $703,000 to 37 charities and community organisations through its Workplace Giving program.

Nearly 600 of the firm’s staff volunteer in their own time to such organisations as:

• CARE’s Clean Water for School’s Project;
• Telecross; and
• Australian Business and Community Network.
Maurice Blackburn

**Sydney Office Location**
Level 20, 201 Elizabeth Street
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9261 1488
F: (02) 9261 3318

**The People**
1 to 5 Partners (Sydney Office)
11 to 20 Lawyers (Sydney Office)
(excluding Partners)

**Other Australian Offices**
Victoria: Melbourne, Dandenong, Geelong, Reservoir, Ringwood, Sunshine
Queensland: Brisbane, Cairns, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Rockhampton
New South Wales: Newcastle, Wollongong

**Pro Bono Philosophy**
“Provides rewards for both the community and staff.”

**SNAPSHOT**
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☐ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☑ Encourages and undertakes community services
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☐ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program

**The Contacts**
National Co-ordinator
Anne Gooley
P: (03) 9605 2730
E: agooley@mbc.aus.net

Sydney Office Co-ordinator
Ben Slade
Managing Principal, NSW
P: (02) 9261 1488
E: bslade@mbc.aus.net
Practice Areas

- Asbestos Litigation
- Class Actions
- Commercial Litigation
- Employment & Industrial
- Medical
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Public Liability
- Superannuation & Insurance
- Wills/Probate
- Work Related Injury Claims

Overview

Maurice Blackburn first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator in 2007. Anne Gooley, a principal in the employment and industrial law practice, was appointed to head the firm’s public interest litigation practice.

The firm’s key pro bono projects are:

- Conducting public interest litigation on behalf of refugees;
- Defending an unlawfully detained Australian resident and persons with adverse security assessments;
- Acting for environmental and consumer organisations.

Maurice Blackburn does not have a mandatory requirement that all lawyers perform pro bono work. However it often encourages its lawyers to undertake pro bono work, within the constraints of a “plaintiff firm” practice, and does have a written public interest litigation policy.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Maurice Blackburn’s pro bono efforts target human rights groups, environment and consumer organisations.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Administrative
- Consumer/Trade Practices
- Discrimination
- Employment/Industrial
- Tort/Negligence

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

Maurice Blackburn carries out pro bono work through:

- The provision of free or discounted legal advice to persons or groups who do not qualify for legal aid and cannot afford legal assistance;
- Participation in law reform projects and community legal education; and
- Participation in advice nights at community legal centres.
PRO BONO PRACTICES

Eligibility Criteria
Cases will be selected on the basis that they:

- Seek to further a particular public good;
- Correct a perceived injustice; or
- Otherwise address issues which are of broad community concern.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Maurice Blackburn undertakes work for no cost or reduced cost to the client. Where a matter is litigious the firm will enter into a conditional costs agreement with the client so that the firm can recover costs if the proceedings are successful. Barristers who are engaged to perform work will be engaged on the same terms.

Maurice Blackburn will generally bear the costs of disbursements.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Maurice Blackburn encourages pro bono work by counting it as part of the lawyer’s billable or target hours. The firm states that by appointing a Principal to head its public interest litigation practice, it is sending a message to staff and clients that this work is valued by the firm.

Pro bono opportunities are communicated to employees through the firm’s staff bulletins and on the firm’s web site.

Sources of Referral
Maurice Blackburn receives most of its pro bono work from:

- Referrals from barristers;
- Referrals from staff members; and
- Direct requests from community organisations.

Community Service
Maurice Blackburn has a community service program called the Corporate Social Responsibility Program. This program encompasses developing policies and projects for direct Maurice Blackburn involvement in worthy community organisations as part of our commitment to local communities.

Maurice Blackburn believes that being involved in community projects around the country is a great way to demonstrate the firm’s community spirit and how living values can make a sustainable difference to people who are disadvantaged.

The Sydney office has chosen Mission Australia for its corporate social responsibility program. The firm have entered into a partnership with one of its centres, Lemongrove Lodge, to provide various forms of assistance to homeless youth who are catered for at the lodge.

Outlook
Maurice Blackburn is looking to increase its public interest litigation over the next 12 months. The practice was formally launched in October 2007.
The Insider

David Kelly – Practice Manager, NSW

“Maurice Blackburn has a long history of providing pro bono assistance and involvement in worthy community organisations as part of our commitment to local communities. Focus groups were conducted to gain an understanding of what community activities we believed were worthy of official Maurice Blackburn involvement. As a result, a number of our offices have chosen their charitable organisations. By way of example, the Melbourne office chose the Hanover Welfare Group for its corporate social responsibilities program. Hanover provides accommodation and support for the homeless and those in need of crisis accommodation. The Sydney office chose Mission Australia and entered into a partnership with one of its Mission’s centres, Lemongrove Lodge.

The firm and staff have found this experience to be fulfilling and rewarding, as well as humbling. In fact, our experience in no small way has contributed to the firm’s philosophy and policy formulation, by refining and expanding our social and community involvement. Staff involvement is constantly recognised on the firm’s intranet and in the CEO’s Newsletter.

There have been a number of activities undertaken recently, including participating in Scope, an organisation providing disability services throughout Melbourne and Victoria to over 5,000 children and adults with physical and multiple disabilities. The firm’s staff participated by entering three teams in the St Kilda Festival’s Scope Charity Bed Race. The race featured teams of five who run 200-metre heats pushing a hospital bed around some fun obstacles.

Scope was able to raise more than $150,000 through conducting this event, and more importantly, this assisted in the generation of awareness of Scope and assisted them in changing the community’s attitude to the work undertaken by Scope.

The firm’s philosophy and approach is one of constant evolution in that we continue to expand our corporate and social responsibility programs by developing policy and projects that not only enable the contribution of our lawyers specific legal expertise, but which also allow staff direct involvement in worthy community organisations.”
Middletons

Sydney Office Location
Level 26, 52 Martin Place
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9513 2300
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The People
Over 26–35 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Melbourne

The Contacts
Sydney Office Co-ordinator
Toby Blyth
Co-Chairman, Pro Bono Committee
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E: toby.blyth@middletons.com

Melbourne Office Co-ordinator
Lara Ruddle
Co-Chair Coordinator
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SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☑ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☑ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☐ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm
- Corporate and Commercial Advisory
- Energy
- Insurance
- Financial Services
- Property
- Employment and Industrial Relations
- Dispute Resolution
- Tax and Revenue
- Planning and Environment
- Telecommunications Law

Overview
Middletons has a strong relationship with the Oaktree Foundation, an entirely youth run aid and development organisation, whose mission is to empower developing communities through education in a way that is sustainable. Its more recent pro bono work targets Aboriginal arts and cultural organisations.

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Middletons carries out pro bono work in the following ways:
- Advice; and
- Acting for clients in disputes and litigation.

Eligibility Criteria
The firm undertakes pro bono work in the following circumstances:
- Charitable/public/environmental/human rights; or
- On individual merits or individuals who are unable to afford representation.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Middletons covers unlimited internal disbursements (e.g. photocopying, faxes, telephone calls and the like), but does not cover external disbursements (e.g. counsel fees, court filing fees, etc).

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
The firm communicates pro bono opportunities to employees through induction sessions and word of mouth.

Sources of Referral
Middletons receives most of their referrals from PILCH (NSW).

Community Service
Middletons has a formal community service policy.
Pro bono is part of a wider range of programs which include a workplace giving program for staff and opportunities to be involved with external organisations such as Oxfam and the Oaktree Foundation.
Minter Ellison

Sydney Office Location
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Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9921 8888
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The People
Over 45 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 150 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

Other Australian Offices
Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin,
Gold Coast, Melbourne, Perth

The Contacts
National and Sydney Co-ordinator
Anton Hermann
National Director, Pro Bono & Community Investment
P: (02) 9921 8797
E: anton.hermann@minterellison.com

Pro Bono Philosophy
“We seek to target assistance towards people experiencing social disadvantage – particularly young people, families and people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness or poverty.”

SNAPSHOT
- Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
- Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
- Has written pro bono policy
- Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
- Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
- Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
- Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
- Has a charitable foundation
- Has a workplace giving program
- Has a community service program
Practice Areas

- Anti-money laundering
- Competition and regulation
- Compliance and governance
- Construction & Environment and planning
- Corporate & Mergers and acquisitions
- Employment law and employee relations
- Government law
- Insolvency and reconstruction
- Insurance
- Intellectual property and Technology
- International trade law
- Litigation and dispute resolution, Arbitration
- Native title
- Privacy
- Projects and project finance
- Property finance, Real estate and commercial property
- Superannuation and pensions
- Tax

Overview

Minter Ellison first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator in 2003.

The firm’s key pro bono projects in NSW are:

- Homeless Person’s Legal Service (HPLS)
- Claymore Legal Counselling and Referral Service (in partnership with Work Ventures)
- PILCH projects

In the 2006/2007 year, the percentage of Minter Ellison lawyers who performed pro bono work was approximately 20%. Pro bono work is voluntary, and the majority of the work is performed by lawyers with 0–4 years post admission experience. Approximately 75% of the lawyers who do pro bono work are female.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Minter Ellison’s pro bono efforts target disadvantaged youth, the alleviation of poverty, homelessness and access to justice.

The firm does most of its pro bono work in the following areas:

- Housing/Tenancy
- Association Incorporation
- Public Interest Law
- Commercial/tax issues
- Fines
- Victims Compensation
- AVOs, including defended matters
- Debt
Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Minter Ellison provides free legal advice, secondments, advice sessions and outreach legal clinics.

Eligibility Criteria
Minter Ellison provides assistance to individuals in need and to nonprofit organisations, but is unlikely to make court/tribunal appearances outside the Sydney CBD.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Generally, the firm does not charge pro bono clients a fee. Disbursements are discussed with clients on a case-by-case basis and set out in the client agreement.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Minter Ellison encourages its lawyers to undertake pro bono work by recognising the hours spent on pro bono work as part of the lawyer’s billable target hours.

The firm’s pro bono policy is communicated to members of the firm through the intranet, internal articles, occasional firm briefings and on induction to the firm.

Sources of Referral
The firm mainly receives pro bono referrals from:
- PILCH (NSW);
- Staff members;
- Direct requests from community legal centres.

Community Service
Minter Ellison has a formal, written community service policy.

The firm’s Pro Bono and Community Investment Policy encourages lawyers and support staff to take a broad view of how they can provide a range of assistance to nonprofit organisations and their clients.

For example, Minter Ellison involves its staff in community activities that support the work of its lawyers at the HPLS and the Claymore Work Ventures Clinic.

Minter Ellison has had a close partnership with James Meehan High School since 2003 and was a founding member of the Australian Business and Community Network.

The Insider

Samantha Stuart – Lawyer

“I have been attending a legal referral centre fortnightly during office hours for two years. The partners and senior members of my group are extremely supportive of my attendance at the centre and I have never been in a situation where I have been asked not to attend one of my scheduled mornings. I receive budget relief for the time spent at the centre and for any time spent on work relating to the centre as well as reimbursement of travel expenses (the centre is about one hour from our city office).

Personally, attending the centre gives me so much pleasure in knowing that I am helping people who need it most. Outer Western Sydney is often a community which is forgotten and they really do appreciate when someone takes the time to go into the community and listen to their concerns. It can often be a long hard road to help people make a difference in their lives, but each little step that we take together with the client to get there gives you a feeling that cannot be compared to anything in the
corporate environment – it is a true and honest feeling that you are making a difference to that person right there in front of you. This is an incredible feeling.

The work we carry out varies and includes issues such as tenancy, debt, housing, sexual assault, bankruptcy and family law advice. We provide as much advice as possible at the centre, however we often need to refer our clients to appropriate legal or social services. Our aim though is to make the experience of seeing a solicitor as easy and non-confronting as possible for the client so if we can manage the issue by just making a couple of telephone calls rather than rushing to Court we will.

I strongly encourage the participation of all lawyers, senior lawyers and partners in pro bono and community work. As a large corporate firm, I think we have a responsibility to help people less fortunate than ourselves and use the skills that we have to help all, not just those who can afford it. I am extremely appreciative of the support I have received during my time of being part of the community investment program and I really encourage all in the firm to give their staff the opportunities I have had.”

Skye Rose – Lawyer

“Minter Ellison has been involved with the HPLS since it was established in New South Wales in 2004. The HPLS is based on a “one stop shop” model and provides free legal advice to those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

My experience with the HPLS has been extremely positive. I have not been discouraged from spending time on pro bono work provided that it is not to the detriment of my practice. The work I have undertaken has been diverse – from appearing at a Coronial Inquiry to preparing a victims’ compensation claim. My experiences have kept me grounded and provided me with the confidence to deal with legal issues in a highly charged environment, particularly when clients suffer from mental illness or substance abuse problems. The major positives are witnessing how a legal ‘win’ can have a dramatic impact on a person’s financial situation and self-esteem.

Minter Ellison supports and encourages participation in pro bono work by providing lawyers with fee relief for work undertaken on approved pro bono matters. Time spent on pro bono work is not simply lost overheads, but is posted to a specific pro bono matter number. This creates a culture that recognises pro bono as an important component of a lawyer’s professional development.

Although participation in pro bono is relatively high, I think that the ‘wins’ and type of work being done could be better publicised internally to encourage wider participation. In particular, it would be great to see even more partners take on a leadership role in relation to pro bono work – as more solicitors would see pro bono work as being an acceptable part of corporate practice and be willing to be involved.”
PricewaterhouseCoopers Legal
‘PwC Legal’

Sydney Office Location
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201 Sussex Street,
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 8266 6666
F: (02) 8266 6999

The People
6–10 Partners (Sydney Office)
41–60 Lawyers (Sydney Office)

The Contacts
National Pro Bono Co-ordinator
Shameela Karunakaran
Solicitor
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E: shameela.karunakaran@pwclegal.com.au

Pro Bono Philosophy
“Pro bono essentially broadens the mind and exposes lawyers to a variety of situations they would not normally face in their day-to-day job. Through the completion of pro bono work, lawyers are able to develop new skills, both of a legal and practical nature. Positive morale, sense of pride, team building, enhances corporate image, living our values, improves culture, part of our corporate social responsibility and sense of partnership.”

SNAPSHOT
☑ Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
☐ Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
☑ Has written pro bono policy
☑ Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
☐ Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
☐ Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
☐ Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
☑ Has a charitable foundation
☑ Has a workplace giving program
☑ Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

• Commercial & Regulatory Litigation
• Corporate & Commercial
• Employment Law
• Property
• Tax

Overview

PwC Legal first appointed a national pro bono co-ordinator in December 1999. The firm also has a written pro bono policy and responsibility for coordinating pro bono work is undertaken by a team of two to four dedicated staff members. Pro bono work is not mandatory for lawyers, but it is undertaken by between 6 to 25% of the firm’s lawyers, of varying levels of experience. The gender divide of the lawyers who undertake pro bono work is even.

PwC Legal’s key pro bono projects are:
• Pro bono work for the PwC Foundation’s 21 charity partners; and
• Some PILCH referrals.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

PwC Legal’s pro bono efforts target health issues, disadvantaged youth, alleviating poverty, supporting children and conserving the environment.

The firm does pro bono work in the following areas:
• General Commercial
• Property
• Association Incorporation
• Consumer/trade issues
• Tax

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken

PwC Legal carries out pro bono work such as:
• Drafting documents;
• Reviewing compliance issues;
• Free legal advice; and
• Dispute resolution.

Eligibility Criteria

Pro bono work must fit within the following pro bono policy:
• Person with financial hardship who does not qualify for Legal Aid;
• Nonprofit organisation acting in the interests of the disadvantaged, marginalised, or for the public good; or
• A public interest matter.

Once a referral has been accepted, the Partner in the relevant work group will determine capacity and willingness to take on the work.
Pro Bono Practices

Costs and Disbursements Policy
The firm will enter into a cost agreement at the outset where the firm estimates the costs of the pro bono assistance. When 75 to 80% of the cost estimate has been reached, the client will be contacted. If it is clear that the work cannot be done fully within the original cost estimate, a new agreement will be negotiated for the rest of the work to be carried out. The agreement may be on a continuing pro bono basis, or may involve additional costs to the client. If it is work related to PwC Foundation charity partners, up to 60% recovery can be obtained from the PwC Foundation. Otherwise, PwC Legal will bear all costs.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
Pro bono work is supported and encouraged through the firm, particularly with pro bono work done for the PwC Foundation’s 21 charity partners. Most lawyers would include pro bono work in their annual review (although there is not a specific section for such) and would obtain recognition for such work.

PwC Legal communicates its pro bono opportunities by:
- Circulating articles on examples of pro bono work;
- Intranet site specifying previous pro bono work.

Sources of Referral
PwC Legal receives most of its pro bono work from:
- PwC Foundation’s charity partners;
- PILCH (NSW) referrals;
- Direct requests from community organisations; and
- Direct requests from individuals.

Community Service
PwC Legal has a formal, written community service policy.

Staff are given one day per financial year to spend doing community-based activity (e.g. tree planting, hamper packing, entertaining children in hospitals, etc). The firm also has a people-giving program, where staff can make pledges to certain charities. In the past, the PwC Foundation has supported many charities by holding events such as World’s Greatest Shave, Breast Cancer Foundation lunches and various morning teas to raise funds for charities.

Outlook
PwC Legal wishes to focus its pro bono activities towards work with the PwC Foundation and its charity partners.
Josie Habak – Solicitor and Former Pro Bono and Community Services Coordinator

“Taking part in pro bono matters and community activities is looked upon favourably by partners and staff within the firm. Staff enjoy making a difference within the community, broadening horizons and developing and learning new skills. Participation in pro bono matters and community activities are recognised in monthly firm briefings and also in performance appraisals. My experience has been positive.

Staff receive one day of leave per year to work in the community. The PwC Foundation does an excellent job arranging for staff to participate in a community day with one of 21 charity partners. These days are particularly well organised, rewarding and fun. Members of a work group often take their community day together and the day forms an excellent team building activity. At the end of last year I was part of a group who took part in a Camp Quality tour of Sydney. We showed the children the Opera House, took them on a Bridge Climb and through the Sydney Aquarium. These children were from all over Australia; some had never been to Sydney before. This was so satisfying as it made these children forget about their illness for a while and have fun!”
Sparke Helmore Lawyers

Sydney Office Location
321 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000
P: (02) 9373 3555
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The People
26 to 35 Partners (Sydney Office)
Over 100 Lawyers (Sydney Office)
(excluding Partners)

Other Australian Offices
Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne,
Newcastle, Perth, Upper Hunter

The Contacts
National Co-ordinator
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Pro Bono & Community
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Pro Bono Philosophy
“Through our national community assistance scheme (‘SHARE’), we facilitate access to justice with our pro bono practice and expertise, we embrace our responsibility to the broader community through our community partnerships and programs, and we give encouragement to people through mentoring and employment initiatives. We see all these activities to be an integral part of our professional and corporate social responsibility as a national law firm. With this philosophy, Sparke Helmore brings the same professionalism, energy, insight and collaboration to its pro bono and community programs as it does all its activities. In doing so, we not only assist people and groups that are in need in our community, but also enrich our own lives with fulfilling and meaningful experiences at work.”

SNAPSHOT
- Encourages and undertakes pro bono work
- Pro bono work is a mandatory requirement
- Has written pro bono policy
- Has pro bono co-ordinator or committee
- Pro Bono work counted towards lawyers’ billable hours
- Pro Bono work taken into account in performance appraisal
- Meets external disbursements for pro bono work
- Encourages and undertakes community services
- Has a charitable foundation
- Has a workplace giving program
- Has a community service program
Practice Areas of the Firm

- Banking & Finance
- Bankruptcy & Insolvency
- Commercial Dispute Resolution & Litigation
- Compensation
- Construction, Projects & Infrastructure
- Corporate & Commercial
- Energy & Resources
- Environment & Planning
- Government & Administrative Law
- Insurance & Risk
- Intellectual Property
- Property
- Workplace Relations & Safety

Overview

Sparke Helmore launched its community assistance scheme in August 2004. The scheme is called ‘SHARE’, an acronym that stands for ‘Sparke Helmore’s Assistance, Responsibility & Encouragement’.

Through SHARE, Sparke Helmore:

- Provides ‘Assistance’ through its Legal Assistance Program – enhancing access to justice through pro bono legal services for people and nonprofit community organisations that satisfy acceptance criteria specified in the firm’s pro bono policy;
- Embraces its ‘Responsibility’ through its Community Support Program – providing assistance to nonprofit community organisations via workplace giving and charitable fund raising, the sharing of the firm’s expertise and resources for community projects, and the hosting of community events;
- Provides ‘Encouragement’ through the Nick Meagher Developing People Program - participating in high school and university mentoring programs and work placement programs that enhance equity and opportunity in the workplace.

SHARE is managed by the firm’s Pro Bono & Community Programs Director, who is responsible to the firm’s National Managing Partner and reports to a Corporate Social Responsibility Advisory Group. Involvement in the scheme is voluntary and is open to all partners and staff as opportunities arise. Pro bono work through the firm’s Legal Assistance Program is performed by both junior and senior lawyers.

Areas of Specialisation or Interest

Sparke Helmore’s pro bono efforts target nonprofit community organisations with limited resources and disadvantaged individuals, who face barriers in accessing quality legal advice.

Each request for pro bono work is considered on a case-by-case basis. Predominantly, the firm has performed pro bono work in the following areas:

- Public Interest Law
- Charity Law
- Community Law
- Commercial Dispute Resolution & Litigation
- Workplace Relations & Safety
PRO BONO PRACTICES

- Environment & Planning
- Government & Administrative Law

Types of Pro Bono Work Undertaken
Sparke Helmore carries out pro bono by providing:
  - No-fee or reduced-fee legal advice and advocacy;
  - Support for community projects that require legal services;
  - Assistance to Community Legal Centres and advocacy organisations;
  - Community legal education;
  - Law reform and policy work.

Eligibility Criteria
Sparke Helmore provides pro bono legal assistance to nonprofit community associations and companies and to low income or disadvantaged individuals who do not qualify for Legal Aid. The assistance sought must be within a practice area of the firm, must facilitate access to justice for the organisation or individual concerned, and may need to satisfy a public interest criterion. The firm may also contribute to legal education projects, law reform and policy work, on issues which are of importance to a specific community or for broader public benefit. Sparke Helmore’s policy for pro bono legal assistance includes a merits and means test and a thorough check for conflicts of interest.

Costs and Disbursements Policy
Sparke Helmore provides no-fee or reduced-fee pro bono legal assistance. In matters that are litigated, the firm’s pro bono policy permits assistance to be provided under a conditional costs agreement for the recovery of costs in successful matters. Sparke Helmore does not normally charge for internal disbursements and, depending on the client’s matter and means, external disbursements up to $500 may be subsidised by the firm through ‘Disbursement Relief’.

Ways Pro Bono Work is Encouraged Amongst Staff
At Sparke Helmore, pro bono work is not mandatory for the firm’s lawyers. However, the firm encourages its lawyers to undertake pro bono work by counting the work as part of lawyers’ billable hours and by recognising their community contribution in staff appraisal processes. Lawyers performing pro bono work are supervised in the same way as any other work, but they receive the support of the firm’s Pro Bono & Community Programs Director while they undertake their pro bono work. To make pro bono work easier, pro bono intake administration is centralised so lawyers can focus their energies on their pro bono advice and advocacy. Pro bono opportunities are promoted via e-mail, through the firm’s intranet, and by direct liaison. Sometimes, firm briefings are conducted featuring pro bono and community program opportunities. The firm is always also open to receiving feedback from those participating in pro bono work on how procedures may be improved or what types of pro bono work the firm’s lawyers would like to do.

Sources of Referral
Sparke Helmore obtains its pro bono work from three main sources, direct requests from nonprofit community organisations, partners and senior legal staff who have links with such organisations, and referrals from Community Legal Centres. In addition the firm also sources pro bono work from:
  - PILCH (NSW) referrals;
  - Referrals from other law firms and courts; and
  - Direct requests from individuals.
Community Service

Sparke Helmore has a formal, written community service policy.

Sparke Helmore engages with the community beyond traditional pro bono work through the firm’s Community Support Program and Developing People Program. The firm encourages participation in these SHARE programs by regularly promoting opportunities and acknowledging time dedicated by lawyers and other staff in achieving program outcomes.

The ‘Community Support Program’ program channels the firm’s expertise, resources and people to assist charities with their community activities and fund raising. This is achieved through workplace giving, donations and sponsorships, and special in-house projects and fund raising events where staff and lawyers roll up their sleeves and volunteer their time and skills. An example is the firm’s sponsorship of an annual triathlon in the Hunter region to benefit the Hunter Medical Research Institute. Sparke Helmore’s people from throughout Australia are supported to participate in the triathlon either through being a competitor or attending as a volunteer. Through practical assistance like this, Sparke Helmore makes a difference for community groups and the firm learns more about these groups and their good work. Sparke Helmore has community partnerships with organisations such as The Spastic Centre of NSW, Austcare, The Salvation Army, Mission Australia and The Australian Employers’ Network on Disability.

Nick Meagher – Developing People Program

Through the ‘Nick Meagher – Developing People Program’, Sparke Helmore embraces a range of mentoring initiatives for high school (e.g., LEAPS mentoring), university students (e.g., Lucy Mentoring) and work placement programs (e.g., “Stepping into Law”) for law students with a disability. These activities enable Sparke Helmore’s people to contribute to a person’s life and development through positive, empowering relationships, which is a strong feature of Sparke Helmore’s workplace culture. In contributing in this way, the firm remembers the legacy of its late Chairman, Nick Meagher, who contributed so much to the legal profession and the broader community.

Outlook

Sparke Helmore has a strategic plan for its SHARE scheme. The plan, which has been promoted through the firm’s intranet and internal briefings, endeavours to increase the scope of Sparke Helmore’s pro bono and community program activities and enhance the quality of the firm’s community partnerships throughout Australia. Some new and exciting developments are being planned that will make the scheme a reality for more people within the firm.
The Insider

Michael Rosenfeld – Pro Bono & Community Programs Director

“I started doing a pro bono role at Sparke Helmore on a part-time basis a few years ago while managing a busy litigation practice. At the time, I didn’t realise it would eventually lead to a national and full-time role in which I direct the firm’s pro bono and community program activities. I have always had a strong interest in social justice and public policy issues and this role has allowed me to embrace that and to help others to give back to the community in ways that they find rewarding. It’s a demanding and very busy area in the firm that provides a lot of satisfaction, especially when the outcomes of our pro bono and community work become evident. SHARE is all about extending ourselves professionally and personally, in helping others who may not have otherwise been able to benefit from the expertise and resources we apply everyday in providing our legal services throughout Australia. Our scheme has been operating for about three years and we are now planning several program enhancements to reinforce our commitment and make even more opportunities available to our people to make a difference in the communities in which we operate.”

Kate Chegwidden – Pro Bono & Community Programs Administrator

“As a law student in my third year, I feel really privileged to work in pro bono and community programs at Sparke Helmore in a part-time role. I assist Michael in opening our pro bono matters and deal with the day-to-day arrangements involved in our mentoring programs and community events. It’s a new role for me and an exciting one because it has widened my perspective on the good that can be done by lawyers. For example, I have been involved in assisting Michael to provide advice and referrals to clients through the Hunter Homelessness Law and Advocacy Service pilot project. The project made me realise that a lot of relationships and planning go into providing pro bono services and it gave me an insight into the disadvantage that some people experience in getting the right legal assistance. One of the highlights for me so far is helping Michael to arrange a graduation for the Lucy Mentoring program offered through the Office for Women and participating universities. Seeing young women like myself talk about their experiences and benefits from the program demonstrated that mentoring can be a powerful way to learn. I couldn’t ask for any better experience in preparing me for a career in the law when I complete my studies.”

share
SPARKE HELMORE’S ASSISTANCE, RESPONSIBILITY AND ENCOURAGEMENT SCHEME
This Guide focuses on the pro bono work undertaken by 22 of the largest law firms in NSW. In response to increasing interest from young lawyers and law students, it has been developed to provide up-to-date information about the structured and organised programs and community services offered by these firms.

Profiles of these firms, their pro bono philosophy, the range of opportunities they offer for pro bono and community service work are detailed along with 'insider' comments from lawyers within the firms.