

NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE

Pro Bono News Issue 16: Volume 4/2005

Welcome to the fourth edition for 2005 of the eNewsletter of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre (NPBRC). The Centre is affiliated with the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales and is funded by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department. Archived eNewsletters are available at www.nationalprobono.org.au/publications/index.html

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1 Darwin Legal Aid/Pro Bono conference

On 5-6 May 2005 about 40 practitioners from Alice Springs, Katherine, Darwin, Sydney and remote parts of the NT met over the two days to discuss unmet legal needs in the NT and how they might be better addressed. The conference was organised by Jenny Hardy from the NT Legal Aid Commission and Barbara Bradshaw, CEO of the NT Law Society and funded by the NT Law Society Public Purpose Trust. Lawyers from NT LAC regional offices, CLCs, ATSILs, Women's Legal Services and Family Violence Prevention Units explained the limitations and difficulties in providing adequate legal services to disadvantaged and marginalised people in the NT, particularly in remote areas.

Few local firms attended but Sydney based pro bono coordinators from Clayton Utz, Blake Dawson Waldron and Gilbert & Tobin attended. BDW have had a secondee based at Katherine Aboriginal Legal Aid Service for over 6 months and it was great to hear what a difference a person who is fully supported by their firm and the local service can make to the delivery of legal services.

The establishment of a pro bono clearing house in the NT was discussed but those at the meeting felt there was not enough capacity amongst NT based firms to warrant a clearing house model. They did agree that there is a need for coordination of pro bono activities and the Law Society's legal aid/pro bono committee was suggested as the best body to take on the role.

2 PILCH news

- (i) On 16 June 2005 directors and staff of QPILCH, PILCH (NSW) and PILCH (VIC) met in Melbourne to discuss ways of cooperating and the 'one stop pro bono shop' model of operation - something that both NSW and QLD are exploring. The Centre attended as an observer. The three PILCHs plan now to have regular meetings.
- (ii) The Queensland Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors has approved a non-recurrent grant for 2005-2006 to assist QPILCH's Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic. The funding will cover the employment of a full-time coordinator to oversee the operation of six clinics, with a new clinic to commence in July 2005, and a part-time policy officer to undertake research, prepare policy submissions and to develop clinics in Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast.
- (iii) PILCH NSW has moved to new premises with increased floor space at Level 9, 299 Elizabeth Street, Sydney 2000 (DX 643 Sydney) just across from the Downing Centre and the Family Court. Ph: (02) 8898 6500 Fax: (02) 8898 6555

3 First State based ALAF is established

The NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF) was launched on 21 June 2005 at the NSW CLC Annual Conference. This follows a resolution made at the National Legal Aid Congress in Brisbane last November calling for the Australian Legal Assistance Forum (ALAF) to develop State forums. The ALAF was established to enable National Legal Aid, the Law Council of Australia, representatives of ATSILS and NACLC to address Australian legal assistance issues and to make recommendations on those issues in a coordinated fashion at a national level.

The initial membership of NLAF includes the NSW Legal Aid Commission, Combined Community Centres Legal Group NSW, Coalition of Aboriginal Legal Services, Law and Justice Foundation of NSW, the NSW Law Society, the NSW Bar and LAW Access NSW. The Law and Justice Foundation has agreed to provide a part-time project manager to NLAF for a 12 month period and is currently advertising the position. Applicants may obtain the selection criteria by calling Ana Berger on 02 9221 3900. Applications close 29 July 2005. Further information about the project can be obtained from Sue Scott at the Law and Justice Foundation on 02 8227 3208.

4 HPLS in NSW turns 1 and launches new clinic

The Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS), a joint initiative of PIAC and PILCH, celebrated its first birthday by launching a new clinic in Surry Hills on 18 May 2005. More than 70 people attended the function at which the Hon Bob Debus, NSW Attorney General launched the new clinic and acknowledged the achievements of the HPLS in its first year of operation.

The new clinic at the Salvation Army's Streetlevel Café, in Derby Lane, Surry Hills, will be staffed by solicitors from PILCH member firm, Baker & MacKenzie, and will operate each Wednesday from 12:30 pm to 2:00 pm.

5 Pro bono coordinators

Clayton Utz pro bono lawyer **Fiona McLeay** has resumed her role as special counsel in the Melbourne construction group after completing the New York University Global Public Service Law Masters course. Fiona, who coordinates Clayton Utz's pro bono program in Melbourne, will devote half her time to construction legal work and the other half to pro bono and Community Connect, the firm's corporate citizenship program. Fiona is director of Community Connect which focuses on non-legal support and assistance to the community through volunteering

programs and grants made by the Clayton Utz Foundation. She plans to use the expertise gained overseas to introduce a range of initiatives to further strengthen Clayton Utz pro bono programs.

Georgina Perry has been appointed as pro bono coordinator at Allens Arthur Robinson. Prior to taking on the role, Georgina worked in Allens corporate and banking departments. In addition to her pro bono work at Allens, Georgina has had a long association with Amnesty International and was elected Vice President in 2004. She is based in the Sydney office and can be contacted on 02 9230 4899.

6 Pro Bono Manual online

The new paperback edition of the Australian Pro Bono Manual is selling well and has been converted to HTML and uploaded onto the Centre's website. All precedents are downloadable as word documents. There are contact details for a national list of 51 pro bono coordinators. You can add to or update the list by contacting us at info@nationalprobono.org.au. The new paperback edition of the Manual can be purchased from the Australian Book Group www.australianbookgroup.com.au.

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Please forward this newsletter to anyone else you think may be interested.

8 Centre contact details

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