

Far West Community Legal Centre Ltd

Annual Report

2017



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge our funding and pro bono partners, and all of our local businesses and collaborative community sector partners in the Far West NSW and in NSW that have provided financial and in-kind support to FWCLC Inc.

Ashurst Lawyers

Commonwealth Legal Services Program, Commonwealth Attorney General's Department

Community Legal Centres Program, Legal Aid NSW

Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program, Legal Aid NSW

Dennis Roach, Consultant

Family and Community Services

Go Dental

John Wren, Silver City Cinema

Justice and Community Sector Partners in the Far West NSW & NSW

Laurie White, Fundraiser Extraordinaire

LawAccess NSW

Legal Aid NSW – Civil, Family & Employment Law

Local Media: 999 ABC Broken Hill, Barrier Daily Truth and 2DRY FM

The Musicians Club

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Women's Domestic Violence Advocacy Program, Legal Aid NSW

We respectfully acknowledge the Elders and the Aboriginal people who are the traditional owners of the Far West NSW.

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"Equal funding" campaign with FWCLC, WWLS, SHLV staff and Board members

Our Vision, Values and Work

FWCLC Limited is represented by the following vital front-line services.

These four services are committed to providing a responsive service to the most vulnerable and financially and geographically isolated people and communities in the Far West NSW who have the least access to justice.

Far West Community Legal Centre (FWCLC)

The Far West Community Legal Centre was officially opened on 18 July 2000.

FWCLC is committed to providing a responsive service for people in the Far West who have the least access to justice. The Far West Community Legal Centre is funded to provide services to the residents and communities of the Far West Region including Tibooburra, White Cliffs, Wilcannia, Broken Hill, Menindee and Ivanhoe.

FWCLC is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Residents of the Far West region are invited to become members of the company.

The FWCLC is committed to the provision of free and accessible legal services including:

- Legal information and advice
- Advocacy
- Representation
- Education
- Referral
- Law Reform

Warra Warra Legal Service (WWLS)

Warra Warra Legal Service (formerly the Broken Hill Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Legal Service) was funded in 2007 by the Commonwealth Indigenous Justice and Community Safety Unit. The funding for this service is governed by the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited.

WWLS aims to provide a holistic, culturally responsive and independent legal and family support program for victims of family violence and sexual assault.

WWLS provides legal advice and assistance in Family Law, Family Violence, Care & Protection and Victims' Compensation matters.

WWLS initiates and facilitates preventative programs for long-term solutions to family violence and sexual assault. By conducting community education programs, WWLS informs people of their rights and conveys to the community that family violence and sexual assault are crimes and not part of our culture.

Services include:

- Legal information and advice
- Advocacy
- Representation

- Education
- Referral
- Family support
- Community development
- Law reform

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (FWWDVCAS)

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service was funded by the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program in 2008. The funding for this program is governed by the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited.

FWWDVCAS is one of 28 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, servicing 108 local courts in NSW.

FWWDVCAS is a locally-based and independent service for women and children seeking assistance and information about protection from family/domestic violence.

FWWDVCAS provides women and children with support, advocacy, referral and information. FWWDVCAS facilitates women and children's access to legal representation ensuring that women can access the justice system to overcome the violence they have experienced.

Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill (SHLVBH)

Staying Home Leaving Violence was first funded by the Department of Family and Community Services in October 2014 and is one of 23 Staying Home Leaving Violence centres around the state. The funding for this program is governed by the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited.

The SHLV program aims to prevent homelessness by working with the NSW Police to remove the perpetrator from the family home so that women and children can remain safely where they are.

SHLVBH also provides a range of support for victims such as safety planning, improving home security, assistance in managing finances, support for children and helping women throughout the complicated legal process.

The Far West Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program (FWCLSD)

The Far West Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program was funded in 2009 by the Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program. The funding for this program is governed by the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited.

The CLSD Program is a regionally-based approach to legal service delivery in NSW. It aims to improve the outcomes for economically and socially disadvantaged people by building cooperative and strategic networks of key legal services and community organisations.

The CLSD Program is based on the theory that better coordination and cooperation in the planning and delivery of legal services will enhance the efficient and effective use of scarce resources and thereby improve access to justice for disadvantaged people.

Board of Directors' Report

Far West Community Legal Centre has had a year of change and consolidation whilst the services have continued to settle into new premises, secure additional professional staffing and maintain service levels with budget constraints.

The directors welcomed Mark Braes this year. Mark brings a great deal of experience in the social sector and is very interested in helping the FWCLC in a governance capacity. He joins Ellen Day, Colleen Riley, Julie-Anne Philp and Dionne Devlin as a director.

We are grateful to our professional staff, led by Catherine Farry in the CEO role for her second year. There has been a lot to do and Cathy has kept all our combined goals in sight and worked methodically to meet them. We have a wonderful staff team of professional, dedicated and happy people, determined to provide exemplary services to the people in our community who need us most.

Our staff keep the organisation on budget, doing as much as possible for our client base which can be amongst the most disadvantaged in the community. We all believe in our strength and capacity to help makes someone's life a little easier.

Setting the future direction of the Far West Community Legal Centre is the Board's priority this year. We will do this by consulting with our staff, community stakeholders and others to ensure the organisation is meeting the needs of its clients both now and into the future.

As directors, we look forward to a new year continuing to play our part in this incredible professional organisation which continues to provide vital frontline services to Broken Hill and the communities of the Far West.

The Board of Management, Far West Community Legal Centre Limited

Dionne Devlin

Ellen Day

Colleen Riley

Julie-Anne Philp

Mark Braes

Secretary – Catherine Farry

CEO's Report

It has been a great year for the FWCLC and its auspiced services. The FWCLC and the FWWDVCAS have settled into their new premises (and cars) while

We have seen a marked increase of volunteers through the services. John Park came over from Sydney in January to volunteer in a legal capacity. John is currently studying law and fortunately for the FWCLC, decided to take some time out from his studies to work with us. He will be missed when he leaves. We have also been very fortunate in the placement of Social Work student Rebecca Deer. Bec has spent her time with the FWCLC, SHLV and WWLS and recently applied for one of the new social worker roles at WWLS which she was offered. And we currently have a Practical Legal Trainee, Sean Bowes who will be with us until the end of the year. Volunteering at SHLV we also had Becky Nunn and at the FWCLC we have had four work experience students, one even coming from as far afield as Menindee. And we have had the inimitable Laurie White who has been organising fundraising events for us, such as the brilliant Drags Aloud show which raised some serious money and was a fantastic and fun evening with the Musician's Club providing the venue and food for the show.

Another fundraiser was hosted by the Silver City Cinema with a screening of the family film, "Hunt for the Wilderpeople" – a big thank you to Dionne who helped organise and Go Dental who donated a number of tickets to be given to clients of the services who may not ordinarily have the means to take their family to see a movie.

One of the great highlights of the past year was Connect the Dots which saw SHLV, FWCLC, WWLS and WDVCS join forces with other services in the area including Family and Community Services, Mission Australia, Salvation Army and the Barrier LAC. The project saw domestic violence campaigner, Rosie Batty and Emily Goldsmith of DVNSW come to Broken Hill where Rosie spoke at a dinner that was attended by a large number of the services. The following day Rosie and Emily, together with Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, Steve Dohnt and myself went Wilcannia where Rosie spoke with community members. That evening in Broken Hill there was a Q and A session held at the Musicians Club with the panel comprised of Rosie Batty, Emily Goldsmith, Senior Constable Dohnt, Eliza Hull from WWLS and Fiona Camilleri from SHLV.

I would like to thank the Board of Management, particularly Dionne, who have provided me with great support and advice.

I could not do what I need to without the support of all of the staff through the services, in particular the Coordinators of the Services; Shannon, Fiona, Narelle and Loretta as well as the administration staff at the FWCLC- to Stacey, Simon and Bianca - thank you for your dedication and loyalty to the organisation.

CATHERINE FARRY

Current Staff at the FWCLC Limited (as of October 2017)

Far West Community Legal Centre

Catherine Farry *Chief Executive Officer (started October 2015)*

Jillian Heeley *Principal Solicitor (started March 2016)*

Stacey Jackson-Moroney *Senior Administration, Information, Referral & Project Officer (2007- 2009, returned September 2011)*

Simon Hunter *Community Development Worker & FWCLSD Regional Coordinator (April 2016)*

Bianca Cattonar *Legal Secretary/ Finance (started February 2011)*

Matt Sier *PPF Full-time Solicitor (started August 2014)*

Lourdes Herber *Part-time Solicitor (started December 2016)*

Nina Betts *Part-time Solicitor (started March 2015)*

John Park *Volunteer Legal (started January 2016)*

Sean Bowes *PLT Student (started September 2016)*

Rebecca Deer *Social Work Student (started July 2016)*

Warra-Warra Legal Service

Shannon Oates *Manager (started September 2015)*

Leah Billeam *Principal Solicitor (started May 2017)*

Sophie Angell *Solicitor (started September 2015)*

Prue Sulicich *Finance Officer (started July 2009)*

Ann-Maree Payne *Senior Administration/Resource (started 2009)*

Lucy Rose Doolan *Intake and Resource Officer (started May 2016)*

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

Loretta Stuart *Coordinator/Aboriginal Specialist Worker (started April 2008)*

Narelle Blows *Coordinator (started September 2009)*

Susan Marks *WDVCAS Worker (started July 2009)*

Racheal Murphy *LCP Coordinator (started June 2015)*

Sandra Uhl *Court Advocate (started July 2016)*

Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill (SHLVBH)

Fiona Camilleri *Coordinator (started September 2014)*

Libby Matthias *Advocacy Worker (started September 2014)*

Heidi Ogden *Advocacy Worker (started April 2017)*

We Farewell, Thank and Acknowledge

We wish Eliza, Charlotte, Becky and Vicky the best for the future and thank them for their significant contributions to FWCLC Ltd.

We also acknowledge our wonderful cleaner Ann-Maree Wilson.

Everyone at FWCLC Ltd. makes a difference. Thank you to all of the FWCLC Ltd. Staff for making our working lives so much easier; we value and appreciate you.



“Hairdresser Breakfast” conducted by FWCLC and SHLV

Far West Community Legal Centre Report

Far West Community Legal Centre

Principal Solicitor's Report

A Year of Growth

It has been a year of expansion at our Centre, with an increase in the diversity of areas of law offered to clients, and an almost exponential growth in client service. Our full complement of solicitors and administrative staff has been supplemented by the addition of a Community Development Worker (the adaptable Simon Hunter in his next administrative incarnation), a graduate law student, a graduate social work student, and a full-time volunteer. In addition, two school students from Willyama High School, who aspire to becoming future lawyers, applied to undertake work experience with us.

Without exception, our "Extras" were able to assist our lawyers using outstanding research skills, and most importantly, all were affable, willing and friendly. While our premises are not exactly palatial, we managed to physically squeeze them in somehow. Despite our graduate student (being last in) having to live in a space reminiscent of a built-in cupboard, he did not complain!

Staff and staff changes

This past year saw the resignation of Sophie Angell from the FWCLC, and her subsequent appointment to a part-time position at Warra Warra. Sophie has since resigned from Warra Warra, and we wish her the very best for her future career, wherever it may be. As mentioned in my last Report, Sophie has developed a strong talent for advocacy, and I wouldn't be surprised to see her at the bar one day!

Our civil law solicitor, Matt Sier, an extremely talented young man, has developed a civil law practice of which the Centre can be very proud. His dedication and willingness to take on "anything that comes through the door" illustrates an attitude which has endeared him to his clients and the Bench alike. He has taken on many litigated matters, and settled most on terms favourable to our clients.

Our Care and Protection and Family Law solicitor, Lourdes Herber, has at times kindly acted as Duty Solicitor at the Federal Circuit Court sittings, as well as taking on her own share of complex family law and child protection matters. Lourdes is a formidable advocate for her clients, and has a depth of knowledge of the law which is second to none.

Nina Betts continues to do excellent part-time work for us remotely, and will again be seconded to supervise our clients when I am on leave during all of January 2018. We thank Nina for her willingness to assist with numerous phone advices, many of which have evolved into larger matters. Nina is always willing to help – even when we strain our friendship by assailing her with urgent matters!

Our intrepid Volunteer, John Park, who came to us to spend a year volunteering as a legal researcher/general factotum, has proved to be worth his weight in gold. John's assistance to Matt, in particular, has been invaluable, and as a result Matt nominated him for a Far West Young Volunteer of the Year Award. There was great jubilation and delight in the ranks when John was announced as the winner! He now travels to Sydney with other regional winners to participate in the state Volunteer of the Year Awards.

We are delighted to have with us for the first time a graduate law student who is spending four months with our Centre to complete the requirements of the Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice. Sean Bowes is from Newcastle, and has proved to be intelligent, convivial and willing to take on anything thrown at him by our lawyers. We welcome Sean, and hope to show him that a Regional Law Practice has a diversity and singular culture which he would not have been able to experience had he remained in the Big Smoke.

Rebecca Deer is a delightful graduate social work student who has been on placement with the Centre for several months through the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health. She has been assigned a variety of tasks, which has seen her moving between our Centre, Warra Warra, and SHLV. Rebecca's excellent work and congenial demeanour have made her a favourite at the Centre, and we congratulate her on securing a full time Social Work position at Warra Warra.

Proposed Contact Centre for Broken Hill

As previously reported, in 2016 Rachel Walker, a social work student from the University of New England, undertook an in-depth feasibility study into the establishment of a Contact

Centre in Broken Hill. The recommendations in her Report have been taken up by a Committee, headed by Louise Heffernan from Mission Australia, to further develop the concept. The Committee meets at the FWCLC once a month, and is presently investigating possible venues for the proposed Centre and sources of funding. Our solicitors approached our local member for Parkes, Matt Coulson, in Canberra in August this year, and found him both very receptive to the concept of a Broken Hill Contact Centre and also prepared to assist with searching for sources of funding. We expect further developments shortly. Watch this space!

Legal Advice and Casework

Our practice in the new areas of family law property matters, Care and Protection, Wills and Estates, Powers of Attorney, Guardianship matters and Centrelink Appeals continues to grow. Matt Sier has developed our civil practice in many areas, particularly debt and employment law, and is taking on litigation when he feels it is warranted.

We are consequently opening many more case files, with the result that we have had to close our books for the last month, to cope with the increasing demand for our services. This has allowed our solicitors to “take a breath” and return refreshed to face the next “round” of clients. The question of whether we should maximise the number of advices, and therefore provide minor assistance to more clients, or alternatively take on more major assistance and litigation matters, because for those clients the stakes are higher if they do not receive competent long-term assistance, is still open for discussion.

Once the dust has settled, I would like to see a regular telephone advice service open at the Centre for at least one day a week. Ours is one of the few Community Legal Centres which does not provide this service.

Due to the deficiencies of the Reporting function in CLASS, we cannot advise with complete confidence as to our figures, however we have reported to Legal Aid that during the 12 month period we completed the following:

1. Information activities: 1173
2. Face-to-face Advice: 503
3. Telephone Advice: 181

4. Cases opened: 228
5. Cases closed: 119
6. CLE projects: 10

It is most gratifying to have been able to assist so many people who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to obtain competent representation.

Outreach

Regular outreach attendances in Menindee and Wilcannia have been re-established, and our new relationship with the Royal Flying Doctor Service has allowed us to service areas which had been neglected due to a lack of resources in 2016. Our solicitors have visited Ivanhoe Correctional Centre (twice), most recently on 29th September 2017. On these occasions we were able to assist inmates of the prison with family law and civil law matters. We also visited Wanaaring for the first time, and although we were not able to assist any clients on this first visit, we expect that this will change now that we have an idea of the layout and needs of the town. Our ability to fly in to and return from these remote areas in a single day has proved a godsend, conserving both the Centre's resources and our solicitors' time.

Matt, Lourdes, our volunteer John Park and I visited Tibooburra for their Education Expo on March 9th and 10th this year, and delivered community education sessions on Wills, Family Law, Fines, Debt and Work Development Orders at a town venue, and also gave a fun legal presentation to the children of the Tibooburra Outback Public School. There were about 22 children at the school on the day, including children who had bussed in from remote areas for the Expo, and our presentation seemed to be well received by students and teachers alike. We hope that the Expo will become an annual event, and look forward to providing further community legal education on the next occasion.

Association with SHLV

We continue to liaise with the excellent and experienced staff at our auspiced service Staying Home Leaving Violence, dove-tailing their domestic violence support with legal assistance from our solicitors, with subsequent benefits for our mutual clients. Thank you to

Fiona, Libby and Heidi for your professional service and affable approach to our collaboration.

JILLIAN HEELEY

PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR



FWCLC solicitor Matt Sier



Volunteer John Park with Courtney Hempel, school based trainee

Warra Warra Legal Service report

Warra Warra Legal Service

Warra Warra has been working hard this year. Warra Warra continues to demonstrate hard work, dedication and consistency in strengthening the existing service and extending the service to Far West communities, including Broken Hill, Wilcannia, Ivanhoe, Menindee, Wentworth and Dareton.

I would like to acknowledge the Warra Warra Staff for all the dedication and excellent work that has been done throughout the year within the Far West Region.

Warra Warra continues to provide direct legal and non-direct legal prevention work, which co-exists harmoniously to provide holistic services to our communities. The team work is imperative to the success of Warra Warra. The service continues to work collaboratively, with our solicitors working alongside our support and community engagement workers in order to continue to engage effectively within community.

Warra Warra Team Update

We acknowledge and farewell Charlotte Buckton who was the Junior Solicitor with Warra Warra. We would like to say a big thank you for all the work and support that Charlotte contributed to WWLS during her time as Junior Solicitor. Charlotte is an amazing strong advocate for Aboriginal women and expressed so much enthusiasm in her work that she will be sadly missed by the community. Charlotte has been successful in obtaining employment at Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre in Lismore. WWLS wishes Charlotte well in her future.

Warra Warra welcomed Leah Billeam, our new Principal Solicitor and we also welcomed Sophie Angell, our part-time Junior Solicitor. Leah has relocated to Broken Hill from Perth and has extensive experience in Family Law and Care and Protection. Leah has settled nicely into her role at WWLS and has been busy providing advice to new clients. Our part-time Junior Solicitor Sophie has a passion for litigation and is a brilliant legal advocate. Sophie has been responsible for providing the vital monthly outreach service to Menindee. This has greatly increased our service's capacity to take on new clients and provide comprehensive case assistance.

Warra Warra would like to thank Ann-Maree Payne, Prue Sulicich and Lucy Doolan for their hard work and dedication to our service, we couldn't do it without you.

Community Legal Education and Law Reform

Warra Warra continues to provide legal education to community within Broken Hill and at outreach locations, along with education sessions at the Broken Hill Correctional Centre, Women's Refuge in both Broken Hill and Wilcannia and CLE for Ltd staff. Warra Warra

continues to work closely with the National Forum in assisting with Law Reform and lobbying to government.

Highlight One: Desert Pea Media Film Clip Launch in Wilcannia

Desert Pea Media and Wilcannia Central School

Warra Warra sought funding from the Royal Commission and was able to obtain the services again of Desert Pea Media. This time DPM ran a project in the outreach town of Wilcannia. The students of the Wilcannia Central School took part in this project. Desert Pea Media are best known for their work in Aboriginal communities mostly with youth, using video, hip hop and rap to engage young people and explore both local and common issues that affect Aboriginal people in Australia.

The students brainstormed issues from drugs and alcohol, boredom, violence, culture, environmental concerns for the Darling River to intergenerational trauma and put them together while setting the content for the song. This project also included a traditional style dance. I can't say much more without giving away as the music video has not been released yet, but what was witnessed on the shooting of this project was visually stunning. The energy and talent displayed throughout the project was truly inspiring.

Through community consultation, community endorsement and co-ownership which are vital parts of this successful community project, this project will have an empowering effect for the whole community and not only the immediate people involved in the writing workshop.

We acknowledge the students and staff of the Wilcannia Central School, WINGS Drop In Centre, Wilcannia Radio, Wilcannia Elders and Walpa Thomson (a local Paakantji man giving his time contributing his valuable knowledge to the project, assisting with language and cultural knowledge for the duration of the project).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSzdIThcTMA>

Highlight two: Family Violence Service Co-Design Project

WWLS have received funding to be part of a team that will co-design initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women/children/men/communities under the Third Action Plan of the National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children. Cathy Farry and Shannon Oates have attended two Co-Design Workshops already and will be attending the third Design Workshop in October.

The First Design Workshop was to prepare the content for provider's proposals for funding of service(s) under Priority 2 of the Third Action Plan to reduce family violence.

The Second Workshop was to design the evaluation frameworks for each service including their program logistics and data to be collected.

The Third Workshop will be to review and update on implementation progress.

WWLS have filled two positions for this project, 2 x Social Workers who will commence employment later in October.

Non-Direct Legal Community Engagement and Prevention

Warra Warra continues to provide on the ground prevention and education strategies to assist in overcoming the complexities of family violence. This work is created collaboratively within the team. This work is imperative to the service and community. We hope to extend our prevention programs and engagement in the future.

The following are some highlights from this year community engagement and prevention work.

Court Support (Working with WDVCS)

Warra Warra Manager Shannon Oates is seconded one day per week to assist the WDVCS Court Support Program. This is an effective relationship between services and allows for clients accessing both services to have a consistent caseworker. Clients have easy access to a lawyer on these days for urgent matters and the seconded worker is an avenue to link clients to both services.

This is an ongoing collaborative project with WDVCS.

Love Bites

Solicitor, Charlotte Buckton was an active member of the Love Bites Subcommittee group and attended meetings on a fortnightly basis in order to develop the curriculum for the program. Love Bites is a school based Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program. Charlotte was involved in the facilitation of the program to Year 10 students at Broken Hill and Willyama High School in May 2017. The program was received well by students who engaged positively with content. The facilitators received amazing feedback from the students on the structure and content of the program.

Ochre Events

On Thursday 30th March 2017, WWLS hosted two Ochre Ribbon Campaign Day Events as part of the Ochre Ribbon Campaign launched by the National Family Violence Legal Service Forum in 2015.

The first event, a morning tea, was held at our office with approximately 30 people in attendance. A presentation was given which contained information about the Ochre Ribbon Campaign and videos consisting of a brief history of violence in this country and its impacts, Ms Dhu's story and Family Violence Prevention Legal Service Victoria's solutions to family violence. The presentation was well received. It was admiring to be able to share information with services and highlight the importance of ending family violence within our communities.

The second, an afternoon tea, was held at the 123 Community Hub with approximately 20 people attending. We presented two videos and yarned amongst one another. We connected with community and listened to their voices to hear about their experiences of violence.

Non-Legal Support

Warra Warra continues to provide non-legal crisis support work. This includes providing clients with food, clothes and personal items when necessary. Warra Warra prides itself on providing holistic services to clients ensuring non-legal support is given when clients are experiencing complicated legal issues. Our non-legal staff provide face to face support this includes supporting the client during legal visit, transporting client where necessary, providing referrals to outside services and supporting clients when attending other service appointments if needed.

Community Working Party Meetings

Warra Warra is now attending CWP meetings on a regular basis, Shannon and Lucy have become members. CWP Meetings are held in, Broken Hill, Ivanhoe, Menindee, Dareton and Wilcannia. Warra Warra is attending Broken Hill CWP Meetings at this stage and has visited Dareton also.

Outreach

Warra Warra attends and provides a regular outreach to Wilcannia, Menindee, Wentworth/Dareton, Broken Hill Correctional Centre, and Catherine Haven. Outreach to Wilcannia is fortnightly, Menindee is monthly as is Wentworth Dareton. Catherine Haven is monthly or as is needed, The Correctional Centre is monthly or as is needed.

Warra Warra has provided extensive outreach this year and been involved heavily in communities. This year Warra Warra took part in community events, some of which we have highlighted below.

Warra Warra Future

Warra Warra is extremely excited about the future and we are working hard and strategically to sustain our already established vital frontline service for the Far West Communities.

Warra Warra has many plans and projects ahead in 2018 which we are so excited about and can't wait to implement. We are pleased to continue our great service for the community and will continue to provide an efficient, professional and culturally competent legal service offering free, confidential and comprehensive legal information, advice and casework assistance.

We hope we continue with our vital work and implement stronger strategies to empower our Aboriginal communities to continue strong identities and culture.

SHANNON OATES

Manager



NAIDOC Fun Day at Sturt Park

Warra Warra Legal Report

The Service

With Eliza Hall finishing up at the end of 2016 as Principal Solicitor the service was supervised remotely by Louise Coady until I commenced with the service on 1 May 2017. New lawyers are restricted practitioners until they have completed a minimum of 2 years supervised practice. Sophie is a part time restricted practitioner and Charlotte Buckton, was a full time restricted practitioner with us until she resigned with effect from 19th September 2017. Charlotte's hard work ethic and excellent rapport with clients was highly valued and we wish her well. The legal team is currently comprised of myself and Sophie Angell. A new full time restricted lawyer has been recruited Emma Stewart and we hope to have her settled in shortly.

We have continued to maintain casework in the Federal Circuit Court (FCC) for family law matters and in the Local Children's Court for care and protection matters. Funding cuts to the FCC mean they will now circuit only 3 times a year instead of 4, making it harder to resolve matters in a timely manner for clients who are caught up in litigation of their matters. We have also provided assistance to the police prosecuting domestic violence orders for our clients and have processed Victims of Crimes claims and lodged Stolen Generation claims in addition to maintaining an advice and referral load.

As a service we attend regular interagency meetings both with Broken Hill stakeholders and at the national level through the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services forums. The principal solicitor forums, usually held by telephone link up, have been particularly helpful and supportive.

Local and Outreach Services

Warra Warra provides a Broken Hill based service to clients both by appointment and drop in at the office. We also attend at the Hub in Creedon Street. This particular outreach is still in its early stages.

The team, with support staff, travel to Wilcannia fortnightly and Wentworth/Dareton and Menindee monthly. Ivanhoe was also visited this year. Services have also been provided to the Correctional Centre, and the Women's Refuge in Broken Hill on an as needs basis. The successful client uptake in Wilcannia would seem to suggest that the more regular the service the better the response from the community.

The team has an excellent working relationship with the Safe House in Wilcannia and has close working relationship with Wilcannia River Radio and there are plans to work with the Radio and the Central School to be lead agency in running a Love Bites program in Wilcannia.

Our clients have had to deal with a range of issues including many of the following;

1. Family violence by a current or former domestic partner;
2. Intergenerational family violence;
3. Mental health issues;
4. Drug and Alcohol Abuse issues;
5. Literacy and numeracy issues;
6. Financial issues;
7. Housing/Accommodation issues;
8. Discrimination issues;
9. Stolen Generation issues;

The lack of sufficient resources in the fields of therapeutic counselling, anger management counselling, drug and alcohol counselling, financial /gambling counselling, and a child contact centre has made it harder to manage matters effectively for the clients. The best approach to their legal problems is an holistic one and limited resources means the supports that they need and deserve are not there for them or they have very long wait lists and this compromises their ability to put their best case forward. Warra Warra has recruited two social workers to help fill the gap in the services available and we are hopeful that clients will feel more supported in what is a very stressful time in their lives .

The non-legal staff at Warra Warra is Indigenous and provides invaluable support for the legal team. They are essential to ensuring that our clients, whether on home base or

outreach, are dealt with in a culturally sensitive and effective way and we greatly appreciate their input into our work.

Legal Advice, Case Work and Referral

The following are the relevant statistics for our case and advice work for the period 1 July 2017 to 11 September 2017 :

- Care and Protection : 9 open files
- Family Law/Children: 12 open files
- Divorce : 6 open files
- Stolen Generation: 23 open files
- Victims Support: 55 open files
- Advices: 42
- Information/referrals: 50
- Files to be closed: 42

Community Legal Education

Warra Warra continues to provide legal education to community within Broken Hill. We have partnered with Far West Community Legal Centre to provide monthly legal education sessions in Broken Hill. Charlotte Buckton was trained as a facilitator and co presented the Love Bites programme to years 9 and 10 in the Broken Hill High School and it is intended to further present an adapted programme to the junior high years in the coming year. We will be willing to continue to offer our services in this regard.

Highlight of the Year

The highlight of the service in the past year has been providing support for NSW Stolen Generation claims to be made. Support from NSW Legal Aid and Redfern Legal Service has been invaluable. There is an inherent unfairness in the scheme as those removed after the cutoff date of **20 March 1969** (when the Aborigines Protection Act 1909 was abolished) have no redress but claims are being lodged in any event to provide statistics which will hopefully provide a basis for expanding the scheme. An additional and alternative approach is a class action claim being prepared by a Sydney law firm Carroll and O'Dea and we have been assisting clients with providing the firm with statutory declarations and case histories.

Law Reform

We have flagged a need to review the practice of removal of infants at birth from their mothers and are looking to see if systemic change can be made to ensure mothers are placed with their babies in appropriate facilities if they are considered to be at risk at birth.

The pro bono arm of the law firm Ashurst (based in Sydney) is working with us and collaboration is at the initial stages.

Outlook

With our team fully staffed we look forward to continuing to service our client base as best we can.

M. LEAH BILLEAM
Principal Solicitor



Ann-Maree Payne cooking donuts for WWLS at the NAIDOC Fun Day

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Advocacy Service Report

The Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (FWWDVCAS) and the Local Coordination Point (LCP) have experienced another busy and productive year. We have expanded the Safety Action Meeting (SAM) to now include Wilcannia, Wentworth/Dareton and surrounding districts. The introduction of AVL equipment should see our expansion become more efficient outreaching with services face to face through technology.

FWWDVCAS are aware that the core business is assisting victims of domestic violence through court processes and gaining an Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) for the protection of clients. We are confident that we have managed dual roles of the WDVCS and the LCP effectively since July 1, 2015 and continue working hard to ensure that all clients are supported & referred through this process.

The introduction of the new Plain English Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs) appears to be successful with a better understanding of the conditions for our clients.

The Safer Pathway reforms (LCP) and Domestic Violence Justice Strategy has FWWDVCAS continuing to lead the referral agency for Broken Hill and surrounding districts.

The total number of referrals received through the Central Referral Point (CRP) for the whole of the Barrier LAC from the January 1st, 2017 to September 30th, 2017 has been 697. These numbers are received through the Central Referral Point which come through at Threat and Serious Threat.

Each of these referrals has had contact attempted within 24 hours of being received and 2nd and 3rd attempts within five days. Clients contacted have been referred out and supported appropriately as requested. Clients at Threat which we have been unable to make phone contact will be sent a FWWDVCAS service letter and community service brochures to the address provided. Clients at Serious Threat are referred to Police for a welfare check and then go on the agenda for the SAM. We believe that these new initiatives are reaching out to those victims who would have previously gone through these hard times unassisted and alone, not realising that there were services and support networks available to them.

As we do every year we are continually working to maintain our links with the other agencies in the area. With the implementation of the Safety Action Meetings held fortnightly, these relationships are strengthening and are more consistent.

We are always aware that our court work and being advocates for our clients is our main priority and we focus on this by our constant presence at all the local courts in our district (Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Wentworth). We are always available and easily visible to Court staff, clients and other service providers. We attend court on Tuesdays and Fridays and

provide support and referrals to victims of Domestic Violence by offering them a safe and friendly environment to sit and wait in Broken Hill, Wentworth (1st Tuesday of each month) and Wilcannia (3rd Wednesday of each month). We would like to introduce our new seconded worker Libby Matthias from Staying Home Leaving Violence (SHLV) who has become a beneficial member with her experience working with victims in the community. Shannon from Warra Warra Legal Service (WWLS) continues to show dedication in her role as a seconded worker.

The FWWDVCAS is involved with community events and we participate whenever we are able. We are aware that being involved in these events not only raises the profile of the FWWDVCAS in the community and with other service providers but also sends the message that Domestic Violence is not acceptable.

The FWWDVCAS have continued to work hard to fulfil their obligations to Legal Aid NSW and have attended Network Meetings and training as required. The service is also represented quarterly at the Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Program (WDVCAP) Workers Forums in Sydney.

We would to acknowledge that we have a solid and collaborative working relationship with the Far West CLC Limited.

As always, we would like to thank the Board of Management for their ongoing support and dedication to not only our service but the organisation.

Far West WDV CAS wishes the Board of Management, the staff of the FWCLC, WWLS, CLSD and SHLV a very Merry Christmas and Happy and Prosperous New Year.

NARELLE BLOWS/LORETTA STUART Joint Coordinators



WDVCAS and LCP staff

Staying Home and Leaving Violence Broken Hill Report

The 2016 to 2017 year came with challenges as well as lots of positive moments with the introduction of the DEX Portal (Department of Social Services database), staff movements and increased client intake; overall it was a great year.

The highlight of the past year was the interagency project, Connect the Dots, of which SHLV was a leading agency, which saw domestic violence advocate, Rosie Batty, come to Broken Hill and Wilcannia and take part in a Q and A forum that was put on for all interested people in the community.

Another great development is that SHLVBH has signed up with WESNET which provides free smartphones to be given victims of DV. This is an important part of safety planning for these women.

Client intake increased over the year and included 78 Case Managed clients, 34 case Coordinated clients, 300 children and 74 referred clients that required information only. Increasing client intake was most notable when Becky Nunn and Vicki Cullen left the SHLVBH Team. It was sad to see them leave; however, we were excited to welcome Heidi Ogden. It can be said that Heidi was thrown in at the deep end.

We would like to thank the Musicians Club and Bakers Delight for their continued support.

Case worker testimonial

I entered my third year as a Case Worker at SHLVBH and I continued to enhance my skills and provide a service to women and their children that I can be proud of. I am supported by my supervisor, SHLVBH Coordinator Fiona Camilleri to enhance my ability to reach positive outcomes for clients and have found debrief with Fiona to be a valuable resource to ensure the safety of both clients and myself. Fiona's alternative approach to supporting staff eliminates rigidity and ensures that self-reflection is never taken to the extreme and sensibility and confidence is inspired.

While the referrals continued to come in I note that my case load began to grow. Without Fiona's consistent support, checking in and making sure I wasn't becoming overwhelmed I might have burnt out. I didn't because the best thing about SHLVBH is that we come together as a team. We get the work completed, even if it's not always in our job description.

At the end of 2016 we were introduced to the DEX Portal, another database to ensure accountability for Federal Government funding provided to SHLVBH to increase brokerage services. The additional money was a great way to provide women with additional technology including sensor lights, torches and driveway alarms. These practical methods of ensuring the safety of women and children has assisted in reducing anxiety, creating safer homes, and provided practical support to women that in many cases were tired of just talking about the issues and concerns they had been facing. Another introduction was the Safe Connections project mobile phones, SHLVBH are now working in collaboration with

WESNET to ensure women experiencing domestic violence have access to a free mobile phone, with the addition of free prepaid credit. This has been an invaluable tool that allows women to contact police, to contact their solicitor and to stay connected with friends and family. One of the biggest positives of this project is that women are able to download a safety app that suits their needs, providing another tool to increase safety and take their power back.

I continued my studies, and am well on my way to completing my Bachelor of Social Welfare, with only one unit to go. In addition, I have been accepted into the Master of Social Work, through Southern Cross University and will begin in the upcoming financial year. I have found that working and studying means I can actively see how my studies affect my work and clients and how my work has affected my studies. I feel more informed and definitely find I am becoming a more confident and able Case Worker. There has been lots of speculation about what I will do after my studies. I have thought about this a lot. Honestly, I would be silly not to think about my future in the industry. I am not here for the money. I am here because despite that fact that at times my work can be disheartening, sad, lonely and frustrating, it is also extremely rewarding, challenging and different every single day. I don't get stuck at my desk and I can engage in community based education and other community engagement opportunities. So, I am not leaving. I think that I am surrounded by so many amazing people at SHLVBH, FWCLC, WDVCS and WWLS. Without support and people that want you to excel and require more from each day, you risk no longer being open for additional learning and life just becomes boring. Bring on 2017 to 2018.

LIBBY MATTHIAS

CASE WORKER



SHLV's Libby Matthias and Rosie Batty



CLSD Report

CLSD Program

The Legal Aid NSW Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) Program is a regionally-based approach to legal service delivery in NSW. It aims to improve outcomes for economically and socially disadvantaged people by building cooperative and strategic networks of key legal services and community organizations.

During the 2016/2017 financial year there have been three people in the role of CLSD Coordinator.

Matt Lyster July 2016

In preparation for Matt resigning from his role he handed over to Legal Aid the organising of a Fines/WDO Days in Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Menindee. The FWCLC were still able to assist in the running of the three days.

Jillian Heeley August 2016 – December 2016

Jillian Heeley took over the CLSD portfolio in August 2016. The September CLSD meeting held at Lifeline was the first with Jillian in her new role, at which there was a disappointing turn-out, due mainly to other service providers being away attending to outreach obligations. As a result of this, Jillian spoke to Kate Halliday, the new Legal Aid Project officer for CLSD, and it was mutually decided that CLSD meetings would henceforth be held on Thursdays rather than Wednesdays, to avoid a clash with Wednesday outreach/Wilcannia court day services. The following CLSD meeting was held on Thursday 10th November at 2.30pm in the FWCLC Boardroom at the new premises. This change of day proved successful as more people were able to attend the meeting, therefore it was decided from this that CLSD meetings were now to be moved from Wednesday to Thursday on a permanent basis.

In collaboration with Ashurst solicitors, a successful relationship has been forged with a large group of White Cliffs residents. A Wills/Powers of Attorney/Enduring Guardianship workshop was held at White Cliffs in June this year, and it was so successful that a second Workshop was requested by the residents. Jillian and Matt Sier travelled to White Cliffs again on 14th September 2016, and in addition to the requested Wills Workshop, Matt gave a presentation on how to turn your SDO fines into Work Development Orders!

The community is grappling with the prospect of losing the value of their mining licenses, due to a recent Native Title claim having been granted over the White Cliffs region. They have requested the assistance of the FWCLC, and we are considering applying for a grant from CLSD for the provision of legal advice from a native title barrister.

On the 9th and 10th November, again in collaboration with Ashurst solicitors, a Wills/Powers of Attorney/Enduring Guardianship/Living Wills presentation was made to prospective clients in Wilcannia. CLSD kindly agreed to fund this new initiative, which will enhance our presence in the town.

In December the 2016 CLSD regional coordinators meeting was held in Sydney, Jillian attended which gave her the chance to meet the other coordinators from all the regions.

Simon Hunter January 2017 - Current

Simon Hunter was assigned to the Coordinator's role in January 2017 as Jillian was spreading herself too thin by taking on this role on top of already being Principal Solicitor. Simon's first task was to attend a day's training with Jenny Lovric – CLSD Program Manager in Sydney to learn all about the wonders of CLSD.

With Simon as the new coordinator, the first meeting of 2017 was able to occur in March. The guest speaker for the meeting was Meg Kelly from Lifeline Connect who spoke about what the service offers clients and how they are able to assist them.

Out of the March meeting it was noted that residents in the Far West were not able to receive advice in relation to criminal law matters without having to pay a private solicitor. From this a free criminal law advice clinic was able to be realised with the collaboration between the FWCLC and Legal Aid to able to offer a free phone advice clinic on every second Wednesday afternoon. The clinic first began in June 2017 and is still continuing.

At the beginning of June the 2017 CLSD regional coordinators meeting was held in Sydney over two days. Simon attended which gave him the chance to meet the other coordinators from all the regions. The main outcome of the meeting was the new structure on how to run the quarterly meetings with the focus to be more on collaboration initiatives.

The final meeting of the 2016/2017 financial year occurred in June using the new structure with Sara Lane from Ashurst agreeing to be a guest speaker. Sara was able to provide all attendees with information on how Ashurst could assist them with their clients. Main ideas to come from this meeting were future projects such as Legal Information Sessions for the general public, Victims Support Services training for workers and another Fines/Bring your bills day to occur (better location and more advertising). On a side note this was now the last meeting where people were not able to attend via phone as by September 2017 we would have teleconference capability.

Traffic Project

The Traffic Law Program is a key CLSD initiative that provides free legal assistance and representation to disadvantaged clients with traffic matters in Broken Hill Local Court. Every Tuesday, and some Fridays, depending on the likely demand, Sophie Angell (together with Matt Sier when he is needed) acts as a Duty Solicitor at the Local Court and takes carriage of any relevant traffic matters where defendants would benefit from legal representation.

At the end of 2016 Sophie Angell left the FWCLC therefore Matt is now the main solicitor providing this service with FWCLC new solicitor Lourdes Herber now assisting when needed.

Approximately 8 clients per month have been assisted through to sentencing, and many more have been afforded minor assistance on their day. Our solicitors have successfully advocated for reduced licence disqualification times, fines, licence suspensions, the

dismissal of charges, the quashing of Habitual Traffic Offender Declarations, the withdrawal of charges, and referrals to the MERIT program and Traffic Offender Intervention Program.

Attending Court and having to speak in Court to the magistrate is a very daunting experience for a client. Minor traffic matters, such as low/mid-range drink driving, require a Court attendance, but usually the client does not qualify for legal aid as there is no “real” risk that they will receive a custodial sentence. Clients are relieved when there is an alternative service which can act on their behalf, give advice as to the best possible outcome and speak for them in Court. The project also has been looked upon favourably by private solicitors acting as duty solicitor as we are able to take the pressure off.

Overall it has been a jam packed year full of changes and challenges which have been met head on with positivity, enjoyment and now excitement of the prospect of all new projects being organised for the future.

SIMON HUNTER
CLSD Coordinator



Bec Deer and Simon Hunter with their handiwork on the side of FWCLC

Financial Report

Far West Community Legal Centre

We ended the financial year with a deficit of \$32,256.84 but due to being allowed to keep our surplus for the previous financial year (for extra staff and training) we ended up with a surplus of \$11,242.39.

Funding in this financial year came from core funding Commonwealth Legal funding, the Care Partner Project, and auspice fees for WWLS, SHLV, WDVCS.

We also received funding from the Public Purpose Fund (PPF) which pays the wage of a Junior Solicitor.

We have received our quarterly funding on time and all debts have been paid accordingly.

PAYG Group certificates have all been issued and finalised together with all superannuation guarantee payments. GST payments have been paid and forms lodged up until the 30th of June 2017.

Allianz provides the Services Workers' Compensation – all payments have been made according to policy and we expect a small premium owing due to wage rises.

In conclusion we would like to thank the FWCLC Ltd Directors for their support and commitment throughout the year. We acknowledge the Auditors Gardiner Hall & Co.

Far West Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program

Last financial year the CLSD program was in surplus of \$8,204. The surplus money was returned to CLSD in September of this year. This year the program had a surplus of \$1,554.84.

Warra Warra Legal Service

It has been a good year financially for Warra Warra. We ended the year with a surplus and all financial needs were met. WWLS expended their funds within the boundaries of our funding agreement.

WWLS had some movement of staff at the end of the calendar year. One position was using funds rolled over from 2015/2016 year which resulted in again having a surplus on this item at the end of June. We employed Sophie at the end of March to use these funds and to help with the workload on our only solicitor Charlotte that was remaining. Our Principal Solicitor resigned in December and therefore we were without a Principal until 1st May 2017. This also resulted in a surplus on wages. Over the time frame of January to May we had various Principals acting at a distance for supervision needs.

We attended The Indigenous Women's conference in September 2016 which was mostly paid for in the previous financial year; however other travel costs associated with the conference came out of this year's budget. That along with other training opportunities like the Diploma in Accounting for the Finance Officer ended up overspending on the training budget.

We overspent on Staff recruitment due to extra costs of employing new staff and also repairs and maintenance. The \$4187.58 R & M payment in June was approved by the funders for building a new space for our Counsellor/Social Worker, which was completed in July 2017. We also overspent on water rates, car comprehensive insurance and other items which were purely because of cost increases and unexpected expenses.

Because of the hard work from our solicitor Charlotte Buckton, we received \$2700 from Victims' Services reimbursing expenses for clients who were granted victims compensation payments.

We were also granted funds for Ochre Ribbon day for \$300.00 and also for NAIDOC for \$1000.00

This year WWLS also was selected to be part of the Third Action Plan trial. This saw WWLS be granted funding for the next two years to employ a Counsellor and Social worker to work within our team to support a Holistic approach to our service. In June 2017 we received the first payment of \$130,000.00 to fund these two positions for the new financial year.

All financial requirements have been met and have been passed onto our funders. These include the acquittal forms, audited reports and 6 monthly financial reports.

PAYG Group Certificates have all been issued and finalised together with all superannuation guarantee payments with the exception of two superannuation payments that have not been paid for two employees. These will be finalised as soon as possible. GST payments have been paid and forms lodged up until 30th of June 2017.

Our surplus from this financial year is \$68,753.00. Of this amount, there was close to \$21,000 that was unused from the surplus of 2015/2016 as mentioned above. We have already sort pre-approval (prior to the acquittal) to roll over this portion of the amount to keep on our third solicitor until the end of October 2017. This was approved. We will also request to retain funds to upgrade our server which is at the recommendation of our IT Company. We will also request to retain the remaining amount for upgrading our vehicle and possibly keeping on our third solicitor until the end of December.

It was another great year working within Warra Warra Legal Service and I sincerely thank all the staff and wider CLC community for their support and look forward to doing it all again next year.

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

The core funding has been expended and the service has ended the year with a deficit of \$5,851.26 with last year ending with a surplus of \$20,951. FWWDVCAS has been enhanced this year with additional funding.

PAYG Group Certificates have all been issued and finalised together with all superannuation guarantee payments. GST payments have been paid and forms lodged up until 30/06/2017.

Local Coordination Point (LCP)

Core funding has been received from Legal Aid NSW. This service is in surplus of \$61,673.61.

PAYG Group certificates have all been issued and finalised together with all superannuation guarantee payments. GST payments have been paid and forms lodged up until 30/06/2017.

Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill

This service has run at a deficit of \$6,703.84. Last year it ran at a surplus of \$931.00. This service has received extra Commonwealth funding, putting the service in surplus of \$37,327.10.

PAYG Group certificates have all been issued and finalised together with all superannuation guarantee payments. GST payments have been paid and forms lodged up until 30th of June 2017.

BIANCA CATTONAR AND PRUE SULICICH
FINANCIAL OFFICERS

