

## Q4 Hunter CLSD Meeting Minutes

30 November 2023 11am – 1pm, Survivor’s R Us Cardiff.

**Attendees:**

Seema Sanghi and Anneleise Hey (Legal Aid NSW), Kate Loughnan (Hunter Community Legal Centre), Nissa Phillips (CLSD Hunter), Bud Crawford and Casey Chesworth (Revenue NSW), Nicole Grgas (Hunter Tenants Advocacy Service- TAS), Jill Green and Hayley Daniels (Aboriginal Legal Service- ALS), Chezarne Cuffe (Money Care, Salvation Army), Jason and Ann Maria Martin (Survivor’s R Us), Sharna (Mirabel Foundation).

**Apologies:**

Pauline Green (NCAT), Christine Francis (Legal Aid).

Agenda Item	Discussion	Action
Welcome to Awabakal country	Nissa Phillips did an acknowledgment of country, followed by a trigger warning about some of the themes in the meeting.	
Purpose of meeting	<p>A. CLSD Program Objective: to work collaboratively to identify and address unmet legal and related non-legal needs of people in the Hunter region.</p> <p>We do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- making better referrals/ referral pathways</li> <li>- working on projects and devising new services, and</li> <li>- coordinating our efforts.</li> </ul> <p>B. Meeting objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To introduce the CLSD partnership to the team at Survivor’s R Us and build referral pathways for people accessing Survivors R Us.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For people attending this meeting to meet new people and services also in attendance.</li> <li>● To Introduce the new CLSD Free Legal Guide to the Hunter.</li> <li>● For partners to practice identifying legal issues, amongst a range of issues, both legal and non-legal, and ensure services know about new services' eligibility and referral processes.</li> <li>● CLSD partnership action development based on community's needs and local data, particularly around fine debt and homelessness in the region.</li> </ul>	
Introductions	All in attendance provided their name, service, and what they would like others in this room to know about their service.	
Survivors R Us	<p>Ann Maria Martin – <u>Survivors R Us</u> (SRU) founder.</p> <p>Ann Maria shared her personal story of domestic violence, and her challenges in accessing appropriate legal and other support for her and her daughter. Maria founded SRU in 2017 to 'support survivors of domestic violence, homelessness and unemployment'.</p> <p>SRU is a volunteer run charity that offers free professional counselling services, a discount food warehouse, an op-shop, dignity bags, children's toys and coordinates donations of household furniture for families in need. SRU are providing 2,000 Christmas hampers and toys in the Hunter this year and are working with Food Bank on the next Hunger Report for our region. They are also trying to source funding to build units for crisis accommodation in the Lake Macquarie region.</p>	Nissa to follow up about a free legal health check and birth certificate event in partnership with Legal Aid at SRU in February, 2024.
Legal Issue identification exercise	<p><b>Legal Issue Spotting:</b> We used the Legal Aid Law Check Up tool, as well as the <a href="#">CLSD free legal guide to the Hunter</a> document to assist our discussions.</p> <p>For this meeting, the group focused on the case study below.</p> <p><i>Justine, a 26-year-old Aboriginal woman and mother, seeks help with her 11-month-old baby.</i></p> <p><i>Justine is currently sleeping rough in the Lake Macquarie area. Justine has often had to couch-surf with friends or sleep on the streets, where she was exposed to further violence and alcohol and drug use. Janelle has also spent time in juvenile detention.</i></p> <p><i>She was living with her boyfriend in a private rental property but is too scared to go back because he hits her and yells at her when he gets drunk. She stopped paying rent and has received arrears notices from the real estate agent.</i></p>	

*Justine has tried applying for social housing but was told over the phone that she isn't eligible because her last tenancy was ended by the Tribunal. Revenue NSW has suspended Justine's driver's licence because she owes \$647.20 in fines. Justine receives the JobSeeker Payment from Centrelink. She also has a mobile phone debt and has been contacted by a debt collector. Justine says that the cost of everything is just too much, and she wants to build a better life for herself and her baby.*

*What can you do to help Justine?*

Participants were divided into two groups and asked to discuss each case using the following questions as prompts:

- What are the legal issues?
- What other issues are the people facing?
- What cultural needs might influence the support provided to Justine and her baby given that she is an Aboriginal woman?
- Who can you refer to for support?
- Are there gaps you're unable to support her with?

**Safety:**

- Link her in with local domestic violence specialist homeless support services (SHS) such as Warlga Ngurra, Nova for Women and Children or Jenny's Place, depending on who has availability.
- AVO – contact local police.
- SHLV – Carrie's, NOVA, link with DV service or DVU@ Legal Aid NSW – and civil team (financial counselling and support worker).

**Housing:**

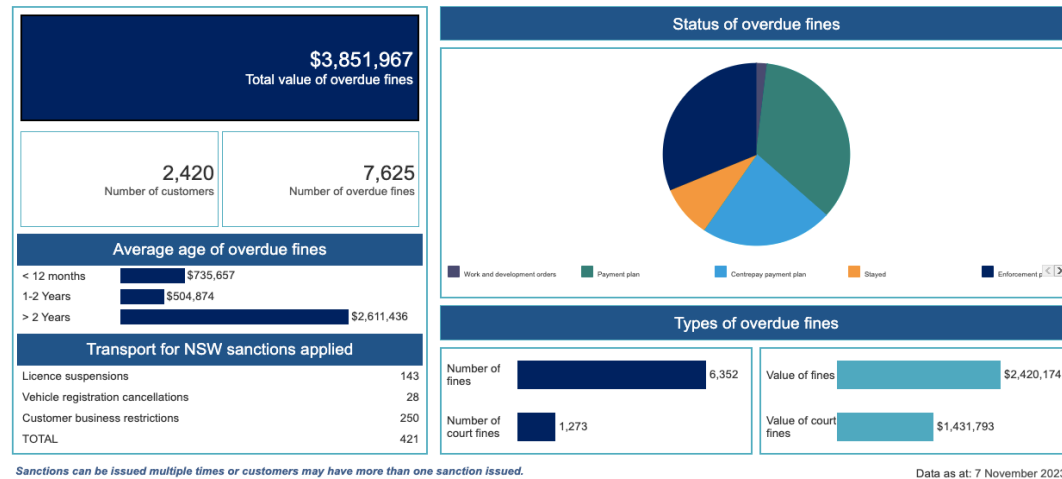
- Refer to a local SHS, as listed above to explore temporary accommodation or refuge options.
- Hunter TAS – explore ways to get him removed from the lease? Get her name off the lease, warm referral to Aboriginal Tenant's Service if they consent to this -First Nations service for tenants.
- DCJ - Housing also has a First Nations line that she could use.
- Look for a private service while housing sorts out her tenancy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hunter Community Legal Centre could support with immediate needs: (\$) for security doors, certificate of injury from counsellor for next steps: victims service claim –recognition payment for sexual assault, violent crime.</li> </ul> <p>Legal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aboriginal Legal Service ALS – could fight tribunal, assist with navigating fines and Centrelink.</li> <li>○ Legal services could also assist Justine with also pausing her fines or asking for a write off based on her circumstances.</li> <li>○ Revenue NSW may be able to assist with reducing her fines.</li> <li>○ Hunter CLC can write a letter up to \$5000, for waiving over \$5000 need more evidence of DV</li> <li>○ Call RNSW First Nation’s team to lift restrictions and put fines on hold for 6 weeks to sort herself out (waitlist is less than normal line): <a href="tel:1800002345">1800 002 345</a></li> <li>○ Work Development Orders (WDO) could be an option – counselling and case management.</li> </ul> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Survivors R Us could assist with basic needs (food, clothing, dignity packs etc.)</li> <li>○ She may be eligible for a one off DV payment from Centrelink, for the person leaving the place – she would need proof, this is a time-sensitive process. Awabakal Medical Service medical could assist with a letter in this process.</li> <li>○ Moneycare, Salvos re: debt collection – FC need more info about how issue arose, compassionate grounds can waiver it. Call Moneycare: 1800722363 (waitlist in NSW w/in 2 weeks).</li> </ul>	<p>Potentially need a template letter and a brief for SRU workers?</p>
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	<p><b>CONTACTS:</b></p> <p>&gt;&gt;<b>ALS NSW/ACT:</b> Call 1800765767 or email: fines@alsnswact.org.au.</p> <p>&gt;&gt;<b>Legal Aid NSW WDO team:</b> wdo@legalaid.nsw.gov.au or Law Access provides legal information to anyone with a legal problem in NSW: 1300 888 529.</p> <p>Or contact the Legal Aid NSW Newcastle office: 4929 5482, email: newcastle@legalaid.nsw.gov.au</p> <p>&gt;&gt;<b>Hunter CLC:</b> For legal advice and information phone (02) 4040 9120 (or Toll free: 1800 650 073) at the following times: Monday 10.00am – 12.00pm; Wednesday 2.00pm – 4.00pm; Friday 10.00am – 12.00pm</p>	
<p>Current issues in Cardiff</p>	<p><b>Fines and fine debt</b> are relatively high in Cardiff.</p> <p>Revenue NSW Data for Cardiff postcode 2285</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2285 – overdue fines exceed \$3.8 million <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Top 5: Exceed speed (under 10km/hr), not parallel parking, companion animal unregistered, speeding (over 10km/hr), not stopping at stop signs</li> <li>○ 7625 overdue fines in the Cardiff postcode</li> <li>○ 143 licence suspensions, 28 registration cancellations, customer business restriction means that people can no longer deal with Services NSW (eg. People can't get license, can't get car registration).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>To access Revenue NSW's dashboard on unpaid fines in your region please <a href="#">see this link</a>.</p>

### Overdue fines dashboard

Age b... (All) Postco... 2285



- **Legal issues** in the Cardiff region
  - Discussion about whether people attending SRU food relief , and other events have legal issues? Identification issues? Unpaid fine debt? Would it be useful to hold an event at the same time as the meals are being given out with legal assistance available? Need to ensure people understand what is available in advance, and to bring their ID if they want to apply for a birth certificate or have their fines looked at. Need a quiet space as well for a lawyer to speak to people privately.
- **Birth certificates**
  - Hunter CLSD has about 75 birth certificates allocated for the current financial year under the extended MoU with NSW Birth Deaths and Marriages. Possibility to use some in the Cardiff region Survivor’s R Us events, and to also support services to apply for their clients online via the fee-waiver template. More [info is here](#), including a template letter.

Nissa to connect Survivors R Us with the Legal Aid WDO team and Revenue NSW and discuss future partner events.

Nissa to plan a free legal health check and free birth certificate day at SRU with Legal Aid for February 2024.

Upcoming events and other news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We are in the 16 days of violence against gender-based violence. A link to the calendar of events for the Hunter is <a href="#">here</a>.</li> </ul>	Nissa to share details about the Hunter 16 days of activism against gender-based violence calendar.
Next CLSD Hunter meeting	<p>The next Hunter CLSD meeting will be held on <b>Feb 15th, 2024</b>.</p> <p>Nikinpaa in Toronto was suggested as a location for our next meeting, further details TBC.</p>	Nissa to organise next meeting and share with the Hunter CLSD partnership.