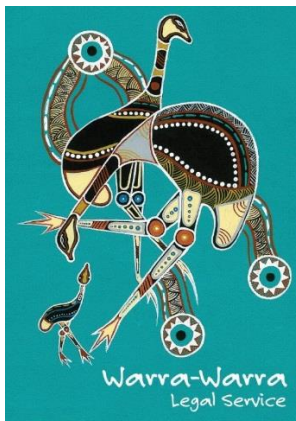


# Annual Report

# 2015



# 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  
Fabric Closet and Top End Meats  
Far West District Department of Family and Community Services  
Justice and Community Sector Partners in the Far West NSW & NSW  
LawAccess NSW  
Legal Aid NSW – Civil, Family & Employment Law  
Local Media: 999 ABC Broken Hill, 2BH / HILL FM, BDT and SCA  
Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre  
Safety and Wellbeing Programme Management, Community Safety Branch, Community  
Safety and Policy Division, 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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## **Our Vision, Values and Work**

FWCLC Inc. is represented by the following vital-front line services. These three 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')**
- **WARRA WARRA LEGAL SERVICE ('WWLS') – Auspiced by FWCLC Inc.**
- **FAR WEST WOMEN'S DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COURT ADVOCACY SERVICE ('FWWDVCAS') – Auspiced by FWCLC Inc.**
- **FAR WEST COOPERATIVE LEGAL SERVICE DELIVERY PROGRAM ('FWCLSD') - Auspiced by FWCLC Inc.**
- **STAYING HOME LEAVING VIOLENCE BROKEN HILL ('SHLVBH') - Auspiced by FWCLC Inc.**

## **2014 - 2015 FWCLC Inc. Board**

### **Executive Members**

President – Greg Pearce

Vice President - Vacant

Treasurer – Ellen Day

Secretary – Dionne Devlin

### **Ordinary Members**

Julie–Anne Philp

Colleen Riley

Lesley Harvey

Kim Vodic

Katrina Webster

## President's Report

I would like to thank David Garland for the brilliant work that he has done over the last 12 months and wish him all the best in the further. I would also like thank all of the board that have supported me in my role as chair since David left, without you all my job as chair would have been so much harder.

Thank you Dionne for being there day and night, you are a great asset to have on a board.

Although I have only been in the position a short time it has opened my eyes to the amazing work that you all carry out in your daily work lives, hats off to you all and hugs all around.

We are again in a fight for our very existence in providing the most valuable services to the community of Broken Hill and the Far West.

The FWCLC Inc. Board will continue to provide all the assistance and support to our most valuable staff through there trying times.

I acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our senior staff- the FWCLC Inc. Tracy Willow who left as half way through the year, I thank you. To Donna Kennedy who stood up to take over where Tracey left off, I thank you for your time as interim CEO well done.

To all other staff thank you all.

The FWCLC Inc. Board and staff will maintain a strong and united team in 2015/2016.

I look forward to remaining as a member of the FWCLC Inc Board, I look forward to having our new CEO Catherine Farry in place, please make her welcome.

I am confident that a healthy and active Board will continue to give support, guidance and wisdom to all concerned in the operations of the FWCLC, WWLS, FWWDVCAS, FWCLSD and SHLVBH.

**Greg Pearce**

**President FWCLC Inc.**

## CEO's Report

As I write this I am coming to the end of my fourth week in the role of CEO of the Far West Community Legal Centre Inc. I have come in, not only new to the role, but also new to the sector. It is on that note that I will write a rather short report! During these past few weeks I have been continually amazed by the dedication and commitment shown by all staff. It is apparent that each service is led by strong and innovative leaders with passionate and caring staff.

Everyone across the "Inc." both Board and Staff, have been incredibly welcoming and I would particularly like to thank Donna Kennedy, Stacey Jackson Moroney and Bianca Cattonar for showing me the ropes and helping me to (start) to settle in to my new role that I know I am going to find incredibly rewarding.

**Cathy Farry**

**Chief Executive Officer**

**Far West Community Legal Service Inc.**

## Current Staff at the FWCLC Inc (as of September 2015)

### Far West Community Legal Centre

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

**Mariette Curcuruto** *Principal Solicitor (started August 2012)*

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

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

**Matt Lyster** *PPF Solicitor (started June 2014) & FWCLSD Regional Coordinator (started June 2015)*

**Sophie Angell** *Casual Solicitor (started September 2015)*

### Warra-Warra Legal Service

**Donna Kennedy** *Manager (started April 2012)*

**Eliza Hull** *Principal Solicitor (started July 2013 at FWCLC, started at WWLS April 2015)*

**Charlotte Buckton** *Solicitor (started September 2015)*

**Prue Sulicich** *Finance Officer (started July 2009)*

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

**Shannon Oates** *Intake and Resource Officer (started October 2015)*

### 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** *Wilcannia Outreach/ WDV CAS Worker (started July 2009)*

**Prue Sulicich** *Finance Officer (started July 2009)*

### Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill (SHLVBH)

**Fiona Camilleri** *Coordinator (started September 2014)*

**Libby Matthias** *Advocacy Worker (started September 2014)*

**Vicki Cullen** *Advocacy worker (started June 2015)*



## **We Farewell, Thank and Acknowledge**

We wish Tracey, Jen, Kelly, Alexia, Anthony, Taryn, Rhonda, Synitta, Meg the best for the future and thank them for their significant contributions to FWCLC Inc.

Synitta continues to be a valued volunteer with WWLS.

We also acknowledge our wonderful cleaner Ann-Maree Wilson.

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

# Far West Community Legal Centre Report

## **A year of contrasts...**

It has been quite a year. The funding crisis that was foreshadowed in my last legal services report hit with a very big bang early this year. It led to many heartbreaking decisions – a reduction in file numbers and advice, a reduction in outreach services, senior staff again taking pay reductions and reducing hours to accommodate the budget crunch, and in addition to those measures and the resultant effects on our community, the loss of good staff, with the Centre losing our then CEO Tracey Willow, and my able solicitor Eliza Hull.

Certainly, the effects of funding uncertainty have been felt across our sector, but it would be remiss of me to fail to mention that a lack of funding certainty in a centre like ours – so far away from the large cities that churn out law graduates and solicitors, where practicing solicitors are not looking for work and are few on the ground – has a terrible effect on the workforce. It causes people to re-evaluate their commitment to the legal services sector, and causes high stress levels to staff who already have a high level of stress.

Sadly for me, this meant that I did resign my position. However, when push came to shove I could not leave the work I love, the people I value, and the client group that I find such reward in assisting.

However, as is often the case in life, a few months later, my body decided to cave under the pressure, and since August, I have been in and out of hospital and am as I write this on extended leave as a result. Apparently, I have now developed 2 chronic autoimmune diseases for good measure. As I write this report, I am still on leave from the Centre and have good days and bad days and also hospital days more often than I would like.

I cannot understate how wonderful the staff of our Centre have been in this personally difficult time for me. Without the unfailing dedication of our administrative staff Stacey Jackson Moroney and Bianca Cattonar, the support of our new solicitor Sophie Angel and our solicitor Matt Lyster (newly returned from paternity leave), I would not have been able to convalesce as well as I have.

It would be very remiss of me not to mention, and profusely thank Rebecca Boreham, the locum solicitor who kindly agreed to assist the Centre through the period of my absence. Rebecca is a sole practitioner in Mildura who has worked in the CLC Sector and Family Violence Sector previously, and kindly agreed, at great personal cost to herself, to commuting to Broken Hill to run the practice whilst I was ill. I cannot thank Rebecca enough for her kindness, professionalism and support of our CLC.

Against all of the challenges that CLC has faced this year through staff loss and illness, CLC continues to go strong, delivering quality, professional services to people in financial difficulty.

We have a wonderful team people driven by passion and determination. This Community Legal Centre could not operate as effectively or service the number of clients that it does without the contribution of each staff member.

Our continued existence within the FWCLC Inc Group, with its focus on servicing victims of domestic violence continues to allow our practice to focus on areas of work that are rewarding, and necessary in our region.

Although the funding crisis of this year is over, and funding is secure for another year, the hard work of rebuilding our service and our team remains ahead. I am certain that we are up to the challenge.

## **Our Team**

FWCLC is the combination of the talents of these dedicated and amazing people: Stacey Jackson our Reception and Intake Worker, Bianca Cattonar our paralegal/finance worker, Junior Solicitor Matt Lyster (who welcomed baby George into our CLC family in September), and our new Junior solicitor Sophie Angell (who welcomes her new baby girl sometime in November). I also acknowledge the contribution of Eliza Hull, who left us in April, my able junior, who has now taken on the role of Principal Solicitor at WWLS; the wonderful Tracey Willow, our CEO who left us in June for a new adventure and also Donna Kennedy who filled the CEOs role on an interim basis.

Thanks also to our legal student volunteer Mary-Kate Tobin who was so willing to jump in and work hard, and also brilliant social work student volunteers who have given their time and energy to the CLC this year – Josh Walker and Claire Bevan. Each has contributed so much to our team, and were willing, enthusiastic and skilled.

I take this opportunity to welcome Cathy Farry, our new CEO to our team. We look forward to Cathy bringing her creative energy and enthusiasm to our organisation.

## **Legal Advice and Casework**

### **A snapshot of Legal Data:**

- Total number of clients in this period: 433. This represents 175 new clients, 143 repeat clients and 115 existing clients.
- Total Number of Information Activities: 1622
- Total Advices in this period: 710
- Total Open Cases new during period: 199
- Total number of cases open at start of period: 134
- Total Number of cases closed during period: 83

Of the entire work of the Centre, domestic and family violence was our main matter type, followed by family law, ADVO's and Traffic matters. We continue to cover a vast spread of legal issues, which include Employment Law, Credit and Debt, Issues with Government and other civil law problems.

Our new innovation – Thursday Evening Clinics have proven very popular with our community. During this period, we have given 91 advice sessions on Thursday between 2pm and 6pm.

## **Publications**

This year, our website, and Friends of the FWCLC Facebook page continues to inspire and communicate with the wider audience in our community.

I thank Jen Mitchell for her knowledge and skill, and tireless effort in bringing the idea to fruition, and for assisting in the development of the plain language resources on the Website. Jen was instrumental in the development and implementation of the website. She has since moved on to the bright lights of Sydney, and we have missed Jen's technical brilliance since the lure of the big smoke took her away.

## **Outreach**

Outreach services in the Broken Hill Correctional Centre, Menindee and Wilcannia continue and have been strongly supported. We thank the local communities of Wilcannia, Menindee, Ivanhoe, Tibooburra and White Cliffs and the staff and inmates at Broken Hill Gaol for their willingness to work with us. We are continuing to look at innovative ways to service those communities in partnership with our interagency partners. Watch this space.

### **Case Study**

Angela's case of domestic violence was one of the most frightening and persistent cases that we have encountered in our service. Like something from a horror story, Angela had been subjected to repeated beatings over many years, and had been threatened with a knife and choked in front of her children. Angela's history was complex, with drug use issues by her partner having a great impact, and a long history of social isolation from her family by her partner. Angela had 3 children under 4, and because of her partner's violence had been cut off from her support systems.

Angela first came to us as a result of intervention by the Department of Families and Community Services. We supported Angela in working with the Department and in setting achievable goals for her to meet to satisfy the Department of her parenting capacity.

We worked with Angela to advocate with Police for the implementation of an apprehended domestic violence order for the protection of herself and her children. We also supported Angela through the process of giving evidence in the criminal proceedings brought against her abusive former partner.

We also were able to assist Angela in obtaining final orders in the Federal Circuit Court granting her sole parental responsibility for her children, an order that her children live with her, and a no contact order between the children and her partner, with a broad range of protective injunctions to protect Angela and her children against her violent and unpredictable partner.

We continue to support Angela through her claim on the Victims Services fund.

In addition to an excellent legal outcome for the client, this case highlights the fantastic partnership between our sister services, Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill and Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service and FWCLC. Angela, who was assisted through the process by FWCLC SHLVBH and FWWDVCAS was provided with excellent legal advice and casework, advocacy and emotional and court support through her interaction with all of these services.

**MARIETTE CURCURUTO**  
**PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR**

## **Joshua Walker – Social Work Student Volunteer at FWCLC.**

### **My Time at the Far West CLC**

When I had first arrived at the Far West CLC I had no idea what to expect, all that I knew was that I was extremely scared and nervous about starting at the Far West CLC. When I first walked into the Far West CLC I was greeted by a smiling face and a good morning from Stacey Jackson- Moroney which had settled my nerves completely, after walking in the front door I was called into Tracey Willow's office where I had a discussion with her about what will be expected from me during my time at the Far West CLC, after my meeting with Tracey I got to meet the rest of the team of the Far West CLC, the way everyone welcomed me into the team was one the best ways to help a student who could only think about not fitting in. The people of the Far West CLC are some of the hardest working, dedicated, fun and caring people I have ever met, they made me feel welcomed from the first day I arrived and on my last day at the Far West CLC I can truly say that I am a part of the family at the Far West CLC. My experiences at the Far West CLC were some of the best experiences and I would never want to change any of it for the world.

# Warra-Warra Legal Service report

## Warra Warra Legal Service

Warra Warra Legal Service has been working hard this year. WWLS 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, White cliffs, Tibooburra, 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 Far West Region.

### WWLS Team Update:

We acknowledge and farewell Anthony Hayward who was the Resource Worker with WWLS for three years. We would like to say a big thank you for all the work and support that Anthony contributed to WWLS during his time as Resource Worker. Anthony is an amazing young talent and strong Aboriginal Man. WWLS wishes Anthony well in his bright future.

We acknowledge and farewell Taryn Mitchell who was a Resource Worker with WWLS for short period. We would like to say a big thank you for all the work and support that Taryn provided whilst she was a member of the WWLS Team.

We would like to welcome Eliza Hull as WWLS new Principal Solicitor. Eliza joined the WWLS team this year in April 2015. Eliza has experience working in family violence prevention beginning her career at Many Rivers Aboriginal Family Violence Prevention Service in Kempsey NSW. Eliza then took up solicitor's role at the Far West Community Legal Centre where she developed a strong connection with the Far West Communities.

Eliza is passionate about working with our Aboriginal Community and is dedicated to working with survivors of family violence. She has a keen interest in working with Care and Protection Law and is passionate about providing Legal Services to parents and carers who may be dealing with this area of law. Eliza is passionate about providing a holistic approach to support survivors of family violence and works closely with Aboriginal Staff and support networks to ensure survivors are supported through their healing.

We would like to welcome Charlotte Buckton as the new Solicitor for WWLS who has recently moved to Broken Hill from the sea side city of Newcastle. She is passionate about working in family violence prevention and assisting survivors of violence and other trauma to access justice, quality legal assistance and other types of support. She is also interested in using community arts as a means of healing and empowerment. During the past year Charlotte has spent time working and volunteering in Aboriginal women's legal centres in Sydney and Fitzroy Crossing in the Kimberley, Western Australia.

We would like to welcome Shannon Oates to the WWLS team as the new Intake & Resource Worker. Shannon has experience working in in Aboriginal Health and support. WWLS are excited about Shannon's arrival and look forward to working with her in the future.

Senior Administration Officer Anne-Maree Payne continues to provide consistent and dedicated support as an integral member of the Legal Team. Anne-Maree also provides non-legal client

support and works closely with Manager on prevention programs. WWLS acknowledges Anne-Maree for her commitment and dedication to the service.

Prue Sulicich continues to provide finance support to the service. WWLS thanks Prue for her dedication to the service and commitment to providing quality and efficient support to the team.

**DONNA KENNEDY**  
**MANAGER**

## **Legal Report**

In April 2015, I was extremely humbled to be offered to position of Principal Solicitor at Warra Warra Legal Service. I began my tenure early April 2015 and have thoroughly enjoyed my time so far. In the period between October 2014 and April 2015, Warra Warra's legal team experienced staff changes and some uncertainty.

Kelly Oxford finished with the Service in January 2015, and we were very thankful to have Michelle Wall from Martin Irwin and Richards assist as Locum Principal until my commencement in April 2015. Junior Solicitor Alexia Zsigmond also left the Service in January 2015, which meant the Legal Team was short staffed for a period. WWLS would like to thank Kelly, Alexia and Michelle for the time, effort and commitment they provided WWLS during their employment.

From April 2015 - June 2015 the Legal Team consisted of Senior Administration Officer Ann-Maree Payne and myself. Ann-Maree has been a consistent member of the Staff at WWLS. Ann-Maree is a proud Barkantji Woman and I would like to personally acknowledge Ann-Maree's commitment and dedication to the Legal Team.

Although we had a rocky start to the year the Legal Team is now fully functioning and working extremely hard to provide efficient, effective and high standard legal services to our community.

WWLS thanks Solicitor Sophie Angel who joined us on a part time basis from July 2015 - September 2015. Sophie was an asset to the team and worked with integrity, grace and commitment during her time at WWLS.

In September 2015 our new fulltime Solicitor Charlotte Buckton began employment with WWLS. Charlotte has melded well with our team and is already an asset. Charlotte has taken the lead working with Survivors of Family Violence. Charlotte has worked on updating all Victims Support Matters and has ensured our clients are receiving the best outcome possible. WWLS acknowledges Charlotte for the significant impact she has already made to the Legal Team and looks forward to working with her in the future.

Despite staff changes WWLS Legal team have maintained a strong commitment to working with the community, hard decisions were initially made to ensure the work load was sustainable. At least 3 significant litigation matters were referred out in around April this year. As these clients had been working with our service for many years, the Legal Team ensured these referrals were strong and assisted in the handover of these matters. All referrals were clients eligible for Legal Aid and WWLS continues to provide non-legal support to these clients. All referrals were successful.

WWLS continues to have large litigation matters on foot including Family Law, Victims Support and Care and Protection Matters. Our case load remains significant with matters ranging in complexity.

Most clients enter the service with numerous legal issues and require significant investment of time and resources. WWLS continues to work closely with support networks within the FWCLC Inc. such as WDVCS and SHLV to ensure clients receive a holistic service.

#### **A snapshot of Legal Data:**

- Total number of clients in this period: 135. This represents 34 new clients, 24 repeat clients and 77 existing clients.
- Total Number of Information Activities: 234
- Total of New Information (referrals out) for this period: 216
- Total Advices in this period: 201
- Total Open Cases to date 75
- Total number of cases open at start of period 91
- Total Number of cases closed during period 60
- Total Number of new open cases during period 50
- Total Number of Referrals to WWLS: 170
- Total Number of Referrals to other agencies : 50

Due to staff shortages we have decreased our outreach during 2015. Although we have maintained our fortnightly Wilcannia Outreach; we have only attended Menindee and Wentworth/Dareton on a needs basis. We hope to re-establish our fortnightly outreach to Menindee and monthly outreach to Wentworth/Dareton in the coming months.

Our Aboriginal Staff continue to provide a vital role within our service. I would like to acknowledge the role the Aboriginal Staff play at WWLS. Senior Administration worker, Ann-Maree Payne and Manager, Donna Kennedy provide not only clients but staff vital support and knowledge to ensure our community receives effective legal service in a culturally safe environment. This is an imperative aspect of our service.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the Barkanji people of the Far West Region and offer my congratulations on the Native Title Claim which was handed down by the Federal Court on ... this year. It was a proud moment for our local community and a significant moment for the Barkanji people. I thank Anne Maree for kindly inviting me to share the day with her and her family.

**ELIZA HULL**  
**PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR**

### **WWLS Community Engagement - Prevention Projects/Support**

WWLS continues to provide on the ground prevention and education strategies to assist in overcoming the complexities of Family Violence.

**Speaking and Healing** - 'Speaking & Healing Project' has been run with an enthusiastic response. The project has been running for two years and stems from work WWLS initially completed with Knowmore Legal Service in collaboration with the Royal Commission.

The projects, despite dealing with the heavy topic of Domestic Violence and child sexual abuse, bring new hope to communities who are desperate for positive change. The projects are a space for



people to not only share their hard stories, but also to reconnect and share positive stories of family and loved ones and aspirations for the future.

This year we held two Speaking and Healing Projects including collaboration with Desert Pea Media and Family Fun Day.

**Desert Pea Media Collaboration** - Warra Warra Legal Service continues to run prevention programs through our Speaking and Healing Projects. This year we teamed up with Desert Pea Media to provide a workshop/project to Broken Hill High School Students.

The students attended a week long workshop. Desert Pea Media provided a space for the students to express their ideas and thoughts about Family Violence in the Far West Region. The students then developed a song and accompanying film clip, exploring their ideas and stories of Family Violence in the Far West. WWLS would like to acknowledge and thank Desert Pea Media for providing a strong and powerful workshop to the students at Broken Hill High school.

We acknowledge the Students and Staff of Broken Hill High school who enthusiastically worked with us during this project. Those involved in the Desert Pea Media Project were:

#### Students

Shakira McKellar  
Tim Bugmy  
Savannah Probert  
Amber Evans  
Kaitaia Clark  
Suni Forner -  
Tyreke Probert  
Jarome Cattermole  
Sione Tuipulotu

#### Staff and Community Members

Tom Kickett  
Synitta Adams  
Vicki Adams  
Colleen Proburg  
Jamie Gilby

# Far West Women's Domestic Violence Advocacy Service Report

2015 has been an exciting and productive year for the Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service (FWWDVCAS), with the service becoming one of five Local Coordination Points as part of the new Government Safer Pathway reforms.

We have had some staff and/or position changes within the service. Racheal Murphy started with the service as the SAM's Coordinator for the Local Coordination Point and Narelle Blows took on the role of Intake and Referral with the new service, while maintaining her position as Joint Coordinator with Loretta Stuart at FWWDVCAS.

The introduction of the Safer Pathway reforms (LCP) and the new Domestic Violence Justice Strategy on July 1 2015 will now see the FWWDVCAS as the lead referral agency for Broken Hill and all the surrounding districts. The Barrier LAC will now refer every domestic violence incident to the FWWDVCAS via the Central Referral Point at Victim Services, and while this will drastically increase the workload of the FWWDVCAS and LCP, we are open to the challenge. This new system sees us contacting every victim that comes through; the first initial contact must be made within 24 hours of the referral. There must be 3 attempts at contact. It is projected that we will receive approximately 95 referrals through this system monthly.

FWWDVCAS are still very aware that their core business is assisting victims of domestic violence through their court processes and gaining ADVO's for the protection of clients, we are confident that we can work competently and effectively in the dual roles between the WDVCS and the LCP. Ultimately our goal is to assist and allow as many women and children as possible to leave these violent relationships.

We believe that these new initiatives will not only be beneficial to the current clients of FWWDVCAS, but to all victims of domestic violence especially those that may previously have gone through the processes themselves, unassisted and not aware of the services available.

As we do every year, we are continually working to maintain our links with the other agencies in the area and with the community. However we are always mindful 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 (1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month) and Wilcannia (3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month).

The FWWDVCAS is continually involved in community events such as the NAIDOC celebrations; Reclaim the Night, White Ribbon Day. This 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 WDVCAP Workers Forums in Sydney.

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

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 as a whole.

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**

# Staying Home and Leaving Violence Broken Hill Report

***"A house where a woman is unsafe is not a home"***

***From every wound there is a scar,  
And every scar tells a story.  
A story that says "I have survived"  
Turn your wounds into wisdom.***

The past 11 months have been an amazing time for SHLV. Operating from a small office, centrally located in the town square, our work has been overwhelming but rewarding. Every day we respond to unpredictable events. SHLV's positive and highly motivated team consisting of myself and two part time advocacy workers, Libby Matthias and Vicki Cullen, accomplished more than expected in this short time. Libby and Vicki have been the backbone of this service, dedicated and hard working. Thank you Libby and Vicki for making SHLV a successful and much needed service in our community, for without you, SHLV would not exist.

**"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." --Phil Jackson**

We have provided for the community a well-resourced and welcoming drop-in service for vulnerable clients and women seeking information. SHLV has focused on community collaboration, providing a safe environment for women and children to relax and access resources to empower women to escape the devastating effects of domestic and family violence. Our effective response to family and domestic violence is complex, requiring involvement of multiple service systems and agencies. These include police, specialist family and domestic violence services, courts, child protection, housing and health.

The best results for survivors of domestic and family violence are achieved when we work together in a coordinated and integrated way. Our main focus is around empowerment, always actively involving the client in assessing her needs and directing what services will be provided for her. This involves assistance to improve self-esteem, gaining knowledge, develop skills and make informed choices in order to be in control of her life.

SHLV has an up to date website, linked to all FWCLC Inc. Services – [www.farwestclc.org.au](http://www.farwestclc.org.au).

Significant highlights from SHLV during this reporting period:

- The number of women who have accessed this service and became clients in the period October 2014 until July 2015 has been 67. (43 Case Managed clients, 24 Case Coordinated Clients).
- 33 Aboriginal families and 3 CALD families, our service also provided support and assistance to 140 children.
- 354 people have used this service to seek information regarding domestic violence and AVO's including the development of SHLVBH resources (pamphlets, business cards, fridge magnets, pens and key chains)
- SHLV has identified unmet needs and have reported these to FACS and to sector interagencies including the Far West Family Domestic Violence Network meeting, the Child Protection Network meeting, FWCLSD Regional Network meeting, Broken Hill Domestic Violence meeting.

- SHLV is developing innovative and collaborative community responses to address the needs e.g. community donations and community engagement with small businesses in Broken Hill. These have been identified as Friends of SHLVBH and are on the service website.
- SHLV has strengthened its working relationship with the following services: Far West Community Legal Centre, WDV CAS, Warra Warra Legal Service, Centacare, Lifeline, Family and Community Services, Child and Family Health, Maari-Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation, Police, Compass Housing, Mission Australia, Education Department, Primary Health and Salvation Army.
- Effective use of social work students.
- Establishment of the Women's Conversation Group – women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- SHLV during this period has had media contact through the local newspaper, ABC National Radio "Left in Harm's Way", Background Briefing 8<sup>th</sup> March 2015 (clients from SHLV participated in the interviews anonymously).
- Participation in community events including: Reclaim the Night 2014, addressing the community on keeping our children safe, Pink Breakfast – Breast cancer light up the square, anniversary of the apology to the stolen generation Aboriginal working party, NAIDOC celebrations, Festival of Respect activities, flag raising ceremony DV awareness Programs, White Ribbon Day, Red Nose Day, Crossroads – education for children and young people, Love Bites – year 10 education sessions on DV and sexual assault for 15 – 17 year students, peer support education day Expo's in local high schools, Self-esteem and awareness programs for women individual.
- SHLV has provided education sessions to the Local Area Command to inform all police officers of SOS Device and the process when activation occurs. This has resulted in greater response and referral to SHLV.

To continue to provide high quality training and ongoing support to the clients of SHLV, Education Department, police and other agencies there is a need to increase staff hours. Increase funding for supplies and equipment would also assist in the day to day running expenses of SHLV locally.

SHLV would like to sincerely thank the Board, Mariette Curcuruto - Principal Solicitor, former CEO Tracey Willow, Stacey, Bianca and staff at FWCLC, WDV CAS, Warra Warra Legal Service, Inspector Mick Stoltenberg Crime Manager and Senior Constable Stephen Dohnt DVLO for their support and regular contact with this service.

**FIONA CAMILLERI**  
**COORDINATOR**



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 organisations. Matt Lyster took over the CLSD portfolio in June 2015 and has hit the ground running working hard to identifying new strategic partnerships in our Far West Community that will practically address unmet legal needs.

Matt is presently coordinating a pilot program in the Far West of a “super clinic” style of outreach with key outreach service providers. This exciting new project was ignited after receiving feedback from our outreach stakeholders that consolidated, regular outreach would be more beneficial to remote clients than an outreach model where key service providers arrive independently and often sporadically. The outreach collaboration project opens new pathways for resource sharing, community engagement and will hopefully provide a platform for a more effective provision of outreach services in the Far West. The first collaboration super clinic is due to be trialed at Menindee in early 2016.

The Traffic Law Program is another key CLSD initiative that provides free legal assistance and representation to disadvantaged clients with traffic matters in Broken Hill Local Court. Every Tuesday Matt acts as a Duty Solicitor at the Local Court and takes carriage of any relevant traffic matters where defendants would benefit from legal representation. So far Matt has made 54 Local Court appearances, successfully advocating for reduced licence disqualifications, fines, licence suspensions, dismissal of charges, quashing of Habitual Traffic Offender Declarations, withdrawal of charges and referrals to the MERIT program and Traffic Offender Intervention Program. Matt also regularly teaches the legal module of the Traffic Offender Intervention Program at Broken Hill PCYC.

## **FAR WEST COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE**

**Matthew P. Lyster**

Solicitor

Far West Regional Coordinator, Cooperative Legal Services Delivery

# Financial Report

## Far West Community Legal Centre

This has again been a challenging year for FWCLC with the loss of the Commonwealth Funding, which although returned, meant a suspension of service delivery for a period. We ended the financial year with a surplus of \$11 401. The previous year had ended with a deficit of \$198 752. Due to sound strategic decisions this deficit has been reversed.

Funding in this financial year came from core funding Commonwealth Legal funding, new Family Law Funding and auspice fees for WWLS, SHLV, WDVCS.

The service has received new funding in relation to a Care Partner Project, the Traffic Law Project and the Transport Initiative Funding.

We also received funding from the Public Purpose fund (PPF) which pays the wage of the 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 30/06/2015

Alliance has taken over the company Gallagher Bassett which was providing the service's Workers Compensation – all payments have been made according to policy and expect a small premium owing due to wage rises.

In conclusion we would like to thank the FWCLC Inc. Board for their support and commitment throughout the year. We also say a huge thank you to all our colleagues who have been supportive throughout the upheavals during the past year. We acknowledge the Auditors Gardiner Hall & Co.

## Far West Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program

Last year the CLSD program was in a deficit of \$2192 which has been reduced to a deficit this year of \$207.

## Warra Warra Legal Service

Core funding has been received from Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Additional funding has come from:

- VCT fund
- DV Alert funding
- Apology Event funding.

The year ended with a surplus of \$192205.

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 30/06/2015

### **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 \$10312. FWDCAS has been enhanced this year with funding to create a new service, Location Coordination Point (LCP). The combination of these services will reduce costs, and it is expected that the financial outcomes next year will be greatly improved.

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 30/06/2015.

### **Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill**

This service opened in October 2014, and has run at a surplus at \$12695.

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 30/06/2015





