

Far West Community Legal Centre Ltd

Annual Report

2018



The Baaka (The Darling River), Wilcannia



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 Ltd.

Ashurst Lawyers; Commonwealth Legal Services Program; Commonwealth Attorney General's Department; Community Legal Centres New South Wales; Community Legal Centres Program, Legal Aid NSW; Cooperative Legal Service Delivery Program; Legal Aid NSW; Dennis Roach, Consultant; EZY Projects; Family and Community Services; 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, Southern Cross Television, 2BH, HILLFM and 2DRY FM; The Lion's Club Broken Hill Branch; The Musicians Club; National Association of Community Legal Centres; The Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; Quota Club; The Royal Flying Doctor Service, South Eastern Section; Sparke Helmore Lawyers; 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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Interagency Roadshow – ready to go to White Cliffs



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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 first 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 29 Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Services, servicing 117 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

It is my pleasure to present the Report of the Directors of the Far West Community Legal Centre Limited.

The Board looks back on the past year as one of challenge and achievement. We are pleased to report that as a result of the consistent and professional work of all of our staff the service has continued to deliver quality legal advice to our clients in need, provided practical and client centred support for victims of domestic violence in order that they can stay home and leave violence, provided Court advocacy support as victims of domestic violence make their way through the Court protection system and undertaken community development and advocacy work. All this core work whether it be undertaken by our professional staff or our administrative staff and volunteers, continues to be provided respectfully and with compassion and wisdom.

The Board acknowledges the work of our CEO Catherine Farry for her stewardship of the service and the professional and administrative staff who support her in ensuring the service delivers on its strategic and financial targets and remains within budget. In an environment of high demand and restricted funds this remains a difficult balance to maintain.

The Board looks forward to providing what support we can to ensure the service remains properly resourced and prudently managed in order that our services continue to be provided in an efficient and professional manner and that our reputation for excellence is maintained.

Mark Braes on behalf of the FWCLC Board

The Board of Management, Far West Community Legal Centre Limited

Dionne Devlin

Ellen Day

Colleen Riley

Julie-Anne Philp

Mark Braes

Bronte Schuster

Secretary

Catherine Farry



CEO's Report

It has been another great year for the FWCLC and its auspiced services. We have this past year had more than our usual quota of Volunteers at the FWCLC. Some have been on student placement with us such as Rebecca Deer who is now employed at Warra Warra Legal Service, and Sean Bowes who completed his PLT with us. We also had some students come out to spend time with us, not for any requirements for their courses but because they wanted to have the experience of working and living in the outback for just a few weeks in some cases, and months for others. All made a very valued contribution and we are proud to continue to provide the opportunity for people to gain experience and training in such socially valuable careers.

Another achievement for the year was Warra Warra being selected for the pilot program for the Third Action Plan for the reduction of violence to women and their children. The program assesses different models that are known to help reduce violence; our part being victim support which has seen us employ Kelsey Lew and Rebecca into the positions of social workers who provide support to the victims of family violence, meaning that WWLS can now provide a more holistic service to clients. Often the legal issue that a client comes in with can actually be the least of their problems and now we can assist with much more. A year in to the program and it is going really well.

Community support of Staying Home and Leaving Violence has been increasing steadily with substantial donations having been given by the Musician's Club, Ezy Build and the Lion's Club amongst others. These donations go towards the support of SHLV who do an incredible job working with the victims of family and domestic violence. It is particularly gratifying to see that this support largely comes from the people who live and work in Broken Hill and know first-hand the great work that this service provides.

The Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service has had its borders increased with the expansion of the police local area command boundaries. Staff at FWWDVCAS have taken the increase in referrals in their stride and continue to provide their very professional and empathetic service.

The CLSD program is going very well under Simon Hunter's coordination. One of the great cooperative achievements of this program is the criminal law clinic that the FWCLC hosts and is conducted by Legal Aid.

I would also like to welcome Ross Casey, an NDIS Readiness and Appeals Officer with Disability Advocacy NSW and Advocacy Law Alliance who has taken up residence in our building in Oxide Street. Although not an employee of the FWCLC Ltd services, Ross works alongside us collegially, joining us at service events and interagencies and even the ever important work Christmas party.

This is the last CEO report from me as I move on at the end of November. I have worked here now for three years and must say that I have been humbled by the dedication and passion that I have seen both with the Staff and with the community law and the family and domestic violence sectors as a whole. Thank you to everyone (and there have been many!) who have helped and supported me in my role these past three years. I could not have done it without you especially in the beginning when I came in new to both the role and the sector. I would like to welcome Irfan Yusuf who has very recently come on board as our new Principal Solicitor and also Stacy Treloar who will be the new CEO as of December.

I would also like to thank the Board of Management for their fantastic support during these past few years.

Catherine Farry, CEO

November 2018

Staff at the FWCLC Limited

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 2016, finished September 2018)*

Thanushar Sridaran *PPF Full-time Solicitor (started September 2018)*

Mark Jongbloed *Full-time Solicitor (started July 2018)*

Nina Betts *Part-time Solicitor (started March 2016)*

Jake Johnstone *School Based Trainee (started February 2018)*

Warra-Warra Legal Service

Shannon Oates *Manager (started September 2015)*

Leah Billeam *Principal Solicitor (started May 2017)*

Emma Stewart *Solicitor (started March 2017)*

Prue Sulicich *Finance Officer (started July 2009)*

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

Lucy Rose Doolan *Community Development Worker (started May 2016, finished September 2018)*

Rebecca Deer *Social Worker (started September 2017)*

Kelsey Lew *Social Worker (Started September 2017)*

Priscilla Lea Liyanage *Paralegal (started March 2018)*

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

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

Narelle Blows *Coordinator (started September 2009)*

Melissa Hickey *Court Advocate (started April 2018)*

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 Welcome, Farewell, Thank and Acknowledge

We would like to thank the volunteers that have been with us during the 2017/2018 year for their significant contributions to FWCLC Ltd, particularly Sean, Mana and Alex.

We farewell John Park, Sean Bowes, Mana Ghadirian, Susan Marks, Sophie Angell and Lourdes Herber.

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.



Far West Community Legal Centre Report

A Year of Adjustment and Transformation

It has been a year of change at our Centre, with a turnover of lawyers (Nina Betts being the only one continuing after October), virtually completed at the date this Report goes to press. To terrify those who eschew organisational change, our CEO is also scheduled to depart in November. Our rock solid administrative staff are admirably holding it together and (thankfully) declining to join the mass exodus.

The Centre is lucky indeed to have recruited two high-calibre lawyers to replace the departing staff, and I'm sure that once a new Principal Solicitor and CEO are appointed, the Centre's reputation will be not only maintained, but perhaps enhanced, and the remaining staff and the community in general will be well served by our dedicated and professional replacements. As we all know, sometimes a new broom can sweep in constructive change.

Staff and staff changes

I will be retiring on October 12th and leaving the Centre with enough material to draft several best-selling novels (everyone should be afraid,) after having spent two and half years in this splendid city. It has been a time of challenges and much joy – the latter far outweighing the former. The community and my colleagues welcomed and embraced me from the moment of my appointment, for which I have been most grateful. It is my hope that the Centre will flourish and go from strength to strength under its new principal. I will visit from time to time in a blowsy motorhome – so it will be *au revoir*, and not goodbye!

This past year also saw the resignations of both Lourdes Herber and Matt Sier from our Centre. We wish Lourdes happiness and success in her new ventures, and Matt an exciting year of travel in India, the United Kingdom, and wherever else he may roam. Matt developed a reputation amongst “other parties” as a formidable adversary who could out-smart and out-paper the most ardent and hard-nosed opponent. Having said that, his professional and personable approach endeared him to his clients and the Bench alike, and we are truly grateful for the successful and hassle-free civil practice he has afforded us for the past two years.

We thought Matt would be an impossible act to follow, but our new civil solicitor, Thanushar Sridaran, is showing exciting indications that she will be an equally dedicated and impressive lawyer who will rival Matt's successes in the role. We are really looking forward to her developing in the position, and hope that she continues to enjoy the Broken Hill community, and all our town has to offer.

Our new family lawyer, Mark Jongebloed, is a talented and personable young man. He is dedicated and willing to take on “anything that comes through the door”, which has obviously endeared him to me!

Nina Betts continues to do excellent part-time work for us remotely, including running our phone advice service and attending to several ongoing files. I will miss reading Nina's wonderful, empathetic and down-to-earth Advices – unique in my experience, and exactly what our clients need.

Our administration trainee from Broken Hill High school, Jake Johnstone, is about to leave us to take on full time employment. Jake has attended one day a week, and proved to be a delight – intelligent, cheerful, obliging, and respectful. We hope he has learnt at least something of value from his time with us, and wish him the very best as he starts out on life's exciting post-school journey.

Proposed Contact Centre for Broken Hill

We were extremely disappointed that (despite an approach on our behalf by the Federal Member for Parkes, Mark Coulton) the Attorney General declined our request for funds for a local Contact Centre. At the same time, several sporting and social clubs in the town have been given large funding boosts for leisure pastimes. Our request for a grant of \$100,000 which would have allowed many parents to spend time with their children which they will otherwise be denied, was turned down, while a local social club was given \$380,000 to improve their bocce bowling surface and kitchen amenities. The government's priorities seem misguided, and dare I say that money appears to be being thrown at projects which will win them the most votes. I urge the next Principal Solicitor to take up cudgels again, and to continue the fight. We have spent too much time on this matter, and it is too important, to allow it to fall by the wayside.

Legal Advice and Casework

Our practice continues in the traditional areas of family and civil law, and in the new areas of Centrelink Appeals, Wills and Estates, Powers of Attorney, Guardianship matters, and Family Provision, for which there is a very strong demand. To our dismay, we have lost CLSD funding for our Traffic project, but Cathy is attempting to obtain new funds to service the strong demand from clients who are now falling between the cracks of private funding and Legal Aid. In many cases these potential clients are not competent to represent themselves, and we are hoping that some additional funds might be found to help them. We are at present giving traffic advice to some clients, but not providing representation at court, which would require our presence there on one, and sometimes two, mornings each week. We are looking into attending the Wilcannia Court once a fortnight to assist with traffic matters, but this is of course dependent on the aforementioned further funds being obtained.

The Criminal Law Advice Clinic that we facilitate has been successfully established, and is run once a week. Clients attend our Centre and telephone a Legal Aid Solicitor in Sydney for advice.

The Reporting function in CLASS has been deficient for some time, but is slowly improving. The method of assessing the type of assistance we give our clients is quite different under CLASS compared with the CLSIS system, and results in our statistics being lower in some areas, even though there has been a 25% increase in the number of clients approaching the Centre (see below). Additionally, some of the files from the previous financial year, predominantly Family Law files, are ongoing, which partially accounts for the decrease in files opened.

A comparison of the Centre Activity statistics for the last three financial years shows the following (in order: 2016, 2017, 2018):

1. Number of clients: 189, 299, 410.
2. Total advices (face to face, telephone, correspondence and legal tasks): 436, 684, 488
3. Files opened during period: 165, 250, 192.
4. Files closed during period: 41, 100, 213.
5. Information and referral activities: 712, 705, 761
6. Total cases closed involving Court/Tribunal representation: 0, 39, 88

In summary, there has been a large increase in client numbers, considerable additional assistance having been provided through representation at Court and at Tribunals, and in the areas of information and referrals. Total advices given have decreased by about 29% since last year (although it is to be noted that we have had 2.5 solicitors rather than 3.5 for the last 8 months), so hopefully this is not of major significance, particularly given the differences in recording advices in CLASS as opposed to the old CLSIS system.

Outreach and Community Legal Education

Outreach attendances in Menindee and Wilcannia have been occurring regularly, and we have also visited Tibooburra (twice), White Cliffs and Ivanhoe during the past year (see below).

After a few false starts, a representative of the Sydney Women's Legal Service attended our Centre on 7th August 2017 to provide both basic and advanced training in Victim Services matters to our Centre and our auspiced organisations. All agreed that it was a wonderful presentation, and well worth the wait.

A series of four CLE sessions was scheduled to be held at Warra Warra during October, November and December 2017 on diverse topics, including gambling, debt, bankruptcy, AVOs and court support, employment issues, applying for the DSP, Care and Protection, Family Law, Wills and Estates.

Another productive CLE activity was our Legal Health day held at Westfield Plaza on 23rd November 2017, where we were able to accost the general public as they attended to do their grocery shopping. We spoke to 60 people that day, some of whom subsequently attended our Centre for advice.

Further CLE activities were undertaken at the NAIDOC Day in the Park, which was attended by 1,500 people, Wear it Purple Day on 31st August 2017 (support for the LGBTI community), a Pink Ribbon Breakfast on 27th October 2017 at which \$844 was raised for the Broken Hill Breast Cancer Support Group, a CLE trip to White Cliffs on 9th November 2017.

Law Reform Submission

On 10th May 2018 I presented an oral submission to a committee of the NSW, based on a paper prepared by our volunteer Sean Bowes and myself, on the need for a Drug and Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre in Broken Hill. The submission was well received, and although the final parliamentary recommendations have not yet been made, the research done by our Centre, Rachel Storey and the mayor, (the latter two of whom also gave presentations) should prove invaluable to our elected representatives, and is accessible on the parliamentary website for stakeholders and other interested parties.

Association with SHLV and WDV CAS

We continue to liaise with the excellent and experienced staff at our auspiced services Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Service and 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 the staff of both organisations for your professional service and friendly collaboration.

Jillian Heeley, Principal Solicitor

Some of the FWCLC Staff – left - Stacey Jackson Moroney, Bianca Cattonar and Simon Hunter Right - Mark Jongebloed,



Warra Warra Legal Service report

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 excellent work that has been done throughout the year within the Far West Region.

We continue to provide direct legal and non-direct legal prevention work, 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.

Community Legal Education and Law Reform

Warra Warra continues to provide legal education to community within Broken Hill and 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.

Highlights – Healing Day

Our Healing Day event was held on Tuesday the 13th of February 2018, it was run in conjunction with the 10th Anniversary of the Apology by Kevin Rudd to the Stolen Generation. It was a successful day with around 40 community and local organisational members in attendance.

Warra Warra also developed and launched a book to the community that was developed from funding received from the Healing Foundation. The book was produced with the above theme 'Heal our Past, Build our Future' in mind. Warra Warra interviewed five local Aboriginal men and women who talked about their experiences of being part of the Stolen Generation and how they have healed and continue to heal today. The books are now located across a number of community organisations so that all of community can access these books.

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 WDVCAS)

Warra Warra Manager Shannon Oates is seconded one day per week to assist WDVCAS 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 WDVCAS .

Love Bites

Solicitor, Emma Stewart and Social Worker Rebecca Deer were active members 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. Emma and Rebecca were involved in the facilitation of the program to Year 10 students at Broken Hill and Willyama High School in May 2018. 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.

NAIDOC

Warra Warra had a very active role again in NAIDOC week and for 2017 ran the film “Bran Nue Dae” at the Silver City Cinema which was free for community and gave everyone free popcorn and a drink. For 2018 Warra Warra has been the lead agency which resulted in a very successful NAIDOC week as well as the Fun Day at Sturt Park

Third Action Plan

As part of the 3rd Action Plan to reduce violence against women, Warra Warra was selected from the application process to take part in a pilot program that looks at different practices to combat gender based violence. WWLS is taking part in the victim support program and provided the funding to employ two social workers to provide a more holistic service to female clients. The benefits from the Third Action Plan to people in our region is that we will be recognized for the need to develop culturally appropriate policies, programs and primary prevention activities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and their children. The \$25 million package of additional measures will help our frontline service to intervene early

to prevent violence from occurring, while also addressing the drivers of violence in Indigenous communities.

The results of this plan for families facing family violence is that they will now get these vital services and a range of activities to keep all women safe from violence.

Community Working Party Meetings

Warra Warra attends CWP meetings on a regular basis. CWP Meetings are held in, Broken Hill, Ivanhoe, Menindee, Dareton and Wilcannia.

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 and the Broken Hill Correctional Centre are visited as required.

Warra Warra has provided extensive outreach this year and been involved heavily in communities. This year Warra Warra took part in a number of community events, such as the student Expo.

We Al-Li FVPLS Project Orientation Visit

Warra Warra Legal Service is a part of Family Violence Prevention Legal Services' (FVPLS) Training and Support Project which is run by We Al-Li.

We Al-Li has been contracted by Prime Minister and Cabinet to design, manage and deliver culturally and Trauma Informed Care Training and Support to the 14 Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services across Australia.

We Al-Li is community based and was established to develop a program and place for healing the individual, family and community dysfunction of family violence, and the pain of mind, body and spirit, resulting from violence and oppression. Its commitment to self-care is to provide support and offer opportunities for personal awareness, healing and skills development, to all members, ensuring continued professional skills development.

Warra Warra staff underwent the Trauma informed care and practice workshops earlier in 2018.

Warra Warra's Future

We are 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.

On a finishing note, we would also like to thank and wish our CEO Cathy Farry the very best for her new endeavors. Cathy has been very supportive of WWLS and I personally thank Cathy for her mentoring throughout this time. Farewell Cathy.

Shannon Oates, Manager.

Warra Warra Legal Report

Staffing

Emma Stewart was recruited as a solicitor and started work with effect from 8 November 2017. In February 2018 an indigenous Deakin University law student, Priscilla Liyanage, came on board as a part time paralegal and has helped the legal team immensely, particularly with document preparation for court

Statistics

No. of Clients: 152

Advices for this period were: 86

Cases opened: 78

Cases closed: 114

The case mix was made up of assistance with variations to apprehended domestic violence orders, family law matters (mainly parenting issues), child protection matters (for mothers whose children had been removed from them), victims services claims (clients mainly were injured in a relationship with domestic violence) and Stolen Generation claims (Aboriginal children removed from families by the Aboriginal Affairs Board before it was disbanded on 20 March 1969).

The cases that are most time/resource intensive are the child protection matters and timely resolutions are difficult to obtain. The NSW Stolen Generations Reparations Scheme came into effect from 1 July 2017. We assisted with applications for compensation. Many of the claimants had suffered trauma and abuse so it was considered appropriate to assist with their claims. It has led to an increased connection with and recognition by, older members of the communities and increased the goodwill towards our service in the communities. Those not eligible for the Scheme but who might have claims against the NSW government over their removal have been referred to a Sydney law firm Carroll & O'Dea for follow up.

Outreach / Projects

Thanks to Sophie and Ann Maree's donut making skills, the Warra Warra stall for the NAIDOC Day in the Park on 28 September 2017 was a huge hit.

We have a *pro bono* connection with a Sydney law firm, Ashursts, and with assistance from them we submitted representations to a NSW Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into Support for New Parents and Babies in NSW on 19th December 2017.

The removal of newborns alleged to be at risk from their mothers has become a live issue (as it happened to one of our clients) and we are networking with the other AFVPLS to develop a policy at national level to push for change and fund support for the mothers and babies so that removal is a last resort option.

In addition to scheduled appointments we have made an effort to see walk-in clients as well. Experience shows that they generally respond better to on-the-spot assistance rather than being deferred to a scheduled appointment time. This can interfere with existing work schedules and relies on the willingness of staff to be flexible and has been appreciated.

Summary

We continue to provide an essential service to the communities, we have co-ordinated well with the other legal services in town, both private and government- funded and have excellent working relationships with court staff and are appreciative of their assistance.

M. Leah Billeam, Principal Solicitor

Warra Warra Legal Service Social Work Program

Social Work at Warra Warra Legal Service began in October 2017. Rebecca Deer and Kelsey Lew were employed after the Service received funding under the 3rd Action Plan of the National Plan to reduce Family and Domestic Violence. Rebecca and Kelsey both completed their final year university placements in Broken Hill; Rebecca was placed at the Far West Community Legal Centre in 2017 and was employed by the service soon after completing her placement. Kelsey finished her placement at a local High School in 2016 and returned to Broken Hill to commence work with us in October 2017.

Social Work within this service brings a holistic approach to family violence working within a client centred model. As social workers within the organisation we hope to provide clients with the relevant social, emotional, therapeutic and practical support through care coordination and counselling.

With this in mind, since October 2017, social work has assisted with the following:

- 20 clients
- All female

- All identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Majority of clients have disclosed experiences of Domestic Violence
- 10 client files open providing case coordination and ongoing support
- 10 client files closed due to limited contact
- 9 clients located in the Broken Hill area, 1 in Wilcannia

Referrals are currently being accepted internally and externally. Client work is ongoing and works to build resilience, self-determination and empowerment with the community and individuals. Both Kelsey and Rebecca regularly attend outreach to Dareton, Wentworth, Wilcannia and Menindee; here they provide support to solicitors as well as visit their own clients.

Currently, the Social Workers are assisting with applications to the Victim Support Scheme as well as the Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme. There are currently:

- 4 Stolen Generations Reparation Scheme applications
- 1 Victim Support Scheme application

As well as client work, Kelsey and Rebecca have been very busy with community development work. They have attended the following events in a community development capacity:

- Ivanhoe Services Roadshow
- Youth Services Expo (Broken Hill and Willyama High School)
- Love Bites (Broken Hill and Willyama High School)
- 123 Kids Hub on a fortnightly basis

At the beginning of June, Kelsey and Rebecca completed filming for a Warra Warra Legal Service NAIDOC 2018 video project. The video was filmed with a focus on the 2018 NAIDOC theme 'because of her, we can'. With this in mind, schools in Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Menindee were asked to select students to feature in the film – over 60 students were interviewed throughout the week. Each student speaks for approximately 1 minute about their female role model and why this person is special to them. The video will be showcased at the 2018 NAIDOC Day in the Park in October.

Kelsey and Rebecca, along with Mariah Goldsworthy from the Broken Hill University Department of Rural Health, as well as Far West Community Legal Centre Social Work Student Francesca Szakaly, have been delivering the DRUMBEAT program to students at Wilcannia Central School. The program runs for 10 weeks and is an evidence-based social and emotional learning program that focuses on social connection through teamwork. The program is proven to build resilience in children, young people and adults, showing measureable changes in social behaviour. We hope to continue delivering the program throughout 2018 in a number of different settings.

Kelsey and Rebecca have also attended the following:

- Trauma, the Brain & Biology: Foundations & Treatment of Trauma : Bessel van der Kolk – Sydney, December 2017
- Narrative Therapy Level 1 Intensive – Adelaide, February 2018
- Love Bites – Dareton, April 2018 (Rebecca only)
- DRUMBEAT – Broken Hill, April 2018 (Kelsey only)
- Sexual Assault Communication Privilege Workshop – Broken Hill, May 2018
- We Al Li Trauma Workshop – Broken Hill, March and May 2018
- Victim Support Scheme Training Workshop – Broken Hill, May 2018

Kelsey Lew and Rebecca Deer, Social Workers WWLS



WWLS staff – from left Leah Billeam, Kelsey Lew, Ann-Maree Payne, Prue Sulicich, Rebecca Deer, Emma Stewart, Shannon Oates, Priscilla Liyanage

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.

From the period July 1st, 2017 to June 30th, 2018 the Local Coordination Point received 1124 referrals through the Central Referral Point. With all these referrals we attempted first contact within 24 hours with three attempts needing to be made within a 5 working day period. Clients are then referred to the appropriate services as requested. Those clients who we do not contact are either sent to the Police for a welfare check to be conducted or a service letter and brochure pack is sent to them, this depends on the severity of the incident and whether they are deemed to be at "threat" or at "serious threat".

All clients who are at "serious threat" are then taken to the Safety Action Meeting.

Far West WDVCS has serviced 565 clients in this reporting period. These numbers have exceeded our benchmarks and show the continued commitment and dedication of the WDVCS team. Many of the clients we have supported through the court processes, given phone advice or at times just offered a much needed "ear" to listen.

FWWDVCAS continue to be present at each of the Courts that are covered by our Police district, we cover the Wilcannia court on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and attend Wentworth court on the first full week of each month. We are always visible and present at the Broken Hill court on AVO list days and as required for hearings.

As per our Service Agreement with Legal Aid, we have two seconded workers on our Court roster and they are the same as the previous reporting period, Shannon Oates from Warra Warra Legal Service and Libby Mathias from Staying Home Leaving Violence.

By being involved in community events the FWWDVCAS believe that we raise the profile of our service in the community, but we are also sending the message that Domestic Violence is not acceptable, so when possible, we will always participate.

The FWWDVCAS have continued to work hard to fulfil their obligations to Legal Aid NSW. All FWWDVCAS staff are up to date with any training. The Coordinators also fulfil any reporting and other obligations that are required.

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

Below WDV CAS staff from left: Melissa Hickey, Loretta Stuart, Narelle Blows, Sandra Uhl and Racheal Murphy



Staying Home and Leaving Violence Broken Hill Report

“It takes courage to seek help, move away from the familiar and trust strangers with your story, your fears and your hopes for the future.” – Moya Sayer-Jones

There’s more to DV than these four words “Did he hit you?” It’s a question that gets asked again and again.

“Because I wasn’t actually physically assaulted by my partner, it was like my experience was less legitimate...People just expected me to get over it”. – Kelly

Violence against women and their children is a prevalent, serious and preventable human rights abuse. One woman a week is murdered by a current or former partner and thousands more are injured or made to live in fear. The social, health and economic costs of violence against women are enormous. Preventing such violence is a matter of national urgency, and can only be achieved if we all work together.

2017 – 18 have seen immense change again at SHLVBH. It’s been a largely positive and productive year with lots of focus on the vital work we do in our community with limited funding and staff. Throughout the year, SHLVBH have worked closely with government and non-government organizations to advocate for the diverse needs of women and children impacted by domestic and family violence and for appropriate, well-resourced support options that will guarantee gender and cultural safety for the most vulnerable people in our community.

Some of the major highlights for Staying Home Leaving Violence in 2017-18 include:

- Introduction of the new data base CIMS –Client Information Management System
- 4 day ECAV (Education Centre against Violence) training - Skills in working with male family violence
- 2 day Technology Safety Summit – Intersection between technology and violence against women and on issues related to technology, privacy, security, women and safety.
- Fiona completing a Diploma of Aboriginal Studies for Professional and Community Practice and Certificate IV in Business (Governance)

SHLVBH strives to maintain its involvement in community events such as Purple Ribbon Day, White Ribbon Day, Wear It Purple, Red Rose Day, Homeless Day and NAIDOC Day.

Unfortunately this year SHLV involvement in the delivery of the Love Bites program into the high schools was limited due to other SHLV commitments and limited staff.

We are always amazed by the kind support by the community and local businesses; donations from the Lions and Quota Clubs, EZY Projects and our major supporter Broken Hill Musicians Club. Throughout the year we distribute your gifts and donations to our clients. Many women and children arrive at our service with nothing but their clothes. SHLV staff were able to give them toiletry packs, clothes, shoes, pillows, blankets and some of the very basic necessities that families need to start again after trauma and keep them safe in their own homes.

Last financial year SHLV worked with 81 women, 262 children and provided information and referrals to 99 people. From the 1st July 2018 till the beginning of September 2018, we are currently working with 27 women, 61 children and have provided referrals and information to 17 people. Looks like busy times ahead for SHLVBH.....

Lastly I would like to bid Libby Matthias farewell as she heads off at the end of the year to move to the east coast. We wish Libby the best and thank her for her dedication and hard work.

Fiona Camilleri, Coordinator



SHLV staff - Heidi Ogden, Fiona Camilleri and Libby Matthias

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 2017/2018 financial year the role of CLSD Far West Regional Coordinator has been filled by Simon Hunter. This has provided the CLSD program with stability and some significant outcomes.

The third of the quarterly CLSD meetings for 2017 was held in September 2017 and Louise Heffernan from Centacare was the guest speaker who provided an update on the proposal to have a Child Contact Centre set up in Broken Hill.

The fourth CLSD meeting for 2017 was changed to be a Planning Day as the last plan was out of date. The day was hosted by Jenny Lovric, CLSD Program Manager, and Polly Porteous, CEO of Community Legal Centres NSW at the Musicians Club in Broken Hill. It was very well attended with a high number of services having a representative being in attendance.

In December Simon travelled to Sydney for a one day CLSD Regional Coordinator meeting where each coordinator was required to give a short presentation (around 5 minutes, followed by questions and comments for 5 or so minutes) about a CLSD Program project from their region. Simon chose the criminal law clinic as other coordinators may want to adopt the project for use in their region.

The first CLSD meeting for 2018 was held in March and the main aim was to work through the action plan that was devised from the planning day to turn the plan from draft to ready.

In May, Simon travelled to Ivanhoe as part of the Road Show organised by the FWCLC. Mission Australia, WWLS, Legal Aid, NSW Health and Ability Links was also involved with the main aim of the Road Show being to attend remote areas that do not have easy access to or even awareness of the range of services that are available to them. To make sure we got the most visibility we provided a barbecue lunch after the local school did a production as this brought in families who might not otherwise attend.

The second CLSD meeting was held on the 14th June and was convened by Jenny Lovric. The guest speakers were Lizette Twisleton from No to Violence to speak about future men's behaviour change programs planned for Broken Hill and John Dunn from WATAAS to talk about tenancy matters and to let us know that WATAAS is now attending the tenant tribunals.

Simon attended the annual CLSD Regional Coordinators meeting that was held in Sydney at the very end of June for two days. The meeting focused on the development of action plans for all of the regions that run the program.

Free Legal Information Sessions

An outcome of the June 2017 CLSD meeting was FWCLC and WWLS decided to collaborate together to present legal information sessions to the general public. It was decided to run the sessions on the first Monday night of each month until the end of 2017. The location chosen was the Lifeline training room due to main street location and joint presenters included the NDIS, Warra Warra Legal Service, Lifeline and WDVCS. Four sessions were conducted which covered the areas of domestic violence, victim's compensation and family law; the second was about the NDIS and wills, powers of attorney and enduring guardianship. The third was about gambling and bankruptcy and the fourth covered Apprehended Violence Orders, employment law and the disability support pension.

Free Criminal Law Advice Clinic

During the March 2017 CLSD meeting one of the unmet legal needs identified was that non-Aboriginal people with a criminal law matter had very limited options locally to get free assistance. Aboriginal people were able to use ALS for assistance in criminal law matters but non-aboriginal people would have to see a private solicitor for advice which is quite expensive and not everyone can afford this. To assist people the FWCLC collaborated with Legal Aid to provide free criminal law advice clinics on Wednesday afternoons. This works by clients coming into the FWCLC and speaking to a Legal Aid criminal law solicitor who is based in Sydney on the phone. The number of clients has been consistent through the entire 2017/2018 financial year and the clinic is too continue to be provided to the community members of Broken Hill.

Victims Support Service (VSS) Training

After over a year of planning and false starts in May 2018 a VSS training session was administered by Mari Vagg from Women's Legal Service. The wait was worth it as from the people that attended said it was one of the best training sessions that they had attended. The training was offered to all community workers in Broken Hill with a beginners session for the people who had no experience and a session that was more complex to cater for the people who had experience with VSS and wanted to learn more. The two sessions were completed in one day with a morning session and an afternoon session.

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, Matt Sier acts as a Duty Solicitor at the Local Court and takes carriage of any relevant traffic matters where defendants would benefit from legal representation.

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.

After approximately 3 years in operation unfortunately the traffic project finished up at the end of June 2018 as the aim of CLSD is to fund projects and not a program which the traffic project turned into. As this project was very successful it has been planned to apply for more funding so that this project can then be run as part of an additional service that the FWCLC provides to the community of Broken Hill.

Future Projects

A fines/bills day has been planned to occur in the second half of 2018. The locations to be covered are Menindee, Broken Hill and Wilcannia.

Overall it has been an exciting year for CLSD with new projects, training sessions and some amazing guest speakers. Whilst there have been challenges to overcome during the year, this made it all that much more rewarding when these challenges were met head on and passed. With the amount of ideas for the future the next year for the CLSD program is looking to be another blockbuster and we can't wait.

SIMON HUNTER

Far West CLSD Regional Coordinator



Financial Reports

Far West Community Legal Centre

We ended the financial year with a deficit of \$59,153.20 due staff entitlements and Long service leave and also to staff payouts in this financial year.

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

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 30/06/2018.

ICare provides the Service's 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 \$1,554.84. The surplus money from 15-16 was return to CLSD in September 2017. This year the program had a deficit of \$3,771.65 owing to the return of same.

Far West Women's Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service

The core funding has been expended and the service has ended the year with a surplus of \$13,015.32 which has been put aside to cover the cost of the Tender. 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 30/06/2018.

Local Coordination Point (LCP)

Core funding has been received from Legal Aid NSW. This service was in surplus of \$61,673.61 for 16/17 financial year. \$34,971.00 was returned to Legal Aid in December 2017 and thus put LCP in deficit of \$37,252.16 this financial year.

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 30/06/2018.

Staying Home Leaving Violence Broken Hill

This service has run at a surplus of \$463.92. This service has received extra commonwealth funding which is in surplus of \$9,382.48.

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 30/06/2018.

Bianca Cattonar, Finance Officer for FWCLC, FWWDVCAS, SHLVBH, CLSD

Warra Warra Legal Service

The financial year of 2017-18 has been a busy year financially. Warra Warra has received different sources of funding throughout the year to support various events and it is the first year to of using the Third Action Plan funding which was provided in the last quarter of 2016-17. Warra Warra continues to meet all financial reporting obligations with the funding body and the Australian taxation department. We ended last year with a surplus and will also end this year with a surplus amount which we have requested to roll over. Overall, the financial health of Warra Warra is strong and we are using all funds within the agreement laid out by the funding body.

Warra Warra Legal Service Funding

Warra Warra in 2016/2017 ended with a surplus and applied to roll over these funds to be used in the 2017/2018 year. The acquittal showed an amount of \$412430.36 unexpended from the year. Only \$401430.36 was approved for roll over into the 17/18 year with \$10600.36 to be offset against this years funding. In the funding approved for carry over, the following was approved for expenditure;

- \$343677.00 Early milestone payment to provide services in 2017-18
- \$21000.00 to employ a third solicitor
- \$19153.00 for salary adjustments
- \$18000.00 to upgrade the server

A total of \$58153.00 was approved, excluding the early milestone payment.

This year we have also been advised the WWLS funding will continue until June 2020.

Third Action Plan Funding

This year we were able to begin using the funds supplied by Prime Minister and Cabinet 2016-17 for the Third Action Plan. This plan is part of the government initiative to reduce violence against women and their children.

We received \$130000 in 2016-17 and only used \$6001.22 to begin the process of hiring and setting up this program. The remaining amount of \$123998.78 was approved for roll over to the 2017-18 year to provide this service.

The TAP will end the year with a surplus. This is due to not employing Rebecca and Kelsey until November and because it took some time to find their feet and distinguish their outcomes and programs, all of the funds were not expended by June 30th. We have requested to roll over the estimated \$93000.00 for the following;

- On-going wages \$60000.00
- Purchase of drums for Drumbeat program \$3500.00
- Intergenerational book \$2500.00
- Language DV resource \$4000.00
- Vehicle Purchase \$23000.00-\$29500.00

Greater detail on these requests can be found in more detail from the Finance team.

All funds have been expended correctly under the guidelines of the funding agreement.

Other funding grants

In this year WWLS has received the following extra funds from other funding sources.

- \$2000.00 was received from Gureglam Corp Ltd. as a General Capacity Building grant, which paid for Shannon Oates and Cathy Farry to attend workshops on the Third Action Plan. \$1504.98 was expended from this grant.
- \$1000.00 was received from NSW Family and Community Services to fund NSW Grandparents day.
- \$700.00 was received from The Healing foundation and this went towards hosting an event marking the 10 year anniversary of the apology given by Keven Rudd.

- \$1000.00 funding was granted to WWLS from Prime Minister and Cabinet as a contribution to NAIDOC week events. WWLS as per the last two years, opened the week with a free cinema event where we screened Rabbit Proof Fence to all members of the community and gave out free popcorn, drinks and raffle tickets for a door raffle. All funds were expended by 30 June 2018.
- \$6000 was also provided by Prime Minister and Cabinet (\$3000) and NSW Department of Education (\$3000) to use towards the upcoming NAIDOC in the park event which will be held in October 2018. Funds remain unspent to date.

Conclusion

As outlined above, Warra Warra has had a busy year with many events and programs on top of its usual service. The addition of the Third Action Plan has been a great benefit to Warra Warra's service delivery on not only its own programs but for the primary service of WWLS. All financial obligations have been met, with all Business Activity Statements and Instalment Activity statements submitted and paid as has the Superannuation for the entire year. Payment summaries were completed and handed out in a timely manner and all bills and expenses up to date. The acquittal is continuous and the audited reports will be submitted to the funding body by 30th September. Once this is complete WWLS and TAP will know if they have a surplus and what has been approved to carry forward.

I would just like to thank the team at Warra for another successful year and look forward to another year ahead

Prue Sulcich, Finance Officer WWLS

