

Riverina CLSD Program meeting

23 February 2023, 11AM – 12:30PM, Online

MINUTES

Present: Annette Weeks (St Vincent De Paul), Keryn Foley (Centacare), Maureen Bates-McKay (Legal Aid NSW), Yvonne De Borde (Macarthur Legal Centre), Lola Imawan (Legal Aid NSW), Leesa Adams (Centrelink, Indigenous Services Officer), Ellie Haas (Legal Aid NSW), Tanya Jones (ACT Disability and Aged Carer Association), Alexandra Burns (Calvary Health Care Hospital), Jo Rigg (Services Australia), Emily Bruton (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT), Stephanie Howard (Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT, Paralegal), Kyle Burgess (Department of Communities and Justice), Craig Maxwell (Pathways Murrumbidgee), Kathie Makeham (Services Australia), Jennifer Cameron (Salvation Army, Doorways Coordinator), Amie Favier (Regional Disability Advocacy Service), Nicholas Wright (TAFE NSW Murrumbidgee), Robert Phillips (Intereach), Scott Boyle (Anglicare, Financial Counsellor), Sophie Warren (Service NSW), Karen Staines (Services Australia, Financial Information Services Officer), Kate Halliday (Legal Aid NSW), Winnecke Baker (Legal Aid NSW)

Apologies: Danielle Plumb (Legal Aid NSW WDO Service), Susan Colley (Sisters Housing), Julie Maron (Legal Aid NSW)

Agenda item	Discussion	Action/Outcome
1. Introduction and acknowledgement/ Welcome to Country	Winnecke welcome everyone to the meeting and acknowledged the respective Aboriginal lands that partners attended from, and that Riverina CLSD partners work on Wiradjuri land.	
2. Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">To learn about the operation of Circle Sentencing, an alternative sentencing method for offenders who are Aboriginal and its introduction to the RiverinaMeet Macarthur Legal Centre and discuss how they could best service this regionA reminder that the Stolen Generations reparations scheme closes this yearService updates	
3. New to Wagga – Circle Sentencing	<p>Guest Speaker - Kyle Burgess (Senior Aboriginal Client and Community Support Officer, Transforming Aboriginal Outcomes Division, Department of Communities and Justice)</p> <p>Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Circle Sentencing is an alternative sentencing model for adult Aboriginal people that plead or are found guilty of certain offences.	

- Matters can be referred if they are being heard in Wagga Wagga Local Court.
- The local Magistrate must approve referrals to circle sentencing.
- The offender must agree to the facts of the matter alleged by the prosecutor.
- The Magistrate, Aboriginal Elders, the offender, lawyers, support staff and sometimes the victim sit together, in an alternative location to the court to discuss the impact of the offence on the victim and the community and determine an appropriate sentence.
- Restorative justice is the objective of the circle as victims have the option to participate and the offender can agree to do things in recognition of the offence like provide an apology.
- Research shows that people who are sentenced in this way are less likely to go to prison and to re-offend, and if they do re-offend that it takes longer for them to do this.

What types of sentences are available

- The circle has the same sentencing options as the court, but these are discussed by Elders, as well as alternatives.
- Sentences could involve an offender agreeing to:
 - participate in driving, drug & alcohol, or parenting courses
 - attend counselling or psychology appointments
 - write an apology to the victim or others
 - participate in cultural activities with their community
 - follow the conditions of an Apprehended Domestic Violence Order (ADVO)
 - adhere to a period of licence disqualification
- Everything is decided in the circle, including the conditions of an ADVO and the periods of licence disqualification.
- The Magistrate makes sure that the sentence is not too harsh or too lenient.

Kyle's hope for Circle Sentencing is that it reduces reoffending in the community and that people can lead better lives.

People are welcome to contact Kyle with questions and enquiries on 0472 849 103 or kyle.burgess@justice.nsw.gov.au.

<p>4. Macarthur Legal Centre Expansion</p>	<p>Yvonne De Borde (Service Promotion Officer, Western Region, Macarthur Legal Centre)</p> <p>Macarthur Legal Centre (MLC), based in Campbelltown, has received funding to deliver free legal services to some areas of Western NSW. Macarthur is funded to employ 1 solicitor full-time and Yvonne, a promotions officer. Lots of legal advice will be provided by phone, but MLC hopes that the lawyer can conduct outreach and attend events too. The frequency of outreach will depend on where the lawyer is based.</p> <p>What can Macarthur Legal Centre provide advice about? Macarthur’s existing solicitors can provide legal advice by telephone now about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Law • Child Support • Care and protection • Minor traffic matters • Neighbourhood disputes • Wills*, power of attorney and guardianship • Employment • Debts and fines • Victim support • Centrelink issues • Consumer complaints <p>Who is eligible for advice? MLC is funded to accept clients living in the below LGAs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balranald • Carrathool • Cootamundra-Gundagai • Leeton • Bland • Coolamon • Narrandera • Temora • Junee • Hay • Cowra • Griffith • Hilltops • Weddin • Wentworth 	<p>Organise further discussion about legal services available in the Riverina when Macarthur has employed the lawyer for this role.</p>
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	<p>*Wills MLC will provide legal advice about a will to anyone who contacts the service.</p> <p>MLC takes a discretionary approach to drafting wills. MLC will draft and prepare a straightforward will for people who are reliant on Centrelink or who have a very low income. MLC will also consider drafting a straightforward will for someone with a home who has dependents if they have limited financial resources and are within the service’s catchment area.</p> <p>How to refer Telephone (02) 4628 2042 9AM – 4:30PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. Email: macarthur_admin@maclegal.net.au</p> <p>How to contact Yvonne Email: ydeborde@maclegal.net.au Phone: 0438 814 906</p>	
<p>5. Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme</p>	<p>Ellie Haas (civil law solicitor Legal Aid NSW Wagga Wagga)</p> <p>The Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme is ending <u>this year</u>. The last day for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications is 30 June 2023. • Internal reviews is 31 December 2023. <p>The reparations scheme provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Payments of \$75,000 to living Stolen Generations survivors who were committed to the care of the Aborigines Protection or Welfare Boards, and • An apology from a representative of the NWS Government at the recipient’s request, and • A one-off payment of \$7,000 to help with funeral costs. <p>Eligibility People may be eligible who were removed from a family or apprenticed out to work and the removal was done by an NSW Government agency before 1969. Legal Aid NSW has also had success</p>	

	<p>with applications where it could be proved that someone was removed after 1969 but still under policies that were put in place in 1969.</p> <p>The best advice is – if you’re unsure, please get advice.</p> <p>Contact Solicitor Ellie Haas in Wagga on 6921 6588 or ellie.haas@legalaid.nsw.gov.au or the Civil Law Service for Aboriginal Communities on 1800 793 017.</p> <p>Resources There are lots of resources available about the scheme for all services to display and share.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters • Post cards • Fact sheets • Podcasts and recorded webinars <p>You can download all these resources HERE.</p>	
<p>6. Service updates and announcements</p>	<p>Anglicare Financial Counselling – Scott Boyle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New referral email address to refer clients for financial counselling. - Email: referrasfc@anglicare.com.au - Griffith and Leeton are now looked after by Margie Tickner who is based in Albury. Margie is available on Mondays and Fridays until she moves to full-time in March. - Aim to have face-to-face financial counselling available once a month or fortnightly going forward. <p>Note: Salvation Army Moneycare has confirmed that they no longer provide financial counselling services in Griffith.</p> <p>Defence and Veterans Legal Service - Maureen Bates-McKay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide legal advice to veterans, current members of the defence force, their families and carers who would like advice about engaging with the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide. 	<p>Please contact Maureen or the CLSD Unit if there are local organisations or services that you would recommend the Defence and Veterans Legal Service connect with.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The service has lawyers and social workers on its team and connect people with supports like free counselling. - Maureen is looking for meetings and forums where she can provide information to past and current veterans about how the service can support them. - Requests for a private session with a Commission must be received before 28 April closing this is one on one submission to the Royal Commission the team can help with the submission, - Submissions must be received by the Royal Commission by 13 October. - Contact: Maureen.bates-mckay@legalaid.nsw.gov.au <p>Respect at Work Legal Service – Lola Imawan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Respect at Work Legal Service is a new specialist state-wide service for people who have experienced <i>sexual harassment</i> or <i>sexual discrimination</i> in the workplace. - Priority clients of this service are Aboriginal people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disability because the Respect at Work report showed that they are more likely to experience sexual harassment at work and less likely to get advice. - Getting advice doesn't compel people to take a complaint any further, they can simply get advice. - Contact: lola.imawan@legalaid.nsw.gov.au or respectatwork@legalaid.nsw.gov.au <p>Leeton Rainbow Pride Festival, Leeton Connect – Nicholas Wright</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fair Day September 30, will have a big focus on rainbow families. Services are invited to participate. - Workshops are starting in May on a range of issues and topics in preparation for the main event and to facilitate lots of social connections. - Please refer any LGBTQI+ people/young people that you work with or know to get involved. - Contact Nicholas on 0409 691 427 or Nicholas.wright61@tafensw.edu.au <p>Caring Dads Program – Centacare, Keryn Foley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New program for men using authoritarian parenting and harsh parenting in Wagga Wagga 	<p>Please contact Lola or the CLSD Unit if there are local organisations or services that you would recommend the Respect and Work Legal Service connect with.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The program runs for 14 to 17 weeks, so it is a reasonable commitment. - More information about the program is available here: https://caringdads.org/ - Contact Keryn Foley at Centacare: foleyk@centacareswsw.org.au or 1300 619 379 <p>No Interest Loan Scheme – Intereach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intereach staff can support community members to apply for No Interest Loans across their NSW footprint. - The loans can be used to purchase essential goods and services up to \$2,000 and repayments are set at an affordable amount over 12-18 months. - Loans can be used for things like fridges, washing machines, dryers, freezers, furniture, some medical and dental services, car repairs and registration, education essentials like computers and textbooks. - More information about the scheme and how to apply is available here: No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) - Intereach 	
7. Next Meeting	25 May	