

Pro bono university lawyers help underpaid workers

Marrickville Legal Centre (MLC) are proud to announce a new pro bono partnership program with Australian Catholic University (ACU) that is helping workers seek justice.

The COVID-19 economic downturn and anticipated impact of the JobKeeper wage subsidy ending has put great pressure on vulnerable individuals for whom underpayment of wages and entitlements is a palpable threat.

ACU's Office of General Counsel has stepped forward to work with MLC's Employment Law Service to provide free legal advice to clients facing disadvantage related to their employment.

The pro bono partnership will work to achieve this at a fortnightly Underpayments Advice Clinic, Fridays 10am-1pm.

Jack Ding and Kieran Ryan from ACU's in-house legal team will take time from their regularly programmed work to assist MLC and the Migrant Employment Legal Service, run by MLC conjointly with Inner City Legal Centre, Kingsford Legal Centre and Redfern Legal Centre.

"This pro bono work will help us flex certain professional skills that we wouldn't doing daily in our work as corporate lawyers such as speaking to individual everyday clients and working on social justice matters," says ACU senior legal counsel Jack Ding. "It gives us real perspective."

MLC and ACU share an interest in reducing the economic, procedural and administrative barriers vulnerable workers experience in accessing justice by addressing unfair dismissal, general protections and anti-bullying applications lodged with the Fair Work Commission in New South Wales.

MLC employment solicitor Lucy Carroll says the support from ACU will help to relieve the consistently high demand for advice on employment matters at MLC.

"It's exciting", says Ms Carroll, "The partnership means we can see more clients. Underpayments are complex. Generally we are limited in how many we can assist with each week. This clinic will allow us to reach more vulnerable workers."

"Pro bono assistance allows Marrickville Legal Centre to increase capacity to deliver services to our community at a time when Jobseeker and work conditions have been heavily impacted by COVID-19".

Do you need free legal help? Make an appointment with an employment lawyer call 02 9559 2899 or [submit a web enquiry](#).

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