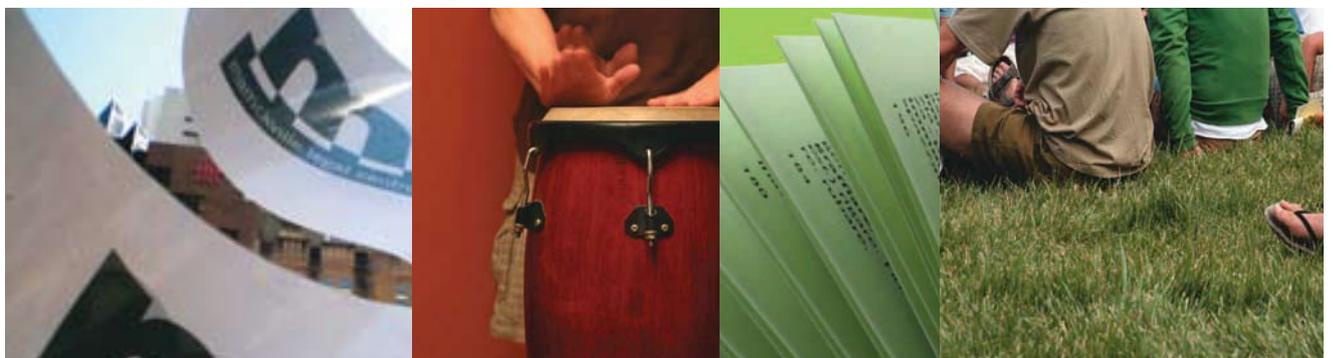




MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE



Marrickville Legal Centre ANNUAL REPORT 2006-07

**General Legal Service
Inner West Tenancy Service
Children's Legal Service
Newtown Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme**



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Generous support: Unibind

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Chairperson's Report

The current Directors of the Board of Management were elected unopposed at the 2006 AGM. I was elected Chair. The Board that had managed the Centre for the previous few years had reduced to three Directors and there was an increasing workload as staff dealt with a number of managerial issues. The status of the Enterprise Agreement had become topical as its expiry approached, and staff had raised a number of points that would require negotiation. A dispute had arisen over one matter and that subsequently went to the initial stage in the NSW Industrial Commission. There was also staff turnover in some key positions including the Coordinator and Financial Officer.

Against that background, the new Board took up negotiations with staff and settled the matter in dispute, and has overseen the selection process for filling of new positions. Emma Keir was appointed Principal Solicitor and is currently on secondment to Law Access and is relieved by Andrew Taylor whose experience has assisted across the Centre's roles. Lisa Woodgate relieved as Coordinator across the period and is now taking up the permanent position of solicitor in the general legal service.

Staff have seen their suggestions for major strategic change implementation taken up, and the structure of the Centre has altered along those lines. Financial management of the Centre has been very sound, and for the current financial year, the 10% levy on the FBT benefit has been removed. Staff can take much credit for their input and efforts to reach this stage.

I don't know if there is any connection, but the major problems with the plumbing system at the Centre (necessitating partial closure, loss of facilities and great pressure on staff over a long period) coincided with my own health problems in late April 2007. From that date onward until September 2007 I was virtually a non-functioning member of the Board and I must thank every Board member, plus staff, for running the whole show. Most especially among many, Nick Yetzotis. It is significant that things ran better without me! And I was able to watch the email system to confirm that. I have some ongoing health problems and will seek my fellow Directors views shortly.

My thanks to all staff, volunteers and Directors for coming to the aid of the Centre and keeping its significant name and history intact.

John Gooley
Chairperson, MLC Board

MLC Board 2006/2007

Board Members 2006/2007

Dianne Anagnos
Appointed: 16 October 2006

Kristian Bolwell
Appointed: 16 October 2006

William Dermody
Appointed: 16 October 2006

John Michael Gooley (Chair)
Appointed: 16 October 2006

Colin Hesse
Appointed: 16 October 2006
Ceased: 7 March 2007

Janet Loughman
Appointed: 16 October 2006

Patricia McDonough
Appointed: 16 October 2006

Julie Venamore
Appointed: 16 October 2006
Ceased: 2 April 2007

Nick Yetzotis (Secretary)
Appointed: 16 October 2006

James Koulouris (Chair)
Appointed: 2 November 1998
Ceased: 16 October 2006

Hannah Sophia Robert
Appointed: 6 December 2004
Ceased: 28 September 2006

Noel Patrick O'Keeffe
Appointed: 24 October 2005
Ceased: 16 October 2006



Coordinator's Report

Marrickville Legal Centre has been operating for 28 years, and for 13 of those years it has been at its current location. Since the Centre started, the number of people seeking assistance at the Centre has increased each year. The Centre's central location and reputation among the community means that there are a high number of word of mouth referrals and drop in clients at the Centre.

2006/2007 was an extremely busy period for the Centre, and this is reflected in the activities covered in the individual team reports. Each team has worked hard to attain a high level of achievement over the 2006/2007 year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the staff at the Centre for their hard work, enthusiasm and commitment to the Centre. I would also like to thank all of our volunteers for their valuable contribution to the work of the Centre. In particular, I wish to thank the current Board members for their dedication and commitment, and volunteering to undertake many additional duties during this period.

Board Members

For the period 1 July 2006 to 16 October 2006, James Koulouris (Chair), Noel O'Keeffe, Hannah Robert (until 28 September 2006), and Natalie Silver were on the management committee.

All Board members stood down at or before the Annual General Meeting in October 2006. At the Annual General Meeting the following Board members were elected unopposed: John Gooley (Chair), Nick Yetzotis (Secretary), Dianne Anagnos, Kristian Bolwell, William Dermody, Colin Hesse (until 7 March 2007), Janet Loughman, Pat McDonough, and Julie Venamore (until 2 April 2007).

Thanks to Elaine Fishwick for rising to the occasion, and chairing the 2005/2006 Annual General Meeting, held on 16 October 2006.

Marrickville Legal Centre Catchment area profile

Marrickville Legal Centre covers a catchment area that includes 13 Local Government Areas within the Sydney metropolitan area. The release of the 2006 Census data provided up to date population statistics and reflects some trends within the Centre's catchment area. The data reveals that:

- The total population of the catchment area is 1,078,158 people;
- The population within the Marrickville Legal Centre catchment increased by 20,000 people since the previous census;
- People from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds make up 40.5% of the population within the catchment area; and
- A significant proportion of the population within the catchment area is on a low income. 42.3% earn a weekly income of \$599 or less. (NB. current Centrelink rates: unemployment benefit is \$424.30 per fortnight, and disability or aged pension is \$525.10 per fortnight).

The data in relation to the youth population within the catchment area are particularly significant:

- Over 25% of the total number of young people (under 18 years old) in New South Wales, reside in the Marrickville catchment area;
- 440,771 of the catchment population are children and young people under the age of 18 years old, that is 40.9%; and
- A further 101,424 people are aged between 18 and 24 years old (9.7%);
- Overall, the youth population aged 24 years old or younger comprises of 545,192 people, that is over 50% of the total population of the catchment area:

This information provides a valuable insight into the population demographic within the Centre's catchment area, and assists the Centre to undertake appropriate strategic planning. The census data also provides relevant empirical evidence to support the Centre's client statistics that show a continuing high demand for the services provided at the Centre to CALD, low income, and disadvantaged clients.

General Legal Service

During 2006/2007 the General Legal Service (GLS) provided legal advice to clients on 1184 occasions. The demand for evening appointments for legal advice continued to be high. Employment, motor vehicles (criminal & civil matters), family law (children), credit and debt, consumer complaints and injuries compensation ranked as the top legal matters during 2006/2007.

The 2006 census data shows that 42.3% of people in the catchment area earn an income of \$31,148 per annum or less. This represents 456,257 people who may experience problems with access to private legal services and thus may require assistance at the Centre. In addition, 436,519 people (40.49% of the population) in the catchment area are from a CALD background. These figures are indicative of the high number of CALD clients who attend the Centre, and the correspondingly high number of interpreters required to assist at the Centre.

In accordance with the strategic plan:

- The Centre ensured that priority was given to providing legal services to marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The Centre's client statistics closely reflect the demographic make up of the Centre's catchment area;
- The GLS undertook extensive casework during 2006/2007;
- GLS team members delivered community legal education sessions within the community;
- The GLS engaged in policy and law reform in response to issues arising from casework;

The GLS conducted outreach sessions at St George Migrant Resource Centre, which provided access to legal advice for residents of the St George area who experience disadvantage. This successful service was made possible by the receipt of funds obtained by St George Migrant Resource Centre under the Clubs Grants Scheme.

- The Centre conducted regular daytime appointments for advice on domestic violence, sexual assault and victims compensation. Some appointments were made available during the day for those clients who would not otherwise be able to attend the evening advice service (eg elderly, disabled, shift workers or carers).

Throughout the year, the GLS conducted evening advice sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. These sessions were frequently booked out. Family law appointments were consistently fully booked, and demand was high for employment appointments. The evening advice sessions relied on the valuable contribution made by the evening volunteer solicitors and assistants, who provided a wonderful service to the Centre's clients.

Thanks to all the evening volunteers for giving their time and expertise at evening advice sessions, especially the family law and employment volunteers, and a heart felt thanks to all the long term volunteers.

There were some changes to the

composition of the GLS team this year:

- In October 2006, Emma Keir was permanently appointed as Principal Solicitor. Emma had been in the role of Principal Solicitor on a locum basis since the beginning of 2006. Prior to that, Emma had been working at the Centre as a locum solicitor since January 2005. During this time, Emma made a valuable contribution to the effective operation of the legal practice and she was also actively involved promoting and expanding the services of the Centre. Since May 2007, Emma has been on 12 months leave to take up a supervisory role at Law Access;
- In June 2007, Andrew Taylor took up the role of locum Principal Solicitor, bringing with him a wealth of experience from his time as Principal Solicitor at Macarthur Legal Centre;
- In March 2007, Lisa Woodgate was appointed to the position of generalist solicitor, and she has been seconded to the role of Coordinator at the Centre;
- We were lucky to have Megan Cameron as locum generalist solicitor from December 2006. Megan is an experienced employment solicitor and was a great asset to the Centre, particularly given the number of employment related matters handled by the GLS;
- Margie Martin continues in the role of part time solicitor, after taking leave during 2006. Margie has been with the GLS since 2000, and her depth of experience and calm manner ensure that she is a valued member of the legal team; and
- While Margie was on leave, Jo Kwan kindly stepped in to fill the part time solicitor role.
- During 2007, Emma and Margie successfully negotiated the establishment of a Corrs Chambers Westgarth Lawyers solicitor secondment at the Centre. We look forward to Monali Pandey commencing in July 2007.

During 2006/2007, clients of the Centre received assistance through the pro bono programs conducted

by a number of private firms. This pro bono support was greatly appreciated. Thanks to all the firms who have participated by providing pro bono assistance during this period.

Mention should be made here of the Law student paralegal volunteers who have been rostered on during 2006/2007: Jane Taylor, Gemma Lardner, Andrew Terrett, Trieste Corby and Anya Poukchanski.

Children's Legal Service

The Children's Legal Service (CLS) is a specialist children's legal practice that operates a state-wide service for children and young people under 18 years old throughout New South Wales.

Overall, 28% of the total number of young people (under 18 years old) in New South Wales reside in the Marrickville Legal Centre catchment area. This represents a significant client base of young people living within the Centre's catchment area. While the CLS endeavours to provide a comprehensive service to young people throughout New South Wales, at times due to funding constraints, the scope of some particular services are limited to the Sydney metropolitan area.

During 2006/2007 Julianne Elliott continued in the role of Children's Solicitor. Emma Keir also undertook matters within the CLS.

Julianne Elliott was the Children's Solicitor for the CLS for just over 2 years. During this time, Julianne made a huge contribution to the profile and work of the CLS. In addition to managing a large caseload, Julianne was particularly active in the areas of law reform and policy work. She undertook community legal education and outreach with young people and community workers. Through her extensive networking Julianne established positive contacts with young people and youth services. Julianne left the service in late June 2007 to spend more time with her young family.

The CLS continued to play an active

role in the area of law reform and policy work, through its involvement with the National Youth Advocacy Network and the Youth Justice Coalition, which has included continuing involvement in the Children in Detention Advocacy Project launched by PIAC. The CLS has also participated in media campaigns including a series of radio interviews in relation to youth justice issues. The CLS has been active in contributing submissions to a number of law reform programs.

The Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) operated under the auspices of Marrickville Legal Centre. Emma Keir and Julianne Elliott acted as convenors for the YJC during 2006/2007. The YJC is a network that works to promote the rights of children and young people in NSW, and during 2006/2007 the YJC undertook a series of major law reform and policy activities.

The CLS provided valuable advice and legal representation for children and young people under the age of 18. Clients of the CLS experienced a range of legal problems. The most common legal issues arising for young people were in relation to fines and victims compensation.

In September 2006, a designated team of CLS law student volunteer paralegals was established to provide assistance to the CLS. These students undertook a range of paralegal, research, law reform and campaign tasks, and assisted at outreach and community legal education. During 2006/2007, the following students were paralegals for the CLS: Bianca Tighe, Amy Knibbs, Alice Yan, Jodie Miller, Adele Veness, Edward Chee, Kit Yap and Andrew Terrett.

Special thanks to Carmine Santone, Pat McDonough, Sharron Norton and Anne Healey for their contributions to the CLS during this year.

Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme

In this reporting period the Newtown DVCAS passed two important milestones:

- In August 2006, it was 10 years



Marrickville Festival stall

since the Service's inception; and

- In January 2007, the Service celebrated 10 years since it started operating at Newtown Court.

Crime statistics for the Marrickville Local Government Area (LGA) show that the number of domestic violence related assaults increased during 2006/2007. In 2005/2006 the Marrickville LGA was ranked at 49 in the state, and 6 in the Sydney metropolitan area, for the number of domestic violence assaults reported on a per capita basis. For the period 2006/2007, the Marrickville LGA ranking increased to 39 in New South Wales and 5 in the Sydney metropolitan area. [source Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research 2007 and sew07-5916].

Overall, these statistics show that number of domestic violence related assaults reported to police increased. The statistics highlight the fact that the Marrickville LGA is an area of concern in relation to the prevalence of domestic violence.

This year, the number of clients assisted by the Newtown DVCAS increased. Additionally, there were an increased average number of contacts recorded in relation to each individual client. The Service identified an increase in contacts with individual clients presenting with complex matters, and special needs clients assisted by the Service during this period.

In accordance with the Centre's legal practice requirements, the Service maintained client files and detailed case notes, and provided each individual client with written confirmation of the proceedings, the orders made and referrals.

Lee Taylor has again attained a high level of success in her role as Coordinator of the Newtown WDVCS. She has played a key role in promoting the services of the scheme in key areas. Lee undertook a number of activities during 2006/2007. Highlights included:

- Organising a training and information day for probationary constables at Marrickville Police Station;

- Stop Domestic Violence Day; and
- Organising the Centre's Law for Community Workers workshop on changes to AVO legislation, which was booked out;
- Undertaking community legal education session at St George TAFE for Community Services (Welfare) students.

Lee was instrumental in fostering positive working relationships between the Court staff and the police DVLOs, and promoting the recruitment, support and training of seconded workers from local services, and investigating new initiatives for the Scheme.

Currently, Lee is investigating establishing a DVCAS at Balmain Court. We hope that funding will become available to start a pilot court assistance scheme at Balmain Court in 2007/2008.

During 2006/2007, Toni Brown achieved considerable success in her role as CALD Access Worker. During the reporting period the number of CALD clients using the Scheme increased. Toni was involved in a number of key projects during this period, such as the Abuse In Anyone's Culture Forum held in May 2007. Toni also undertook a number of external Community Legal Education (CLE) sessions, including a domestic violence and family law CLE for women from the local Vietnamese community, and a women- only focus group on domestic violence for women from African communities.

In addition, Toni was involved with writing key submissions. These include:

- Submissions made on behalf of the Family Law Forum to the NSW Inquiry into the impact of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006 Cth;
- NSW WDVCS Network submission to the NSW State Plan; and
- A submission to Legal Aid in relation to CALD Specialist Workers.

Lee and Toni achieved a great deal during 2006/2007. Given that both are part time workers, the scope of their achievements during this period highlights their ability to multitask and their personal commitment to the Scheme. Maria, as Information and Referral Officer, also played a key role in assisting domestic violence clients and undertaking administrative tasks for the scheme.

Special thanks to the all the student volunteer paralegals who have assisted DVCAS during 2006/2007: Anna Payton, Renae Carter, Clare Dahlstrom, Heather McIntyre, Theresa Pan and Kit Yap.

Inner West Tenancy Service

The tenancy team provided a comprehensive service to tenants within the Inner West Tenancy Service catchment area. The 2006 census data shows that there are 33,724 households that rent within the catchment area, comprised of 31,282 private rental households and 2,376 public housing households. Throughout the year, the tenancy team worked hard to provide assistance to individual clients, undertake community legal education on tenancy issues, conduct outreach, regularly network with community organisations, and liaise with the media in relation to tenancy matters.

During 2006/2007, the Inner West tenancy service continued to be very busy. The service assisted 1453 clients in relation to a range of tenancy issues. We estimate that 40% of callers to the Centre are calling on tenancy related matters. Services provided by the tenancy service included:

- The provision of tenancy advice;
- Assistance with preparation for matters in the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) for all clients within the catchment area;
- Extended casework assistance with self advocacy, advocacy, and representation in the CTTT for disadvantaged clients.

During this period, the Service assisted 689 clients who were born overseas.

This represents a 63.42% increase in the number of CALD clients assisted.

The service represented tenants at the CTTT on 104 occasions. This was a 75% increase in the number of occasions the service attended the CTTT on behalf of clients. The majority of the clients assisted at the CTTT were disadvantaged. Many of these clients required a high level of assistance and support in order to resolve their tenancy matters.

The Service also participated in the Duty Advocacy program at the Sydney CTTT, which was introduced in April 2006. The Duty Advocacy program provided a valuable service to tenants attending the Tribunal, particularly unrepresented CALD clients and other disadvantaged clients. Staff of the Service attended the CTTT as duty advocates on 22 occasions during 2006/2007.

During 2006/2007, the number of clients requiring assistance with rental increases and evictions due to mortgagee repossessions increased.

The service continued to have a significant number of clients who were elderly long term tenants, who did not meet the protected tenancy criteria, and who faced eviction or large rental increases as a result of the sale or redevelopment of properties. Unfortunately, these situations all too frequently arise when the owner goes into a nursing home or dies, and other family members take over the property.

Throughout 2006/2007, the service continued to conduct regular community tenancy information sessions. In addition, the Centre ran "Law for Community Workers", a series of community workshops held every 6 months. The Law for Community Workers tenancy workshops provided an important introduction to tenancy matters and were well attended by community organisations and new community workers within the catchment area.

During the period 2005 to 2007, the service has undertaken extensive community education sessions and as a result it has largely saturated the market for community education on tenancy matters within the

catchment area. The Service is currently investigating other avenues for undertaking community education programs.

Thanks to the law student volunteers who are part of the roster for the Tenants' Union Hotline, which operates at the Centre on a weekly basis.

Administration

2006/2007 has proved to be another busy period for the administrative team. The client statistics once again show the high demand for the appointments, information, and referrals that are provided by Maria and the front desk student volunteers.

Maria celebrated 10 years at the Centre in August 2006. During this time Maria has made a major contribution to the running of the Centre.

The Administrative team worked effectively and efficiently to ensure that the administrative, financial and reporting functions of the Centre were carried out successfully.

In August 2006, Cecilia Urbina left the Centre after 6 years in the role of Financial Administrator. Cecilia will always be remembered for her great organisational skills and financial acumen. In the subsequent period, the Centre utilised the services of accountants from an agency to undertake the Centre's financial administration.

I would like to thank Lee Taylor for all the work she undertook in the role as Finance Assistant during this year, and our accountants Sharon Johnson and Anna Petrsek. Thanks must also go to Sandra Grollmus, the Centre's auditor, for her work during the 2006/2007 financial year, and for agreeing to continue on as auditor.

Combined Group and National Association

Marrickville was involved with the NSW Combined Legal Centres Group. In February 2007, Lisa Woodgate became a co-convenor of the Administrators

Group. Julianne Elliott was active with the Care & Protection sub committee. The Centre continued to be well represented at quarterly meetings.

Inner Sydney Group

The Inner Sydney Group, which included Marrickville, Redfern, Inner City and Kingsford Legal Centres, met on a regular basis. Lisa Woodgate was the Centre's representative on this group. The group was very active throughout 2006/2007. It organised a series of community legal education forums for volunteer solicitors and students and undertook other projects and activities.

Access and Equity

Marrickville Legal Centre operated within the objectives outlined in the Centre's Strategic Plan. The Centre demonstrated its commitment to the access and equity principles in a number of ways:

- Provided relevant training to volunteers on access and equity principles in accordance with Centre policy;
- Inner West TAAP service conducted tenancy outreach service at the Marrickville Centrelink office;
- Inner West TAAP service undertook regular community legal information workshops for disadvantaged groups;
- Inner West TAAP service assisted people who are unable to leave their homes, including by making 24 home visits;
- The GLS provided home or hospital visits where the need arose;
- We regularly attended community forums, cross agency referrals eg refuges, youth organisations, St George Ethnic Services Interagency and Marrickville Ethnic Communities Committee;
- We regularly disseminated translated resources at community

events, eg Marrickville Festival, Ashfield Carnivale of Cultures, Refugee Week;

- The GLS conducted a legal outreach clinic at St George Migrant Resource Centre;
- The GLS provided regular daytime appointment sessions for people with disabilities, carer responsibilities and the elderly; and
- DVCAS organised cross cultural training with a special focus on new settler and emerging communities.

Networking

The Centre continued to network within the community. All the reports provide details of the networking which each team has been involved in during 2006/2007.

Premises

During 2006/2007 the Centre experienced continual problems with blocked sewerage pipes, which left the staff and clients without access to toilet facilities. In April 2007, this situation reached crisis point, and the Centre was without toilet facilities for an extended period. A portaloos was installed in front of the Centre. Unfortunately, this arrangement did not provide a satisfactory alternative toilet facility as it created further OH & S risks for staff and clients of the Centre. The Board was forced to limit services at the Centre for several weeks and to close the Centre on 8 May until the repairs were finally completed at the end of the second week of May.

The Centre would like to take this opportunity to thank Marrickville RSL Club, Marrickville Council staff, Colin Hesse and Carmel Tebbutt for their support during this testing time.

Volunteers

Daytime law student volunteers played an integral role at the Centre. Over the years the Centre has come to rely on the contribution of volunteers to help provide services to clients. In recent times the Centre established structured training sessions to

provide intensive orientation for new volunteers. All staff participated in the training of volunteers. Special mention should go to Megan Cameron who played a crucial role during a number of orientation sessions, and more recently Andrew Taylor and Margie Martin for their assistance with the training program.

In early 2007, the "Student Volunteer Front Desk Appointments Manual" was developed to provide a comprehensive manual for front desk volunteers. Many thanks to Jo Kwan and Emma Keir, for their input with the development of this resource. In 2006, the Centre established designated groups of paralegal student volunteers to assist teams. The GLS, CLS and DVCAS have each participated in the paralegal volunteer program.

Post Xmas Party

The Centre held its annual post Christmas party in March 2007 in the bistro garden of the Exchange Hotel in Marrickville. All the volunteers, Board members and staff who attended experienced a thoroughly enjoyable evening. The catering was superb. The weather that evening was tropical, the atmosphere ambient and relaxed.

This annual event was organised to show appreciation to the many volunteers who so generously gave their time to assist the work of the Centre throughout the year.

Lisa Woodgate
Coordinator



Post Xmas Party
for MLC volunteers

MLC Staff 2006/2007

Staff Members 2006/2007

Legal Team		
Emma Keir	Principal Solicitor	Locum from 15 January 2006 Permanent appointment 22 October 2006 On leave of absence to take up position at Law Access from 9 May 2007.
Andrew Taylor	Locum Principal Solicitor	Commenced 18 June 2007
Margaret Martin	Part time Generalist Solicitor	Returned from leave in February 2007
Megan Cameron	Locum Generalist Solicitor	December 2006
Andrea Hadaway	Locum Generalist Solicitor	March 2006 until August 2006
Jo Kwan	Locum part time solicitor,	31 May 2006 until February 2007
Shellee Smith	Casual evening advice supervisor	casual
Lisa Woodgate	Generalist Solicitor	Permanent appointment 5 March 2007, seconded to the position of Acting Coordinator
Children's Legal Service		
Julianne Elliott	Children's Solicitor	Resigned effective 15 June 2007
Elizabeth Szabo	Locum part time solicitor	May 2007
Tenancy Team		
Eloise Parrab (nee Finlay)	Tenancy Advocate	



Elizabeth de Freitas	Tenancy Advocate	
Felicity Johnson	Tenancy Advocate & Access Worker (p/t)	
Tenancy Locums 2006/2007		
Julia Murray	Hazel Blunden	Jo Kwan
Mary Flaskas	Sophie Grieve	Elizabeth Szabo
Carmen Jauregui	Stephen Jiao	Jane Wilkinson
Agne Ratomskye	Joo Youn Hea	
Newtown DVCAS		
Lee Taylor	DVCAS Coordinator	
Toni Brown	CALD Access Worker	
Anne Pridham	Locum DVCAS Coordinator	
Administration		
Lisa Woodgate	Coordinator	
Maria Elena Ang	Information & Referral Officer	
Cecilia Urbina	Financial Administrator	Resigned effective 10 August 2006
Lee Taylor	Financial Admin Assistant (Casual)	
Trieste Corby	Casual administrative assistant	
Jane Wilkinson	Casual administrative assistant	
Mary Flaskas	Casual administrative assistant	
Janine Ding	Casual administrative assistant	

General Legal Service

Marrickville Legal Centre has provided a General Legal Service (GLS) since 1979. This year, the service covered thirteen local government areas in the inner west, south west, and south of Sydney. The total combined population of those local government areas was in excess of one million people.

During the past year we continued to adopt a strategic approach to legal service delivery, which combined the provision of free legal advice, targeted casework, community legal education, law reform, and policy work.

Our clients

The GLS assisted people in our community who experienced barriers when gaining access to legal services. Our client base included people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and people who had difficulty gaining access to legal services due to mental illness, disability, and social or economic disadvantage.

During the year we continued to provide an outreach advice service at the St George Migrant Resource Centre (SGMRC). Providing that service assisted us in our aim of increasing access to legal advice and information for the people from a variety of ethnic communities who live in the St George area.

This year the GLS provided legal advice and assistance to clients on approximately 1250 occasions. The advice was provided either face to face, by telephone, or in writing.

Staff

The year saw some changes to the membership of the GLS team:

- Emma Keir was appointed to the position of principal solicitor on

a locum basis on 16 January 2006, and on a permanent basis on 22 September 2006. Emma subsequently took unpaid leave from 8 May 2007 to take up a temporary role as a manager at Law Access;;

- Andrew Taylor was appointed as a locum principal solicitor in Emma's place. Andrew commenced as the locum principal solicitor on 20 June 2007;
- Margie Martin returned from a period of leave on 9 February 2007 and resumed working three days a week, and Margie's locum Jo Kwan left us. During May and June 2007, Margie worked 4 days a week while a locum principal solicitor was recruited;
- Jo Kwan was a locum part time generalist solicitor from May 2006 until 9 February 2007;
- Lisa Woodgate was appointed to the position of generalist solicitor 5 March 2007. Lisa was seconded to act in the role of Centre Co-ordinator while the Co-ordinator's position was being filled; and
- Andrea Hadaway and Megan Cameron filled the generalist position as locums.
- Andrea Hadaway was a full time locum generalist solicitor from March 2006 until August 2006, when she left to join the Children's Legal Service of Legal Aid NSW;
- Megan Cameron was a full time locum generalist solicitor from December 2006.

We would like to express our gratitude to Pat McDonough who volunteered her time and expertise as the Centre's solicitor on the record during the period from 8 May 2007 to 20 June 2007.



Law Week Open Day

The Evening Advice Service

The GLS provided an evening advice service on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The advice sessions were staffed by volunteer solicitors, barristers and assistants and were supervised by solicitors from the Centre.

The sessions aimed to provide advice, information and basic assistance in:

- General civil law disputes;
- Minor criminal matters;
- Employment law;
- Family law;
- Victims' compensation;
- Discrimination;
- Credit and debt matters;
- Motor vehicle property damage; and
- Complaints about professionals and government organisations.

Demand for employment law advice has been high in past years. That trend continued this year. To accommodate the most disadvantaged of our clients, we limited appointments in employment matters. Appointments were provided to clients on a low income and clients who were likely to experience difficulties representing themselves due to language, mental illness or age. These limits did not apply to employment matters involving discrimination. We provided targeted casework and representation to significantly disadvantaged clients in a range of employment related matters.

In addition, demand continued to be high for family law advice. We gave priority to matters concerning children, and clients who were likely to experience difficulties representing themselves due to language, mental illness, age and other factors.

The evening advice sessions provided clients with:

- Basic advice and information in order to assist them to solve their legal

problem; and

- Direct assistance, for example, by explaining the meaning of a legal document or writing a letter for the client to sign and send to the other party.

In many cases GLS solicitors followed up matters referred by the evening volunteers. In some matters, we provided on-going assistance or representation in a particular matter. The decisions about whether to follow up or give on-going assistance were made taking into account the needs of the client and the nature of their legal problem, as well as the resources and capacity of the GLS to take on a new matter.

The evening advice sessions were an integral part of the work of the Centre and they informed every sphere of the Centre's operations. The sessions were also a means by which the Centre identified particular issues within the community that then become the basis of campaigns for reform and community legal education forums.

Daytime appointments

Daytime appointments were offered on alternate Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons to clients who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or who have victims' compensation matters. Daytime appointments were also offered where there were exceptional circumstances, or for those clients who were restricted in their ability to attend the Centre at night.

Legal Outreach Clinic – St George Migrant Resource Centre

During the year we provided an outreach legal advice service at the St George Migrant Resource Centre (SGMRC). The outreach service was partly funded by Clubs grants obtained by the SGMRC. The outreach service commenced in February 2005 and has been well received by the community, including other service providers. The need for additional

legal services in the St George area was initially identified through our involvement with various networks including the Ethnic Services Interagency. The demand for the service from the local ethnic communities has remained strong.

The outreach advice service has generally been well attended. It increased access to legal assistance for residents of the St George area who experienced disadvantage, in particular people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with disabilities and single mothers who have difficulty travelling to Marrickville to attend our evening advice service. It was also an effective means of better engaging with our local community.

Appointments were provided every fortnight on Monday afternoon at the SGMRC in Rockdale. There were four appointments available during each session. Advice was also provided on a drop-in basis when time permitted. Advice, information and referral was provided in a range of areas including:

- Domestic violence;
- Complaints about police and other government bodies;
- Discrimination;
- Fines;
- Credit and debt;
- Consumer complaints
- Motor vehicle accidents (property damage)
- Employment law; and
- Family law (children's matters).

There was a significant demand for employment law advice through this service.

Casework

We undertook a significant amount of casework during the past year. Our casework was derived mostly from our evening sessions and daytime appointments. We did not apply a rigorous means test, although a client's financial circumstances were

taken into account when considering whether to offer a client casework assistance or representation.

We were successful in securing assistance for several clients through the pro-bono programs conducted by some of the larger private law firms, particularly in matters of victims' compensation, local court debt recovery and unfair dismissal. In particular, we would like to thank Clayton Utz and Blake Dawson Waldron for accepting numerous victims' compensation referrals throughout the year.

Over the year the GLS provided assistance and representation to clients with a variety of legal matters, including debt, fines, insurance complaints, police complaints, consumer complaints, and minor criminal matters. We targeted our casework towards assisting clients applying for victims' compensation as a result of domestic violence or sexual assault, and for clients experiencing discrimination, particularly in employment.

Case Studies

Fines

Our client arrived in Australia as a refugee from Kenya a few years ago. Three or four transit officers approached our client while he was waiting for a train. Our client was told that his ticket was not valid and that he had to purchase another ticket. Our client did have a valid ticket for his return travel home, but because the trains were running late, his ticket had 'expired' by the time he received the fine.

Our client received a fine from the transit officers and was told that the fine was for failing to travel with a valid ticket. However, the fine was actually in relation to an alleged failure to pass through the automatic ticket gates.

Initially, we assisted our client with an annulment application. Ultimately, we made successful submissions to Railcorp in relation to withdrawal of the fine.

Pregnancy Discrimination

Our client was employed for over 10 years. When she applied to take maternity leave, her supervisor made some unfavourable comments about her pregnancy and the impact it would have on the organisation. Despite this, she took maternity leave for almost 12 months.

Towards the end of her leave, our client was told that another person had been employed in her role, and that she would be provided with a comparable position on her return to work. Our client requested information about this 'comparable position' on several occasions, but did not receive a response.

Out of frustration and because of a complete lack of communication and co-operation from her employer on the issue of her return to work, our client resigned.

We represented our client in her complaint of sex (pregnancy) discrimination at the Anti-Discrimination Board of NSW. Following a lengthy conciliation process, our client's complaint resolved by way of monetary compensation and a reference on terms agreeable to our client.

Unfair Dismissal and Disability Discrimination

Our client was employed by a large chain store which was located in a shopping centre complex. He was a young man who had several health complications associated with spina bifida, including difficulties with his urinary tract. This meant that he needed to use a disabled persons' toilet.

Our client took a short break from work one day to go to the toilet, which was located in the public area of the shopping centre complex. While our client was using the facilities, he was interrupted by a loud bang on the door and aggressive shouting by a security guard employed by the complex. When our client opened the door to find out what the problem was, the security guard verbally abused and interrogated him. The security guard accused our client of being perfectly fit and not needing to use the disabled toilet. Our client had to produce the mobility parking sticker from his car in order to 'prove' his disability.

After this incident, our client's employer reduced his shifts and finally informed him that his services were no longer required. The employer referred to its concern that the incident might prevent the renewal of its lease with the shopping centre complex. Our client was dismissed while serving a probationary period.

We represented our client in his application for relief in respect of unfair dismissal in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission. The matter resolved to our client's satisfaction, and the employer agreed to pay our client in lieu of his notice period, plus an amount for lost income.

We also assisted our client to bring a complaint against the shopping centre complex in the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) on the grounds of disability discrimination in the provision of services. The matter resolved with the payment of compensation and provision of a written apology to our client. The shopping centre complex also agreed to provide discrimination and EEO training for all management staff.

Victims Compensation - unrelated acts

We represented our client in her claim for victims compensation arising out of domestic violence perpetrated by her former husband over a period of 7 years. The violence included a series of physical assaults, including assaults while our client was pregnant, and verbal and emotional abuse. We assisted our client to lodge two separate applications for victims' compensation. We argued that the assaults were unrelated acts.

The Tribunal found in our client's favour, and made two separate awards of compensation at the maximum end of the scale for a domestic violence injury. The factors which were the basis of the finding that the assaults were unrelated acts included the lapse of time between the two series of offences, and the different nature of the criminal charges brought in each case.

Policy and law reform

The GLS adopted the Strategic Service Delivery Model when providing legal services. It actively pursued policy and law reform activities in conjunction with providing advice and casework assistance. Our policy and law reform activities over the last year included making submissions to public inquiries and lobbying for change to legislation and government procedures that impact inequitably upon persons experiencing disadvantage.

We engaged in policy and law reform independently as a Community Legal Centre, and also in collaboration with the Combined Community Legal Centres Group, the National Association of Community Legal Centres, and our other networks.

Over the past year Marrickville Legal Centre made submissions including:

- A submission to the NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Social Issues Inquiry into the Impact of the Commonwealth Work Choices Legislation. We provided direct examples of how the Work Choices legislation was affecting our clients. We also participated in a joint presentation to the Committee on this issue; and
- A submission to the Community Relations Commission in relation to its guidelines regarding exemption from payment for interpreting services. We argued that interpreter services should be more widely available.

The Centre also participated in the NSW Charter of Rights Support Group, the Discrimination Lawyers Group, and a number of Combined Community Legal Centre networks.

Community Legal Education

During the year the GLS provided CLE sessions to community groups and workers, client groups and to our enthusiastic team of volunteers, including:

- Our series of workshops on Law For Community Workers. This year our series included an update on the changes to the family law legislation with a focus on the impact for women and children surviving domestic violence and a half day seminar about industrial relations laws;
- Victims compensation;
- Domestic violence; and
- Employment law and discrimination.

We updated our "Volunteer Advice and Casework Manual – The Kit". We would like to thank Gilbert + Tobin for their generous assistance in printing the kit. We also continued to update our fact sheets.

We contributed numerous case studies to the Women's Employment Rights Project & Employment Research Project (WERP). WERP provides advice, information and training to community advocates, in relation to employment law.

Evening advice volunteers

Our volunteer solicitors, barristers and assistants attended our evening advice sessions either fortnightly or monthly to provide assistance to our many and varied clients. Our volunteers displayed an exceptional commitment to our evening advice service, and without their assistance we would not have been able to meet the demand for our services.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to our wonderful team of volunteers for their hard work and dedication to the Centre and its clients.

A list of volunteers who have provided us with invaluable support during our evening advice roster in 2006/2007 can be seen on the next page.

Evening Advice Volunteers 2006/2007

Abigail Shelley	Jamie Ukra
Adrian Barwick	Jane Hogan
Ailsa Bailey	Jennifer Barron
Andrew De Celis	Jessica Brown
Andrew Keast	Joe Daniel
Andrew Stewart	Jonathan Callaghan
Anne Day	Julian Dight
Anne Pridham	Justine Field
Antonia Rose	Kevin Lynch
Aziza Lai	Louise Butt
Ben Lau	Marie Delaney
Ben Webster	Meena Sripathy
Brae Sinclair	Michael Cooley
Brendan Tomlinson	Michael Green
Brendon Noney	Nadya Haddad
Cameron Andrews	Neda Asadi
Caroline Spruce	Nick Yetzotis
Charlie Beasley	Noel Tin
Chris McArdle	Peter Jones
Cristina Gaete	Peter Krockenberger
Daniel Kelly	Poulad Berenjforoush
David Harradine	Rachel Callinan
David Kwok	Rebecca Moore
David Thomson	Ric Gonzalez
Di Anagnos	Rob Macredie
Elise Ball	Roza Lozusic
Emma Toohey	Sam Indyk
Erin Gough	Simon Fung
George Papanikitas	Simon Snow
Gloria Nicol	Sri Ogden
Golda Dela Cruz	Suraya Turk
Graeme Edgerton	Tamara Sims
Greg Sarginson	Tanya Sklepic
Hannah Robert	Tibby Morgenstern
Hubert Feng	Tony Chow
Irene Ferles	Veronica Lavulo
Irene So	Wayne Morrison
William Dermody	

Corrs Pro Bono Program

Early in 2007 Corrs Chambers Westgarth offered Marrickville Legal Centre a daytime volunteer graduate solicitor to assist with the work of the Centre. MLC jumped at the proposal and the Corrs Graduate Lawyer Placement Program at MLC was scheduled to start in July 2007.

During the initial 3 month placement, the volunteer, in consultation with our Children and Youth Solicitor, will be working within the Children's Legal Service on a range of activities including providing telephone and face-to-face advice to young people under the age of 18 years on:

- Fines;
- Minor criminal;
- Victims compensation;
- School disputes and suspensions; and
- Discrimination and employment.

We anticipate that the solicitor will also assist with casework in both the Children's Legal Service and the GLS, and will undertake law reform and policy work including writing submissions, research and drafting media releases.

Many thanks to Corrs Chambers Westgarth pro bono committee and especially to Louise Camenzuli for this most beneficial arrangement which will enhance the work of the Centre.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge and pay special tribute to the solicitors and barristers who have donated many hours of pro bono assistance to the Centre and its clients over the year: In particular we would like to thank:

- Barristers Ingmar Taylor, Kate Eastman and Simeon Beckett;

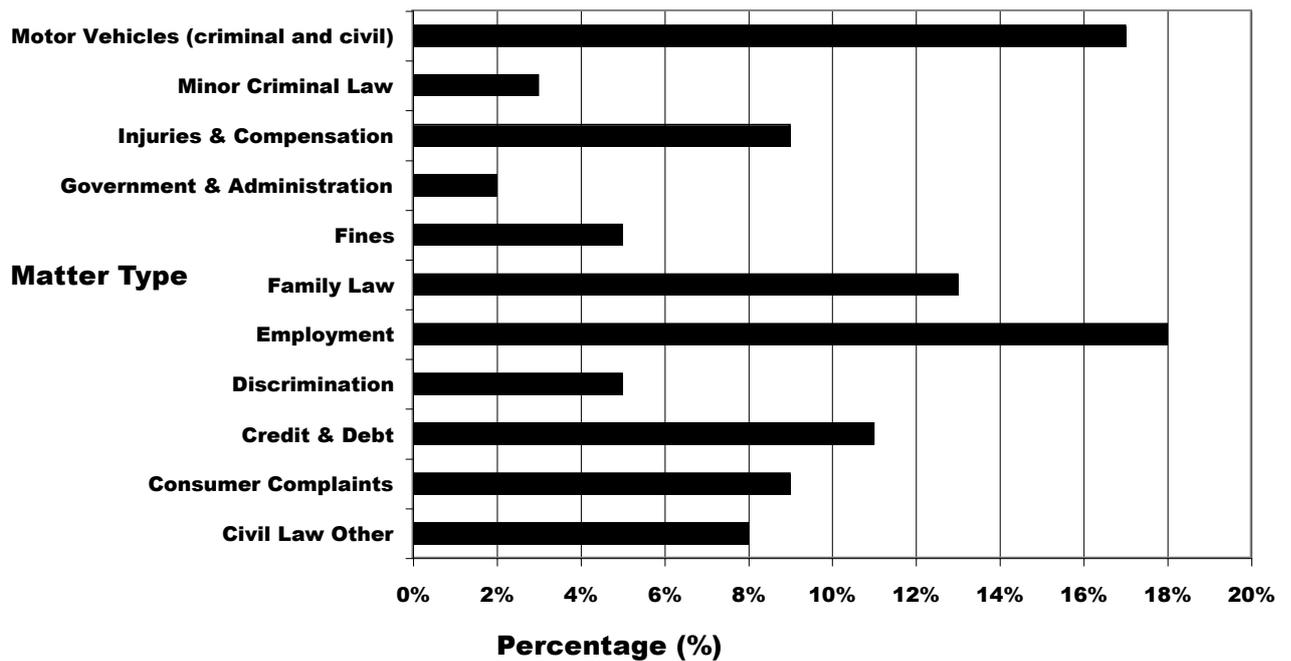
- Tamara Sims, Jane Stratton, Michelle Hannon and Danny Gilbert from Gilbert + Tobin;
- David Hillard and Belinda Wilson from Clayton Utz;
- Anne Cregan from Blake Dawson Waldron;
- Carmine Santone from Maurice Blackburn Cashman;
- Allens Arthur Robinson;
- DLA Phillips Fox;
- Freehills; and
- Corrs Chambers Westgarth.

Some Statistical Snapshots

Marrickville Legal Centre Activity Snapshots 2006/07	
1. Total Number of clients	2348
New clients	1954
Repeat clients	293
Existing clients	101
2. Total Information and Referral Activities	3206
3. Total Cases Open During Period	310
-Open at period start	109
-New (Opened in period)	201
-Still open at period end (Ongoing)	95
4. Total Cases closed during period	215
- Minor Cases closed	84
- Medium Cases closed	88
- Major Cases closed	43

General Legal Service Summary	
Clients	
Total number of Clients	796
New Clients	619
Repeat Clients	147
Existing Clients	30
Activities	
Total Advice Activities	1252
Cases	
Total cases open during period (Open and New)	60
- Still open at period end (Ongoing)	32
Total cases closed during period	28
Non-Casework Projects	
Total projects open during period (Open and New)	61
Open Community Legal Education Projects	11
Open Law Reform & Legal Policy projects	14
Total projects completed during period	15
CLE projects completed	11
LRLP projects completed	2

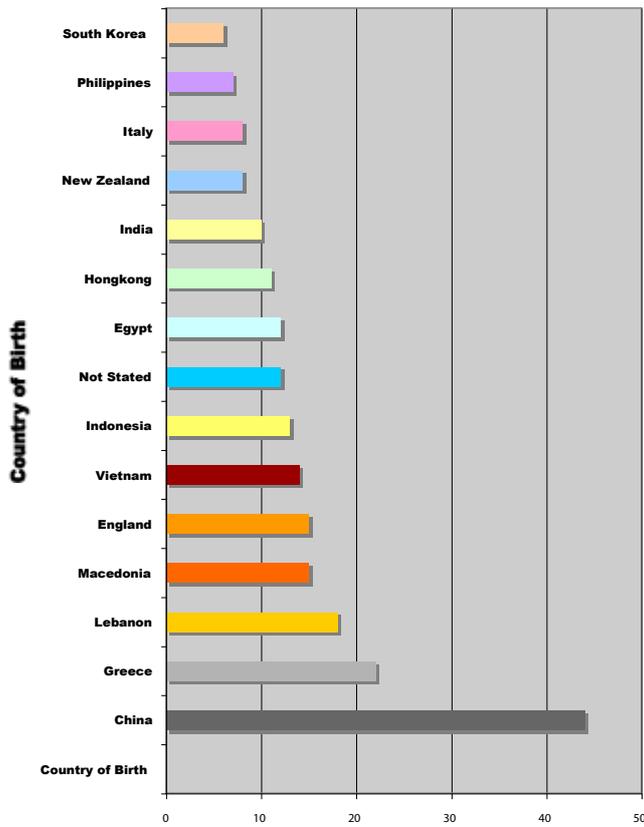
Matter Types Handled by General Legal Service 2006/2007 Total: 812



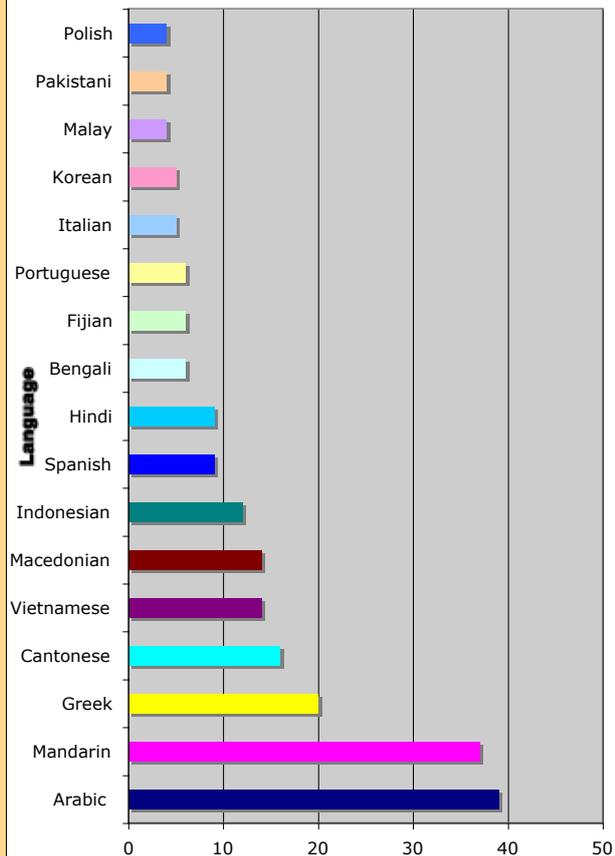
Top 20 General Legal Problems

1. Employment unfair dismissal
2. Road traffic and motor vehicle regulatory offences
3. Employment Other
4. Motor vehicle accident
5. Credit and debt owed by client
6. Injuries compensation
7. Govt/admin issues relating to fines
8. Motor vehicle property damage
9. Child contacts or contact orders
10. Discrimination Other
11. Employment conditions/entitlements
12. Credit and debt owed to client
13. Consumer complaints legal/solicitors
14. Child residency
15. Consumer complaints financial/insurance/super
16. Other civil
17. Consumer complaints products
18. Injuries Other
19. Family or domestic violence order
20. Other Family Law

GLS Clients' Top 15 Countries of Birth (after Australia)



Main Languages Spoken at Home by GLS Clients (after English)



Results of Client Satisfaction Surveys - 2006/2007

Financial Year : 2006/2007

Client Characteristics (b)	Proportion of clients expressing satisfaction (%)				
	Explanation to client	Getting to the centre	Responsiveness	Treatment of client	Usefulness of assistance
Males	100	100	100	100	100
Females	100	100	100	100	100
Under 18 years	0	0	0	0	0
18-34 years	100	100	100	100	100
35-49 years	100	100	100	100	100
50-64 years	100	100	100	100	100
65 and over	100	100	100	100	100
Used an interpreter	0	0	0	0	0
Did not use an interpreter	100	100	100	100	100
Indigenous	100	100	100	100	100
Non-indigenous	100	100	100	100	100
Has a disability	100	100	100	100	100
Does not have a disability	100	100	100	100	100

Top Ten Children's Legal Problem Types	Proportion to Total Children's Legal Problems
1. Fines	20.9
2. Victims compensation	15
3. Other Civil	12.1
4. Traffic Offences	9.2
5. Credit and debt owed by client	4.9
6. Other civil - legal system or process	4.4
7. Child protection other	2.9
8. Govt/admin complaints against police	2.9
9. Other and miscellaneous criminal offences	2.9
10. Injuries - other	2.4

Volunteer Voices

Chris McArdle (Solicitor)

In order to be a volunteer at MLC it is necessary to ignore one of the basic principles of professional life - never volunteer.

What's more, I was once told by a toffy nosed senior chap in the noble profession that those who have no money have no problems that could possibly be solved. A rich person with a problem was a client and a poor person with a problem was a whinger.

One Thursday a month, once one overcomes one's instinct to send a retainer letter, the experience gives back far more than it takes. When the jaded one sits and listens, he/she cannot but find the experience interesting to a fault, and often professionally stretching. Mind you, the major problem identified with a lot of cases at MLC is that they are constitutionally compelling, legally urgent, intellectually fascinating, and worth \$50.

That is what MLC and its sister centres are all about though. The legal system "out there" really is about people who can afford it resolving their conflicts with other people who can afford it. Despite the high minded utterances of some people we could name, it was designed to facilitate power, it evolved to protect wealth, and it exists to consolidate both.

MLC is for the people the legal system is not for. AND it's great fun. I had a gender discrimination matter which was worth no money, but was compromising the peace of mind of the complainant - I gave her some ideas which she acted on, and the problem went away. People with wages claims worth \$4,000 - so what, says the system but here's how you fill out the forms and get the \$\$\$ back, says MLC. People who have been discarded because of their age, or people who have been sacked unfairly, we show them what to do. These are the interesting cases that hit you in the eye every visit.





Dianne Anagnos (Solicitor)

I have been volunteering at Marrickville Legal Centre's evening advice sessions on a monthly basis since May 2006. It's impossible to predict what kinds of matters I'll be seeing when I rock up for the session. It honestly could be anything! One night I had to deal with complaints about barking dogs, a family dispute and an unfair recording contract back to back. On other nights I only deal with only one client who might be particularly distressed or who has a more complex matter.

I have lived in Marrickville's client catchment area my entire life. Volunteering as a solicitor at Marrickville Legal Centre provides an invaluable insight into the legal needs of my own community. Each session leaves me amazed at the acute level of need that exists in my community for legal advice, referrals and the de-mystification of the legal system. Volunteering at Marrickville has also provided me with invaluable experience across a wide range of areas of legal practice, and I expect that it will continue to do so!

Brae Sinclair (Solicitor)

.....of course it's for the fame, fortune and glory that I originally volunteered at Marrickville Legal Centre. What's kept me volunteering as a volunteer solicitor though is the contract I signed that's locked me in for the next five years.....

Actually, I've found that the people who work and volunteer at Marrickville Legal Centre are genuinely nice, knowledgeable, friendly and eager to help. I've found that the clients who come to Marrickville Legal Centre are like neighbours who've heard you're a solicitor and want some free advice- and you're in the mood to have a chat and give out that advice

Perhaps for me though, the most telling thing about being a volunteer at Marrickville Legal Centre is the fact that the solicitors that started volunteering when I originally did, are still volunteering now. We all come from very different backgrounds, large city corporate firms, suburban private practise, government bodies - but the one common denominator that we all

share is the enjoyment we get from Marrickville.

In addition, I have also found that my confidence in dealing with clients has increased and my legal and communication skills are continuously improving. I feel that in some way, I am getting paid to volunteer at Marrickville - only instead of money, I'm gaining skills and having a great time along the way!

Erin Gough (Solicitor)

I have been volunteering at Marrickville Legal Centre for about two years now and I enjoy it immensely. The volunteer roster provides a terrific opportunity for solicitors to make use of their legal skills outside their normal course of employment and to gain skills as well.

While volunteering at Marrickville, for example, I have learnt how to interview clients with an interpreter and have discovered subsections of the Dividing Fences Act that I never knew existed.

The team at Marrickville are professional, knowledgeable and friendly. There is always someone to assist you with a curly question, or to point you in the direction of a resource sheet or website that might hold the answer and the ready gratitude of the clients makes it a pleasure to dedicate a little time each month to assist members of the local community.

Children's Legal Service

The Children's Legal Service (CLS) is an integral part of Marrickville Legal Centre. It serves a need identified by the Centre in 1979. It is funded from the limited resources of the Centre's core Legal Aid grant.

The CLS provides a state-wide service throughout New South Wales. There are only a few children's solicitor positions in the NSW CLC sector and we are very proud to find our home within the Centre for a specialist children's solicitor.

Staffing and Volunteers

Julianne Elliott continued in the full-time Children's Solicitor position until the end of June 2007. Emma Keir continued to divide her time between the CLS, General Legal Service and her duties as Principal Solicitor this year.

Thank you also to the other generalist solicitors who took on children's files this year: Margaret Martin, Andrea Hadaway, Jo Kwan and Megan Cameron.

Special mention should also be made of Elizabeth Szabo who worked for the CLS this year in a short term temporary capacity and provided invaluable support to the CLS on one of our biggest and most long running matters.

Goodbyes

Julianne Elliott left the CLS in June this year after working for two years in the position. She left us to dedicate more time to her young family. Emma Keir took leave from the CLS and the Centre in May 2007 to work with LawAccess for a year.

Volunteers

This year we were lucky to have the assistance of many enthusiastic law student volunteers. These volunteers provided essential support

in administration, legal research, policy and law reform projects, and Youth Justice Coalition projects. Special thanks to all the CLS student volunteers including Bianca, Amy, Alice, Jodie, Adele, Edward, Andrew and Kit.

Service Overview

The CLS provides information, advice and legal representation for children and young people under the age of 18. Our clients experience a range of legal problems including care and protection matters, criminal charges, fines, victims compensation, rights in education, employment, family law, debts, complaints about government bodies and other civil proceedings.

In the past 12 months, the CLS undertook the following services on behalf of young people;

- 106 advice activities;
- 39 casework matters (including a major Supreme Court test case) and;
- 57 non-casework projects.

The CLS is committed to providing a strategic and responsive community legal education program. We hold workshops, talks and provide Q & A sessions for young people, as well as community sector workers working with young people. We also contribute to the Centre's Community Legal Education program.

The CLS has a role in responding to policy and law reform issues affecting young people. This is done through the normal work of the CLS as well as through participation in the National Youth Advocates' Network, the Youth Justice Coalition (YJC) and local Youth Interagencies, including:

- Julianne Elliott convened the YJC;
- Emma Keir was a member of the YJC;

- Emma continued to be a member of the Marrickville Youth Resource Centre Management Committee; and
- Julianne continued to be a member of the National Youth Advocates' Network.

Casework

The CLS provides a telephone advice service to young people and youth workers during business hours. This service is frequently used by young people, adults calling on behalf of young people and youth workers calling on behalf of their clients. There is always an increase in requests for telephone advice after the children's solicitor attends an interagency meeting or holds a workshop. The CLS gives advice or information and referral on any legal issue affecting young people.

The greatest demand for advice this year was in relation to criminal procedure, fines, personal injury, family law, debt and AVOs. In relation to casework, demand was strongest for fines and victims compensation applications.

We are working with a number of youth centres and services in the Sydney metropolitan area to develop regular times when a children's solicitor can be available to answer questions young people have about their legal rights. As always, we are working hard to make the service more accessible to young people and provide services appropriate to the needs of young people.

Our casework is supported by barristers, who either provide pro bono advice or accept Legal Aid briefs in complex matters. We would particularly like to thank Anne Healey and Sharron Norton for their support this year.

Community Legal Education

The CLS conducted a wide range of community legal education workshops and promotional work for the service including the following:

- Providing regular workshops on legal issues for young people at Rosemount Youth and Family Services Day Program;

- Providing workshops for youth workers and young people from Marrickville Youth Interagency, the Inner West Youth Interagency, Bankstown Youth Interagency, Marrickville Youth Resource Centre, Marrickville PCYC and youth refuges in Sydney;

- Participating in the Centre's CLE program by presenting workshops to community workers on fines;

- Presenting information on police powers, street rights, and complaints to the NSW Ombudsman to a group of young people who were participating in Links to Learning programmes through Marrickville Youth Resource Centre;

- Conducting the annual survey of community workers to determine the need for community legal education and the outreach needs of a variety of youth services in the Sydney metropolitan area.

- Providing information and materials to young people at Marrickville South Schools Expo, the Marrickville Festival, the Aboriginal Footy Knockout Competition and Ashfield Carnival of Cultures; and

- Being involved in Youth Week events, by providing information about our service to young people and youth workers.

Law Reform and Policy Work

National Youth Advocacy Network

Our involvement with the National Youth Advocacy Network has continued this year. The main focus for this period was campaigning in relation to juvenile justice issues in each state.

Children In Detention Advocacy Project (CIDnAP)

We continued to be involved in a project launched by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre. The Project aims to explore systemic civil law issues arising out of the arrest and detention of children and young people – for example, unlawful imprisonment, false arrest, malicious prosecution, and assaults causing injury. The project aims to litigate matters with the assistance of the Public Interest Law Clearing House and Legal Aid, and identify areas where policy development and law reform is needed.

Youth Justice Coalition (YJC)

YJC is a network of youth workers, children's lawyers, policy workers and academics working to promote the rights of children and young people in NSW. YJC is run under the auspices of the Centre. In 2006 meetings were held at the Centre on the third Wednesday of the month. From the beginning of 2007, meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis, hosted alternatively by Gilbert + Tobin and Blake Dawson Waldron.

During this year, Emma Keir, and Julianne Elliott both acted as convenors of the YJC. The major law reform and policy activities undertaken by YJC this year were:

- Attending consultations and collecting case studies for the NSW Ombudsman's review of the Law Enforcement (Powers and Responsibilities) Act and the Law Enforcement Legislation Amendment (Public Safety) Act;
- A submission to the Department of Community Services review of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act;
- Participating in the NSW Charter of Rights Campaign;
- Contributing to the Youth in Detention project in response to the UN findings of human rights abuses against a young Indigenous man

whilst in custody;

- Providing feedback at the Community Consultation session for the NSW State Plan;
- Responding to requests from media outlets for comment on youth justice issues, particularly in the lead up to the New South Wales State elections in March 2007; and
- Developing materials encouraging young people to enrol to vote.
- YJC held a planning day on 14 February 2007, which was kindly hosted by Gilbert + Tobin. We developed an agenda for the year ahead.
- We continued to distribute copies of Joe's Conference, a video made through YJC about Youth Justice Conferencing.

Police Complaints and the Ombudsman

The "Good Cop Bad Cop" police feedback website was launched last period. It is hosted by the Youth Action and Policy Association, and enables young people to provide anonymous feedback on their experiences with the police – good or bad – by completing an online form.

We continue to retain the feedback forms, monitor the complaints received and take up any relevant issues with the Ombudsman.

Combined Community Legal Centres Group NSW – Care and Protection Sub-Committee

The CLS continued its involvement with the sub-committee and convened meetings about the review of the discussion paper published after the review of the care and protection legislation in New South Wales.

Victims Compensation

We acted for a young boy who was injured as a result of bullying at school. The incident resulted in a physical injury and also in psychological injury. Despite difficulties in preparing the application, including the young age of the offender in this matter, we were successful in our application. Our client received \$18,000 in compensation.

Fines

We acted for a 14 year old girl who had received several train fines for not travelling with a ticket. Our client was fined during a period of homelessness. She elected to take the fines back to court and CLS represented her in a plea in mitigation at the Children's Court. The young person had six fines against her dismissed and the last fine reduced to \$20.

Schools

We represented a young woman who had just sat for her Higher School Certificate and had been accused of cheating in two exams. She was at risk of losing the marks for the two exams in question and significantly reducing her results overall. The CLS assisted the young woman in her appeals to the Board of Studies, including getting a pro bono opinion from Counsel. The young woman successfully appealed against the allegations made against her and did not lose any marks.

Inner West Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service

The tenancy service provides an advice and advocacy service to tenants and boarders/lodgers living in the Local Government Areas of Marrickville, Ashfield, Strathfield, Burwood and Canada Bay.

The service also provides community education for tenants and community workers on a range of tenancy issues.

Tenancy workers

The current members of the tenancy team are Elizabeth De Freitas, Eloise Parrab (nee Finlay), Felicity Johnson and Julia Murray.



Magnus Hammar,
Secretary General of International
Union of Tenants visits
the Inner West Tenancy Service.

We were very lucky to have the following locum workers to assist us during the last 12 months:

Carmen Jauregui
Steven Jiao
Hazel Blunden
Sophie Grieve
Mary Flaskas
Elizabeth Szabo
Jane Wilkinson
Youn Hea Joo
Agne Ratomskyte

Casework

In the last 12 months, the tenancy service provided advice every day of the week either face to face or via the telephone. Whenever the Centre has been open we have been available to provide urgent advice and assistance. The telephone advice hours for the tenancy service were Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 2pm – 5pm, Tuesday 10am – 5pm and Friday 9am – 1pm.

- In the past 12 months, the tenancy service provided the following services:

- Telephone advice

was given to 1453 tenants in relation to a range of issues;

- 139 face-to-face advice sessions were held;
- 24 home visits were attended;
- Written information was provided to 510 tenants as a follow up to our advice;

- Assistance in preparing for a matter at the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal (CTTT) was provided to over 364 tenants; and

- We represented tenants at the CTTT on 104 occasions.

The greatest demand for advice this year was in relation to terminations of tenancy, and repairs. During the year there was a large increase in the number of calls from tenants enquiring about their rights in relation to rent increases.

Duty Advocacy

We continued to provide a Duty Advocacy Service at the CTTT during this period. This service operates on Wednesdays at the Sydney Registry. Advocates from all the Sydney TAAP services staff this service on a rostered basis. Our service provides an advocate once a fortnight and covers the 9.15 am and 11.15 am hearing lists.

We have attended as Duty Advocates on 22 occasions and have found that the service has been very well received and utilised by tenants. The tenants' advocates have provided advice and information. They have also negotiated on the tenants' behalf with landlords in conciliation, and provided representation at hearings if required.

Tenants' Union Hotline

The service continued to contribute to the Tenants' Union hotline throughout the last 12 months. There is usually a turnover of volunteers every 6 months due to changes in university timetables and employment opportunities. We have been able to offer some of our experienced Hotline volunteers locum work when it becomes available. The volunteers that have contributed to the Hotline over the last year are:

Jane Wilkinson
Youn Hea Joo
Patricia Ridoutt
Stephen Jiao
Katy Jenkins
Agne Ratomskyte
Molly Wen
Nadya Marokakis
Melissa Leong
Astrid Chan
Natalie Kozlov

We are very grateful for their contribution to our service.

Community Education

Our Community Education Worker continually updates and creates new community education resources targeted at particular audiences. We have also been developing digital presentations of our education resources.

Over the last 12 months we have maintained our focus on developing and maintaining our links with women's refuges in our area in order to provide the clients and workers at the refuges with tenancy advice and information. The Residential Tenancies Act does not contain measures to deal with domestic violence situations. The situation can become very complicated for women who are renting and experiencing domestic violence. We have continued as a permanent participant in the Orana Lodge "Living Skills Program" for their residents. We provide a monthly CLE session for Orana Lodge. We have also provided CLE sessions to The Marian

Centre, St Louise Lodge and The Gender Centre.

We were again invited to speak at AMES (Adult Multicultural Education Service) in Burwood. This CLE specifically targeted the Chinese and Korean students and included one session for mixed languages. This was a half-day event at their campus and was very well attended and received by the students. There were approximately 250 students in attendance.

We have continued to target youth services in the area.

We participated in the Chinese Association 'Tenancy Rights Day' held at Bankstown Senior Citizens Centre in May of this year. This was a well-attended event and approximately 300 people visited throughout the day. We provided information brochures and answered many questions.

Outreach

From February 2006 until January 2007, we conducted a Tenancy Outreach service at the Summer Hill Community Centre Summer Hill.

In February 2007, a new Outreach information and referral service was established at the Centrelink office in Marrickville. This service operates on the first Monday of each month from 10am -12pm. The service provides an opportunity for tenancy workers to have direct contact with Centrelink clients, and particularly low income and disadvantaged clients. We hope to establish a similar service at other Centerlink offices in our catchment area in early 2008.

Policy work

The tenants' advocates continued to be involved in the Tenants' Union working parties. They were regular participants in the Boarders and Lodgers Action Group, Public Housing Issues Working Party and Tenancy Legal Working Party.

Our service continued to be actively

involved in lobbying for law reform for boarding house residents. We provided input into a Law and Justice Foundation project looking at boarding houses and law reform in this area. We also participated in a boarding house seminar organised by the Shadow Minister for Ageing and Disability John Ryan looking at possible law reform to ensure better protection for boarding house residents.

We had a very interesting visit from Magnus Hammer representing the International Union of Tenants (IUT). He was interested in discussing NSW housing laws and looking at how this compares to Sweden where he is based. Our laws appeared very outdated compared to the laws that apply in much of the EU. Since Magnus' visit, IUT has devoted an edition of its Newsletter to looking at Australia's tenancy laws.

We have also made contributions to articles in our local newspapers. We have been asked to comment on a range of issues including the recent rises in rents and the lack of affordable housing in our area.

Following are a number of case studies, which highlight the variety of work we undertake in the tenancy service.

Recognition as Tenant

Our client moved into residential premises under an agreement that the previous tenant was assigning his interests to him. The previous tenant left with rent outstanding. Our client paid off these arrears along with a new rental bond and weekly rent payments. Our client also paid the bill for emergency repairs after being told that he was liable for a water leak into a downstairs property.

After 15 months, the previous tenant returned and threatened to evict our client by changing the locks and effectively denying that he had assigned the tenancy to our client. The Real Estate Agent supported the previous tenant's claim, even though they had been accepting our client's rent and negotiating repairs arrangements with him during this time.

Our client lodged an application at the CTTT in order to be recognised as a tenant or alternatively, to be compensated for all his payments during the course of his occupation. After a lengthy period of adjournments, we represented him at the CTTT. The matter proceeded to formal hearing, and involved a number of witnesses and the exchange of documents. The CTTT made orders recognising our client as the tenant of the premises with the bond lodged in his name.

Rental Subsidy Fraud

Our client is from a CALD background. She was a public housing tenant who had her rental subsidy cancelled on the grounds that her husband (the additional occupant) owned undisclosed property. The cancellation of her subsidy meant that she was forced to pay market rent on the premises, and that she incurred a rent arrears debt of \$60,000 and was threatened with eviction. Our client, who was on a pension and caring for five children, had been at the premises for over fifteen years.

Our client was unaware of her husband's financial dealings, (he had moved out and returned on a number of occasions), and had no knowledge that he was the owner of property. For cultural and family reasons, she had not questioned her husband's whereabouts.

We immediately lodged an internal appeal, allowing us time to investigate the matter and gather further evidence. After a successful recommendation from the Housing Appeals Committee, our client's evidence was accepted on the grounds that she did not intentionally mislead the Department and her rental debt was significantly reduced. The termination matter at the CTTT was also resolved successfully; the client was able to retain her tenancy and arrange for the payment of arrears via instalments.

Tenant compensation for illegal lock-out

Our clients were from a CALD background, and they had been renting the granny flat at the back of a house under an oral tenancy agreement. One night they returned home to find the police at the premises, assisting the landlord with removing their possessions. When the tenants attempted to negotiate getting access to their goods, the landlord refused and assaulted them. Our clients required medical treatment. They also lost some expensive musical equipment and became homeless as a result of the landlord's actions. The police later acknowledged that they should not have assisted in the eviction.

We assisted with lodging an application to the CTTT to get access to the premises and to the tenants' possessions. At hearing, it transpired that the landlord had disposed of the tenants' possessions. Orders were made that the tenants receive \$500 each as compensation. The tenants were unhappy with this decision and felt that not all of the circumstances had been taken into account. We helped them apply for a re-hearing which was granted. Final orders were made granting the tenants compensation of \$10,000, which was the CTTT jurisdictional limit.

Discrimination

Our client was a young gay man from a CALD background, who had come to Australia to do an internship with a major law firm. He was a sub-tenant in a share house in Newtown. His two flatmates were co-tenants on the tenancy agreement.

After a month, our client noticed that his flatmates had started making homophobic remarks and had tried to prevent him from using facilities within the premises, including not allowing him to sit on the couch or use the kitchen. He was quite distressed by this situation and decided that he would move out.

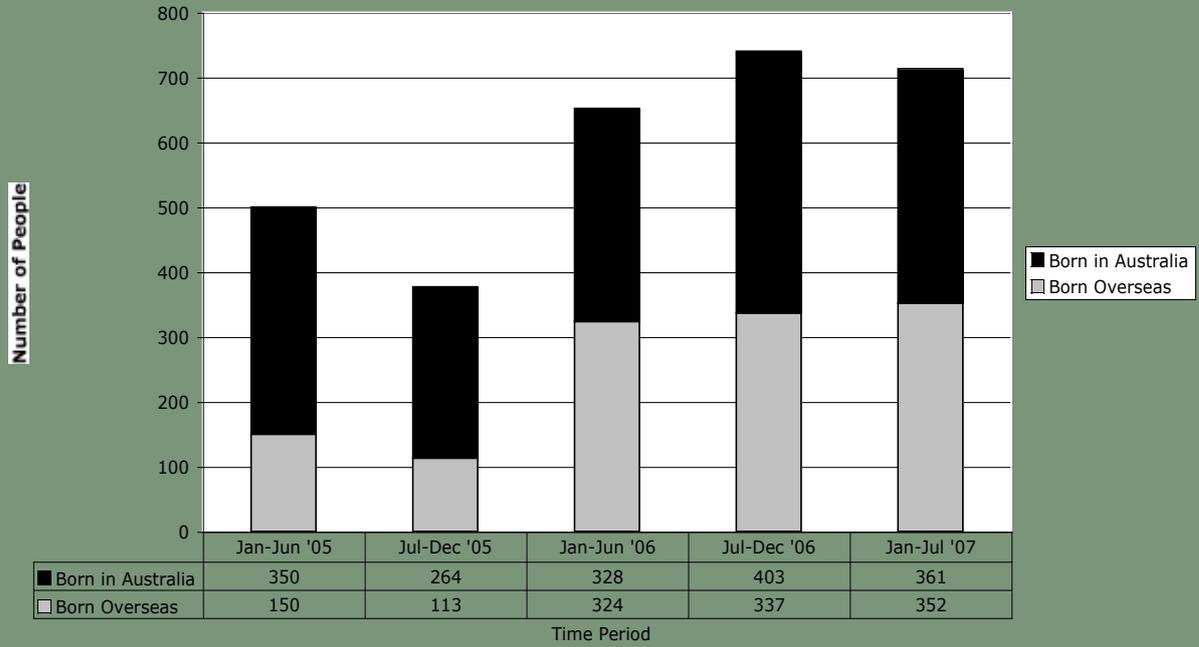
When he advised the head tenants of his intention to move out, he was told that he could not move out until a new tenant was found. Our client continued to pay rent even though he spent very little time at the house. Late one night, he returned to the house and his flatmates denied him access to his room. Our client left the premises and was afraid to go back in order to retrieve his goods.

He then contacted the Tenants' Advice Service which assisted him with lodging an urgent application at the CTTT, seeking the refund of his bond, return of his possessions and compensation for being illegally evicted from the premises.

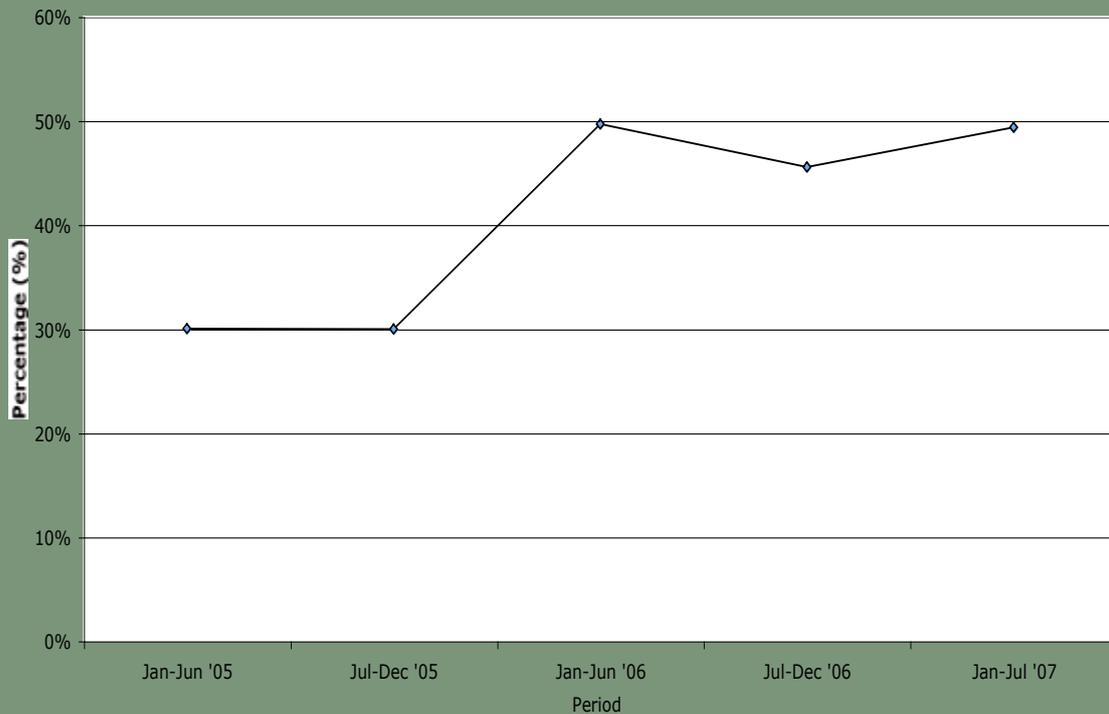
At the hearing, we successfully argued that our client was a tenant, (not a boarder/lodger as the head tenants claimed) and that the CTTT had jurisdiction to hear the matter. Our client was awarded approximately \$1,000 in economic and non-economic loss for breaches of his right to quiet enjoyment of the premises.

Tenancy Statistical Snapshots

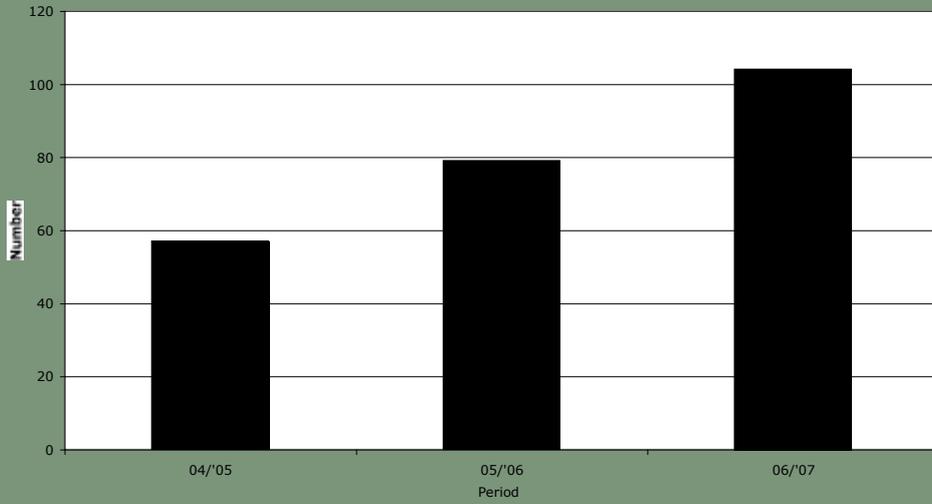
Study of Clients Born Inside and Outside of Australia Assisted by the Inner West Tenancy Service



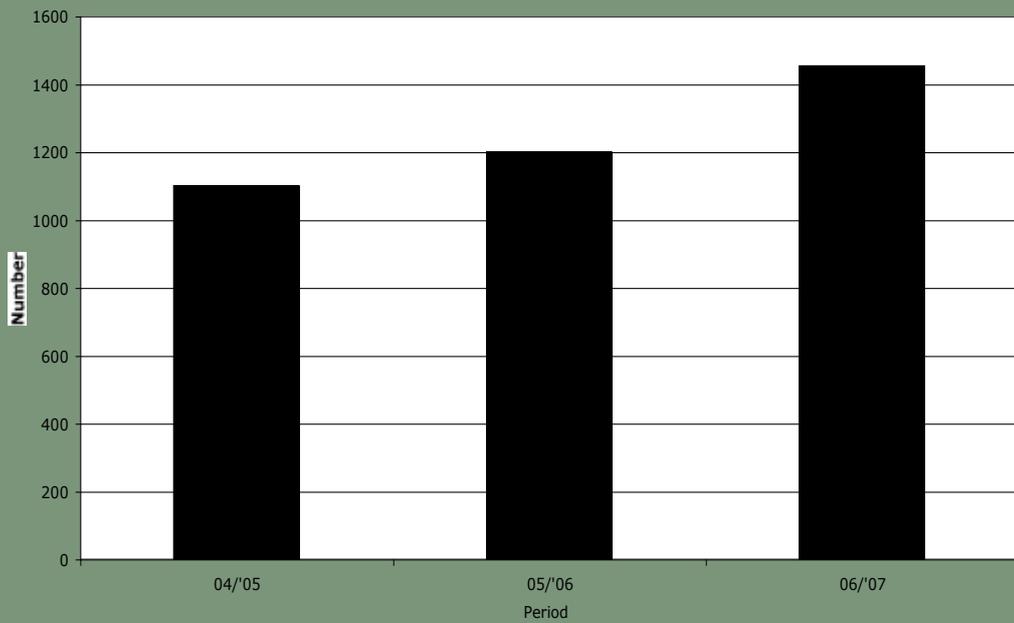
Percentage of Clients Born outside of Australia Assisted by the Inner West Tenancy Service



Clients Assisted via CTTT Representation



Clients Assisted via Telephone Advice



Tenancy Top 10 Enquiry Types	
1. Termination	491
2. Repairs	323
3. Bond	218
4. Compensation	157
5. Consumer Trading and Tenancy Tribunal	152
6. Rent Arrears	148
7. Rent increase	136
8. Access	106
9. Breach of quiet enjoyment	61
10. Boarder and Lodger	46

Newtown Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme

Newtown DVCAS has achieved its objective to "assist women and children experiencing domestic violence to obtain protection through the legal process and social system" with commitment and dedication from Lee Taylor (coordinator), Toni Brown (CALD Access Worker) and Maria Ang (Administration).

The Statistics

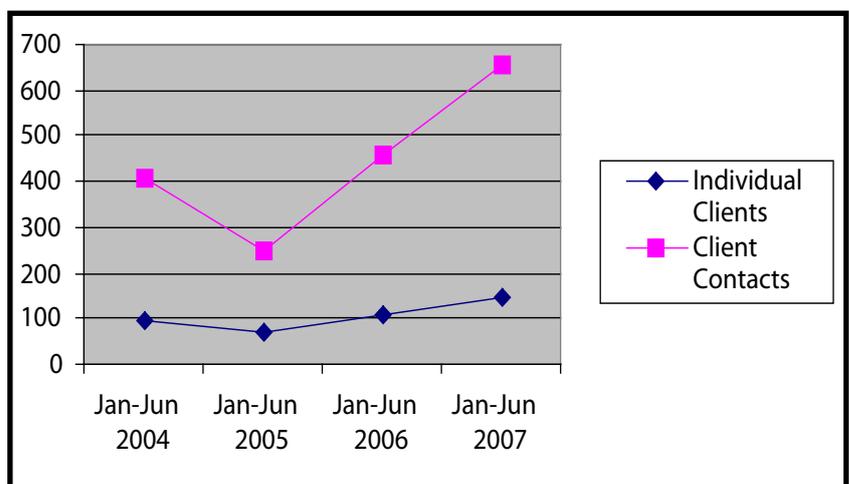
In July 2007, the NSW Legal Aid Commission (LAC) introduced a new database for the state-wide Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program. Lee has implemented it, and has been trained in its operation. Some Legal Centre volunteers have been trained to assist with data entry. There were some technical hiccups along the way. LAC program developers and computer technicians visited Marrickville Legal Centre to assess the technological environment and view the database 'live'.

For the full year period, DVCAS individual client numbers have increased slightly (2005/06 – 251; 2006/07 – 255). However, the numbers for the first six months of the past four years demonstrate a further increase for Newtown DVCAS.

There has been a notable increase in the number of contacts with each individual client. This can be attributed to:

- New data collection in January 2007. Charge matters associated with an ADVO are now incorporated in the client contact statistics;
- Amendments to the NSW Crimes Act in March 2007, which had an impact on Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs). These amendments have meant that more ADVO applications have proceeded to a 'next mention' stage or hearing. It appears that fewer ADVO applications are being withdrawn on the first occasion at court; and
- Contact with more complex matters/clients. There have been a number of clients throughout this period who have had other matters, such as cross applications, charge matters and applications to vary.

Many of these clients have had additional issues such as intellectual disability, mental health problems, a need for an interpreter, child protection and drug and/or alcohol usage. These women require more contact with DVCAS for assistance with the court process and referral to appropriate services



Our Service

We provide services to clients in a number of ways:

- Pre-court contact or enquiries regarding ADVOs/domestic violence (19.2%) after referral from other sources. Referrals are made to Newtown DVCAS by various agencies. Referrals by other community services such as local refuges, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, May Murray Neighbourhood Centre and counsellors may not be reflected accurately in the data as these services often make the initial referral to police, which leads to an ADVO application and then subsequent contact with DVCAS. (See Table 1)
- Contact at Newtown Local Court. Of the new matters dealt with at Newtown Court this year, 76.2% had initial contact with Newtown DVCAS on the first court date;
- Support after court (4.5%) with advocacy in relation to legal representation/advice, housing, Centrelink benefits, information and referral for family law issues, child support, disability services, family support services, counselling and victims compensation. This support can often be lengthy due to adjourned mentions at court and/or in preparation for a hearing matter;
- Attendance at Newtown and Downing Centre Local Court (DCLC) to provide access to the safe room and support women through the hearing process. For example, in this period:
 - Toni arranged a seconded worker to support a client with a physical disability at DCLC;
 - Toni attended DCLC herself to support another client with a learning disability; and
 - On one day, Lee attended DCLC to support two women. One was particularly vulnerable, frightened and alone, and the other needed pro bono representation as she was defending a cross application. On this particular day, Redfern CAS was not available to support these women.

Referrals to DVCAS by:	Total %
Police	76.8
Local Courts/Prior DVCAS Contact	8.1
Marrickville Legal Centre	3.6
Other Public Legal Services	3.1
Other including: Welfare/Accommodation/CHC/Counsellor	8.4

Table 1

Domestic Related Assaults - Marrickville Local Government Area	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Rate per 100,000 population	409.1	505.7	480.5	466.0	539.2
Number of Incidents	313	384	364	350	405
Population	76515	75937	75752	75114	75114
Rank	65	49	45	49	39

Table 2

Origin: NSW Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research
2007-41201-3

Domestic violence in the Marrickville Local Government Area

Local Government Area (LGA) statistics show that local police are dealing with more victims of domestic violence. The incidents of domestic related assaults for Marrickville LGA are as follows:

Table 2 shows an increase in the number of domestic violence related assaults reported to police. It also shows a substantial increase in Marrickville LGA's ranking as an area where persons are likely to experience a domestic violence related assault.

Of the 405 assaults, 339 were reported as taking place in 'a residential dwelling' or 'residential temporary accommodation'. 83.7% of domestic assaults occur behind closed doors. Often there are children present and sometimes the child is the direct victim

of the assault. Children who are present at a domestic assault (even if they are not physically injured) are considered to be victims and are reported to Department of Community Services (DoCS) by police.

The Newtown DVCAS seconded workers are mandatory reporters and must make a report to DoCS (in consultation with and in support of the woman) if there are ongoing concerns for the care and protection of a child.

Community Development

Supporting other services and community events, Toni:

- Attended the MLC stall at the

launch of a Legal Aid DVD in Refugee Week;

- Attended live performances of African musicians and dancers at Petersham Town Hall in support of our outreach work with the local Sierra Leone Community;
- Participated in the MLC stall at Marrickville Festival;

- Attended the Jean's Place Women's Refuge Annual General Meeting;

- Presented at a Domestic Violence Hypothetical Panel at Sydney University in relation to service responses to domestic violence for women and children;

- Participated in the Leichhardt Women's Health Centre Service Evaluation; and

- Helped prepare for and attended the DVCC Launch at Parliament House.

Lee continued in the position of treasurer for the Leichhardt/Marrickville Domestic Violence Committee. The committee was involved in a number of projects, including:

Support VAW Campaign - 16 days of activism to stop violence against women (25th November to 10th December each year):

- The Committee ran a Stop Domestic Violence stall on 27th November 2006. All available 'sample' bags were given out on the day and many women approached the stall for information. Stickers were designed and fixed to the sample bags which read 'Domestic Violence hurts children too'; and
- On Stop Domestic Violence Day, 1st December 2006, Lisa Flood (DVLO Newtown police) and Lee Taylor walked King Street Newtown and gave away just under 200 white ribbons (purchased by the DV Committee) with information sheets about '16 days of activism to stop violence against women'.

"Fifty-seven per cent of Australian women involved in the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS) reported some level of physical/sexual harm over their life."

Australian Institute of Criminology 2004, Women's Experiences of Male Violence: Findings from the Australian Component of the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS), Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra

Resource Development:

- The 'Hands are not for Hitting' resource was developed. This resource showed drawings from children in refuges depicting their experiences of violence. Lee attended the launch of this resource at Balmain on 5 December 2006 as part of the '16 days of activism ...' activities;

- Update of local Domestic Violence Handbook – Lee contributed to updating and editing this resource booklet which provides referral numbers and information on issues which may affect women in the local area who have survived domestic violence; and

Development of 'purse sized' referral cards with telephone contact numbers. These cards fold so information is on the inside only and the contents are less conspicuous in a woman's purse or handbag.

Support for future project at Balmain Local Court

- Unlike Newtown Local Court, Balmain Court operates without a DVCAS on the AVO 'list' day. The Leichhardt LAC DVLO (Keryn Chisholm) and the local domestic violence committee have been aware of the lack of support for women at Balmain Court for some time. A 'safe room' is already available at Balmain police station, next door to the court. The DVLO needs support workers and a CAS to ensure this room functions to its full capacity. Lee and Lisa Woodgate

have prepared a funding submission to Legal Aid to propose that Newtown DVCAS coordinate this service.

- VAW Regional Reference Group (RRG).

During this period, Lee attended two regional meetings which included discussion about domestic violence services, upcoming forums or projects by other services, and peer support from other service coordinators/managers.

The Regional VAW specialist, Matina Mottee, has provided the Newtown DVCAS with support in relation to matters at Court and community development through:

- Coordination of VAW RRG meetings;

- Support with resource materials for court, including:

Supply of Attorney General's resource card for AVO clients at Court and liaison with DVCAS coordinator to evaluate its effectiveness and discuss proposed changes with Local Courts; and

Provision of afternoon tea on 14 December 2006, as thank you to court staff and seconded workers;

Arranging and attending a meeting with the Marrickville police commander and DVCAS coordinator to discuss the relationships between general duties police, DVLOs and DVCAS. This meeting led to the probationary constables' training day.

Community Legal Education

Community Legal Education sessions (CLE) were run at Marrickville Legal Centre this year. Newtown DVCAS contributed to these by arranging presenters of sessions about domestic violence for community workers. These included:

- November 2006: Judit Solyom (Women's Legal Services) attended MLC and gave a presentation to

discuss the changes to the Family Law Act for women who have experienced domestic violence;

- May 2007: Domestic Violence Advocacy Service (WLS) solicitor, Elena Grinfeld presented a session on amendments to the Crimes Act and the impact on ADVOs. The number of people booked for the session exceeded MLC's capacity, and the session was moved to Marrickville Town Hall.

Attendees provided positive feedback in relation to these workshops.

External CLEs

The following external CLE sessions were conducted:

- Toni ran a CLE on domestic violence and family law for 20 women from the local Vietnamese community in November 2006;
- Joint training with the local police and court staff was conducted in April 2006 on the intersection of the settlement process and domestic violence;
- Toni met with members of the African Communities Council to discuss a proposal to run a focus group with women in the local community;
- Toni ran a general CLE session for the African community in Marrickville on the services of the Legal Centre;
- Toni ran a women-only focus group on domestic violence for women from African communities. The aim of this group was to identify women's experiences and knowledge of laws and practices regarding domestic violence in their country of origin;
- Lee ran an information session at St George TAFE on 31 May 2007 for students participating in the Community Services (Welfare) course. The session included information on the impacts of domestic violence, ADVOs, court process, interagency responses, working in the sector and networking with other services;

- Preparation for a training/information day for probationary constables at Marrickville police station commenced during this reporting period. This training day will take place on 12 July 2007. Lee has arranged several services to make presentations on the day. These services include: NSW Police Education Services Unit, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, Marian Centre Women's Refuge, Jean's Place Women and Children's Refuge, Elsie Women's Refuge, Sydney Women's Counselling Service, Leichhardt Family Support Service and Rosemount Youth Services.

Staff Training

- Lee attended WDVCAP Network meetings and coordinator training;
- Lee and Toni attended a panel presentation on the new family law provisions conducted by Women's Legal Services NSW;
- Toni attended training on Working with Subpoenas conducted by WLS (DVAS) Training and Resource Unit (TRU);
- Lee attended TRU Support at AVO Hearing and Victim's Compensation Update training;
- Lee and Toni attended the WDVCAP Conference and the 10 year celebration of WDVCAP at Parliament House on International Women's Day; and
- Toni and Lee attended MLCs CLE on changes to Pt15A of the NSW Crimes Act.

Seconded Workers

A great team of seconded workers provided invaluable support to Newtown DVCAS this year. These workers are employed by other services within the community sector including Elsie Women's Refuge, Jean's Place, Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre, Marian Centre, May Murray Neighbourhood Centre,

Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, RPA Hospital and Centacare. They attend Newtown Local Court as support workers one Monday per month for three hours.

The service could not function without the collaboration of the agencies and the workers who support the Newtown DVCAS. The ongoing provision of seconded workers is greatly appreciated.

Workers who were seconded to the Newtown CAS throughout the year were:

Kimberley James
Mia Rose
Sandra Katbay
Ruth Paillas
Rosie Le
Michelle Taouil
Jenny Dunlop
Kate Beaver
Tracey Robinson
Hazel Cowen
Marta Ponti
Sharon Todd-Miller
Michelle Dunn
Kathy Kondogiorgis
Roxanne Cameron

Unfortunately throughout this period for reasons beyond our control we have said goodbye to:

Michelle Dunn
Kathy Kondogiorgis
Roxanne Cameron
Kate Beaver
Jenny Dunlop
Michelle Taouil

It is with much regret that we lose these valuable workers and wish them happiness and fulfilment on their chosen paths. Unfortunately this loss of workers constitutes nearly half the roster and a recruitment drive will be under way in the beginning of 2008 for new workers to assist the scheme.

Volunteers

Throughout the year five law students

from Sydney University have assisted as paralegals working with Newtown DVCAS. These students attend for 3-4 hours each, per week. The students were:

- PLT placement Chrystalla Gallos – at court Mondays 2006
- Clare Dahlstrom (August 2006 – July 2007)
- Theresa P (August 2006 – December 2006)
- Renae Carter (August 2006 – July 2007)
- Heather McIntyre (August 2006 – June 2007)
- Anna Payten (at court Mondays February 2007 – July 2007)

Two University of Technology Sydney law students assisted Toni with the development, promotion, coordination and evaluation, and follow-up for the CALD forum. They were Thao Tran and Kit Yap.

The assistance these volunteers provided to the Newtown CAS has been immeasurable and a special thank you must go out to each of these fabulous and very capable young people.

Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Worker Report

We began the reporting period by participating in Marrickville Council's review of its cultural diversity plan.

According to the Legal Aid Database Yearly Report, this year, CALD client contact increased to 29.4%. According to LGA statistics, there was a marked increase in new settlers in the Marrickville LGA from 266 in 2002 to 657 in 2006. The highest numbers of new settlers were from Vietnam, followed by China, the United Kingdom, India, Indonesia and Sierra Leone.

The WDVAS data reflects these statistics to some extent. The most frequently recorded languages for WDVAS clients were languages from China (2.4%). Clients who spoke Arabic, Portuguese, Tagalog and Turkish were each 2% of total contacts, and Vietnamese speakers were 1.2% of clients.

CALD contacts also reflect the area's well-established communities from Greece (2.7%) and the Philippines (2.7%). Emerging African communities' contact was 1.2%.

No Licence to Abuse in Anyone's Culture, Are We Equal Before the Law

During the period there was a tendency for some media commentators to link the defence of women from violence with demonising certain cultures. The result of this was that women from those cultures became more reluctant to speak out about violence for fear of bringing shame on their communities.

This trend was the motivation for running the No Licence to Abuse in Anyone's Culture forum at Bankstown Town Hall in May 2007. The aims of the forum were:

- To raise awareness of the universality of violence against women;
- To dispel the myths about racialised violence against women; and
- To address the special needs of women from culturally diverse backgrounds who seek the protection of the law.

Speakers included prominent academics and legal practitioners from the field, as well as representatives from NSW Police, Amnesty International, the NSW Violence Against Women Unit, Women's Aboriginal Legal Services, NSW Local Courts, Women's Legal Services NSW and the NSW Community Relations Commission.

NSW Network of WDV CAS CALD Specialist Workers

In July 2006 the WDV CAP at Legal Aid requested that the NSW CALD specialist workers consider a proposal to relocate their positions to a single location, and to act as a resource for all WDV CAS services throughout NSW. Since that time, the workers have met on a regular basis. These meetings have led to a number of joint initiatives including:

- Collation of data from WDV CAS Coordinators about their current CALD access strategies;
- A joint proposal to Legal Aid that workers remain located at the local level with greater resources provided for support;
- An amended CALD Specialist Worker job description; and
- The No Licence to Abuse in Anyone's Culture Forum

Toni also made a response to the Legal Aid proposal on behalf of the Newtown WDV CAS and MLC, highlighting the importance of CALD networking at a local level.

Submissions

- NSW Inquiry into the impact of the Family Law Amendment (Shared Parental Responsibility) Act 2006 (Cth)

Toni made submissions on behalf of the Family Law Forum to the NSW Inquiry about the impact of the new federal family law legislation on the operation of AVOs in NSW.

Among other matters we expressed concerns about the lack of information regarding screening standards in mediation centres, especially for disadvantaged clients, as well as the absence of referral protocols between DV Specialist Services and mediation services.



No Licence to Abuse in Anyone's Culture forum drew a lot of attention from women, DV workers, the police and proponents for change.

NSW State Plan

After consultation with the WDV CAS Network, Toni wrote and submitted the NSW WDV CAS Network submission to NSW State Plan. After ten years of service delivery to the community the NSW WDV CAS Network remains focused on a criminal justice response to domestic violence.

The Network works closely with the police, courts and community services. The WDV CAS Network remains ideally placed to provide advice to government on effective face-to-face service delivery.

CALD Case Study

Our client was a woman of a non-English speaking background. She was the subject of a police application for an ADVO at Newtown Court. At that time there were no family law orders in place.

After the first mention, we discovered that our client already had an AVO in place. We contacted the police to clarify the situation, and to enquire why the police had not charged our client's husband with breaching the order. We attended the police station with our client so she could make a new statement.

We explained to the police that there were two current orders in place on the police system, and discovered that the second order was incorrectly listed. We attended the police station again with our client to make a new application to vary and extend her original current order. She also had to have the order varied on an interim basis prior to attending court for the next mention, as the original order was about to expire.

After a contested hearing, the order was made in our client's favour. The police offered to follow up with charging for the original breach of the AVO, but our client did not want to go through more court processes. She had a family law application to consider and she did not want to antagonise her husband.

Family Law Mediation

We were allowed to attend the mediation service only after our client informed the service that she would not participate unless she had a support person present.

The service undertook a screening process before the actual mediation session. This included a long interview and the provision of information about the mediation process, and about referral services. However, the information was not translated and had no referrals to specialist domestic violence services.

The mediation was not successful because our client's husband became abusive and walked out of the mediation.

Administrative Service

The wheels of justice have been busily turning in 2006/2007. The Administrative team, with the support of an army of law students and paralegal volunteers, committed itself to providing support to the Centre so that it could continue to deliver services continuously and efficiently. The Centre enthusiastically conducted:

- General and children's legal advice;
- Tenants' advice and advocacy;
- Domestic violence court support;
- Popular community legal education; and
- Law reform campaigns.

Clients

The front desk is an important focal contact point in Marrickville Legal Centre. It facilitates access to the law, and provides social justice to our clients, who are a socially disadvantaged and economically needy community.

During the 2006/2007 year, the front desk handled more than 3206 information and referral enquiries, and 2348 client enquiries.

These figures may not fully represent the total number of telephone and client contacts. At times the high volume of client enquiries means that the Information and Referral Officer does not have the capacity to deal with the client enquiries and also record the enquiries for statistical purposes. As a result of this, we estimate that the actual number of client contacts is higher than the statistics indicate.

Staff

A full list of staff in the administrative team is located on page 12.

This year two long-term Marrickville staff members both celebrated 10 years at the Centre. Maria Elena Ang and Toni Brown started at the Centre

on the same day in August 1996.

The Financial Administrator, Cecilia Urbina, resigned in August 2006. Since that time, the Centre has utilised the services of accountants from an agency to undertake the financial administration of the Centre.

Centre Premises and Facilities

Occupational health and safety inspections were undertaken on a regular basis, and any outstanding matters are attended to promptly.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report, the Centre experienced significant problems with sewerage service and toilet facilities over a lengthy period of time this year. The Centre was without functioning toilets for extended periods of time. This problem has now been rectified.

The Centre received a computer equipment grant from the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department. This grant enabled us to develop the computer facilities available for our student volunteers. The Centre was able to set up a paralegal workstation, and dedicated workstations for the front desk student volunteers.

Legal Requirements

The Centre has met all legal requirements. This includes maintaining records as required by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission and the Australian Taxation Office.



Toilet saga





External Communications

The administrative team coordinates the administration of the Law for Community Workers workshop series, held twice a year at the Centre. The workshops continue to be a key venue for training. Community workers attend the workshops from organisations throughout the Centre's catchment area.

The workshops were popular and the Centre received many bookings. One workshop had to be moved to a larger venue to accommodate the volume of attendees. Thanks to the staff of the Marrickville Library for their assistance with providing a bigger venue at the Town Hall.

Community Events

The Centre staffed information stalls at a range of community events during 2006/2007, including:

- Marrickville Festival;
- Ashfield Carnival of Cultures;
- Refugee Week at Auburn Town Hall;
- Aboriginal Footy Knockout; and
- The Aboriginal Women's Corroboree.

The guessing competition held at the Centre's stall at the Marrickville festival was a definite drawcard for locals. Many hundreds of entries were received.

During Law Week, the Centre held a well-attended Law Week BBQ & Open Day. Many local residents and community workers took the opportunity to visit the Centre, obtain information and enjoy the BBQ.

Following last year's successful Annual Post Christmas Party event, the volunteers' party was again held at the outdoor bistro at the Royal Exchange Hotel. The event was attended by members of the Board, evening advice volunteers, daytime volunteers, and staff. People enjoyed a relaxing and sociable evening, and luckily the

thunder storm predicted for that evening by-passed the function venue.

Maria, who has attended many of these events, was particularly impressed with the wonderful and plentiful catering provided by the chef.

Daytime Volunteers

Over the last 12 months, we have held a series of volunteer orientation sessions and have increased the number of daytime volunteers. The introduction of a structured volunteer training program led by the Coordinator and supported by the different services has produced an excellent crop of volunteers.

Student volunteers provide an essential service at the front desk. This year, an average of two or three volunteers have attended each morning and afternoon shift. Students give a minimum commitment to provide at least six months volunteering at the Centre. However, many of our students volunteer for much longer.

Many of our our daytime volunteers have derived valuable experience during their time volunteering, which they find useful in both their academic and future professional lives. A number have also graduated to performing more demanding paralegal work such as giving tenancy advice and undertaking research to support the requirements of the services at the Centre. Other daytime volunteers assist with the Tenants' Union Hotline conducted at the Centre on Thursdays. These trained volunteers are sometimes called upon to undertake paid locum tenancy work at the Centre.



Daytime Volunteers

Adele Veness
 Agne Ratomskyte
 Alice Yan
 Amy Knibbs
 Angela Wen
 Anna Poukchanski
 Anna Payten
 Anne Minkyounng Kim
 Andrew McLeod
 Andrew Terrett
 Astrid Chan
 Bianca Tighe
 Caterina Kim
 Clare Dahlstrom
 Cicely Sylow
 Claire Armour
 Crystalla Gallos
 David Bijisma
 Derrick Lau
 Edward Chee
 Elliot Downing
 Frank Pantelis
 Gemma Lardner
 Georgia Flynn
 Ha Tat
 Heather McIntyre
 Isabel Cropley
 Jane Taylor
 Jane Wilkinson
 Janine Ding
 Jessica Evans
 Jennifer Zhang
 Jodie Lir
 Jee Yoon Chung
 Joanna Sutton
 Josephine Tay
 Katherine Boyle
 Katie Robb
 Katy Jenkins
 Kevin Leong

Leo Yang
 Liam Cavell
 Kit Yap
 Ling Ling Lu
 Lee Power
 Melissa Leong
 Maria Rodriguez
 Mai Campbell
 Michael Hemsall
 Molly Wen
 Monika Szuszkiewicz
 Natalie Kozlov
 Ningji Hu
 Patricia Ridoutt
 Renae Carter
 Rod Stockwell
 Rosemary Aloisio
 Sam Hallahan
 Sarah Elliott
 Sascha Morrell
 Sophia Cassimatis
 Sophie Inwood
 Susan Cirillo
 Stephen Jiao
 Tanya Le
 Theresa Pan
 Thao Tan
 Trieste Corby
 Warren Oakes
 Winston Yu
 Youn Hea Joo



Volunteer Voices



Anna Payten

I volunteered at Marrickville Legal Centre during 2006-2007. In that time I worked at the Centre and was also involved in the Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme located at Newtown Local Court. It was a fantastic and challenging experience that I would recommend to anyone. We began with a training session that covered the basics of how MLC ran and what our role was, but nothing could have fully prepared me for the first day. By the end of my first shift, I had answered calls from numerous clients, booked several appointments; tried to come to grips with the many acronyms used in the community legal world and discovered that the 'hold' button was an invaluable friend! It became clear from the outset that the services MLC provides make a real and practical difference in the lives of many people every day. The team at MLC were incredibly patient and helpful, and have inspired me to one day work in this field. Volunteering has given me an insight into the legal system that I believe no tutorial or lecture ever could. It has been one of the most memorable and rewarding experiences of my time at University.

Kit Yap

I'm a 3rd year BA (Journalism)/LLB student at UTS. I started at Marrickville Legal Centre in March this year, during my deferred semester. Originally, I took a leave of absence from university in search of direction and forward movement in my life. I feel that my work at Marrickville Legal Centre with the Children's Solicitor really gave me guidance and helped me re-motivate myself to study. The most rewarding things that I did with the Children's Solicitor were working on a Supreme Court test case (which involved discovery, legal research, and drafting legal documents) and participating in community legal education to simplify the law and show that justice doesn't always have a price. Just being in the presence of experienced solicitors with true community connections made me feel closer to the often neglected. I would recommend volunteering at Marrickville Legal Centre for the

experience, the fulfillment it brings to university study, and as a true perspective on how the law affects the great majority of the population.

Trieste Corby

and Gemma Lardner

We started here over a year ago as inexperienced and innocent law students. Initially the idea of answering the phone and having to deal with the huge range of client problems was incredibly intimidating but as time has gone on with the help of 'The Kit', the hold button and Maria we have found our feet, grown in confidence and learned a lot about the law. The best thing about volunteering at MLC is feeling like you're making a contribution at the same time as being able to benefit from it yourself. We have seen how the law is applied in real life, not just in the textbooks and made lots of friends along the way.

Warren Oakes

Originally I began at Marrickville because, having just returned from a volunteer trip to the Philippines, I wished to give something to the community in an area relevant to my interests. Six months down the track, and I already feel "part of the family". It's a cliché I know, but true.

Marrickville gives you an insight into law in its truest sense; both its limitations and the help it offers to the everyday person. It can get quite hectic at times, but the people here always have a smile on their face. Best of all, I really do feel like I am contributing to the community.



Ha Tat

It's really great to be working in the centre as a volunteer. I have learnt lots from all the wonderful staff. All I want to say is THANK YOU SO MUCH for your kind help and support to me since then. Thank you! All the best for the centre.

The best part about working at MLC is knowing that I am assisting people in the community to access legal advice and information.

Adele Veness

I thoroughly enjoyed volunteering at Marrickville Legal Centre. The centre provides an invaluable learning experience in a very welcoming atmosphere. Staff are always ready to offer assistance and advice. Managing such a large catchment area gives volunteers experience across a broad cross-section of legal issues and provides an excellent source of information for student volunteers and clients alike.

Edward Chee

I was still a first-year law student when I began volunteering at Marrickville Legal Centre. One year down the track, the experience I have gained has been invaluable. Volunteering here puts the law into context - knowing how the law affects the lives of individuals and the struggles they face really puts the law into perspective. The staff are very warm and their support goes a long way to making the experience enjoyable.



Thao Tran

I'm a 3rd year BA (Journalism)/LLB student at UTS. I started at Marrickville Legal Centre in May this year and it has been an eye-opening experience. From day one, I was thrown in the deep end and given hands-on experience dealing with clients at the front desk. However, the atmosphere of MLC is always supportive in helping me learn and it has been such a practical way to see how the law works outside the world of law textbooks. The most valuable part of working in a community legal centre such as Marrickville is that you learn how the law affects people from the grassroots level and it is a great place to complement your studies.

But it's not all work here, we have a bit of fun every now and then! The Law Week BBQ was a blast with everyone getting together and promoting the law. Most importantly, volunteering here has contributed to building my sense of social justice.

MLC has given me an insight into the dynamics of the law and I am very grateful to be part of the team. Every time my shift ends, I always look forward to coming back!

Apart from administrative duties, I was also given an opportunity to help with the "No Licence to Abuse in Anyone's Culture" forum on domestic violence - writing articles, transcribing and also drafting a follow-up report. I would recommend volunteering at MLC because you do really learn so many things uni alone can't teach but most of all, it is a rewarding experience to be able to contribute something back to the community.

Monika Szuszkiewicz

Volunteering at MLC has illustrated to me the importance of community legal centres, particularly for disadvantaged clients. It has been a rewarding and practical experience that has enabled me to acquire knowledge in a variety of areas such as tenancy, debt and employment. My contact with clients both over the phone and face-to-face has helped me to develop my interpersonal skills, and I have had the opportunity to work with interpreters. Through answering calls at the front desk I have learnt to extract information and identify legal problems and clients' needs.

Profiles

The 2006 Combined Community Legal Centres Group (CCLCG) Award

This award is presented to an individual, or a group of individuals, who, voluntarily in a NSW community legal centre have demonstrated outstanding commitment to improving access to justice in NSW, particularly for socially and economically disadvantaged people.

The 2006 Combined Community Legal Centres Group (CCLCG) Award was presented by Ms Michelle Jones, Chair, CCLCG, to Mr Paul Boers for his volunteer work at the Inner City Legal Centre especially his work on issues relating to Family Law and gay and lesbian parents and families.

Mr. John Gooley of Marrickville CLC was awarded 'Highly Commended' especially for his work on employment issues.

John has been a volunteer solicitor at Marrickville Legal Centre's evening advice since 2002. Earlier this year the centre's funding for specialist employment law advice clinic ceased, and John has voluntarily provided employment advice twice a week. This includes information, referral and advice, and representing clients in the State and Federal Industrial Relations Commissions. John also worked with other CLC workers to prepare submissions and submit information to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into the Impact of Workchoices in NSW. John's work has enabled socially disadvantaged people to access assistance on employment law.

John continues to volunteer his time at the Centre in the role of Chair of the MLC Board 2006/2007.



Toni Brown – 10 years Newtown Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme

In August 2006, Toni Brown celebrated 10 years' service with Marrickville Legal Centre. Toni has been a prominent figure with the Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme since its inception in 1996.

Over the years, Toni has put a lot into the DV team, in relation to both casework and policy. She has worked hard to achieve the team's noteworthy status and has increased access to justice for women seeking AVOs, raised public awareness of domestic violence, undertaken successful law reform and had input into major policy initiatives.

More recently, Toni has taken on the role of Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Specialist Worker. In that role, Toni has had a high level of success in promotional and educational activities which have increased the profile of the service and ensured that it is responsive to the needs of the community.

Toni started at the Legal Centre with a brief to set up the Newtown Women's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Scheme (WDVCAS). Establishing the framework of the scheme required extensive community consultation. During this process, Toni convened meetings with chamber magistrates, police, community workers, refuge workers and other interested community organisations. Toni also set up an advisory committee to oversee the establishment of the scheme and to advise her as Coordinator of the Scheme's services. The advisory committee members played an integral role in assisting Toni lay the foundation for the Scheme's future success.

Toni also worked closely with the local community as a representative on the DV Committee, which aimed to raise awareness of domestic violence, develop resources, identify gaps in service delivery and deliver community legal education.

Amidst all this, Toni was recruiting and training support workers for the Scheme so they could assist women at

Court. This was done in conjunction with the training and resource unit at the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service. As a consequence, the Newtown WDVCAS was probably one of the first schemes of its kind to develop a training module for court support workers and solicitors.

The WDVCAS began operation at Newtown Court in late January 1997. In the 10 years that it has been running, the Scheme has assisted thousands of women to seek protection from domestic violence.



The Scheme has always relied on the dedication and commitment of its seconded community workers and solicitors. Community workers from over 40 different language groups have worked on the scheme. Many community organisations have been with the Scheme since its establishment, including Wirringa Baiya, Jeans' Place, Elsie Women's Refuge, and The Marion Centre. Other organisations which contributed support to the scheme in its early years include the Marrickville Community Health Centre, Marrickville Family Support Service, Careforce, Barnardos, RPAH Social Workers, Centrelink Social Workers, Leichhardt Women's Health Centre, May Murray Neighbourhood Centre, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, Heenan Solicitors, Hunt and Hunt Solicitors, and the Domestic Violence Advocacy Service.

Looking back over these years, Toni has identified the positive changes that have been made:

"Over the past 10 years, there has been an increase in the number of AVO

matters initiated by the police. It is heartening that they have embraced the responsibility to take out AVOs and address domestic violence within the community. However, this does not mean that there is not a continuing need for private solicitors at court, particularly because of the need for assistance on related family law matters, and also to meet the needs of specific clients."

"There is an ever-increasing need to have information in relation to family law matters and there will inevitably be women who are reluctant to approach the police because the women are afraid of authority figures, or have experienced difficulties with the authorities in their country of origin."

In late 2005, Toni changed roles to take up the position of CALD Access Worker. At that time, the Marrickville local government area included 139 different cultural groups. Toni had been aware for a long time that needs of CALD women attending Court had to be addressed. In this new role, Toni has continued to attend court and undertake casework on behalf of CALD clients.

Some of the highlights that have been achieved since Toni took on this role include:

- The Family Law forum. This Forum was held in 2005, and was attended by 170 participants;
- The Eileen Pittway joint training of court staff, police & support workers. This training was held in 2006 and was focused on providing support to women of refugee and asylum seeker status; and
- The "No Licence to Abuse" forum. This forum was held in 2007 and was attended by over 200 participants. The aim of the Forum was to address the emergence of racist comments in the mainstream media, relating to perceptions of 'cultural' violence.

Since Lee Taylor commenced as Coordinator of the WDVCAS in 2005, Toni and Lee have worked together to make a team that provides an invaluable service to women seeking protection from domestic violence.

Maria Elena Ang - 10 years Information and Referral Officer

In 1994, while travelling by train, Maria saw Marrickville Legal Centre's sign at its premises in Robert Street. Little did she know that she would soon be working for the Centre, and would continue to do so for the next decade.

On 5 August 1996, Maria started as Information and Referral Officer, working 4 days a week. At that time, there were about a dozen employees at the Centre, at least half of whom worked part-time. With hardly any time for induction, Maria immediately plunged into the always busy, complex, dramatic and exciting world of the community legal sector.

Although the Centre was already seventeen years old at that stage, times were simpler then than they are now.

When she first started at the Centre, Maria did the payroll. She did ten employees' wages and entitlements by hand on a massive index card and pay slips were handwritten carbon copies. The client database was a very rudimentary one and there was no organised national database. A year later, the first national information scheme was introduced and it has now grown to the internet-based CLSIS database.

Client file management was still paper-based. The front desk was bleak, dark coloured wood – although it was a big improvement on the Centre's beginnings as a single chair and table at one corner of the Petersham Town Hall in 1979. The phones were a commander system, and playing overnight messages on the answering machine took up a lot of precious Centre opening time.

Then and now, our clients rely on an accessible, prompt and reliable legal service. It is a constant feature of the Centre that, it provides help when community members need emergency and urgent assistance. Some examples which Maria has seen have been:

- A group of boarders were

roughly ejected out of their boarding house with police, dogs and physical force;

- A mother was in fear of her children being spirited overseas by her ex-partner;
- A woman felt endangered and had nowhere to go because of a violent ex-partner;
- An elderly person was being eased out of her home by relatives; and
- A child had missed school for several days because of a school disciplinary measure.

Through the years, Maria has often witnessed and participated in the Centre providing more than legal help, particularly to very disadvantaged clients.

Being involved in the legal labyrinth, but not being a solicitor herself, Maria has developed her own radar for identifying client emergencies. This radar is essential to the Centre's response to such emergencies.

While sticking to Centre guidelines, Maria has been known to use her exceptional ways and sense of humour in dealing with clients over the phone. On one occasion, Maria was speaking with a woman who had been crying for nearly an hour. The woman was upset about breaking up with a boyfriend. The Principal Solicitor, who overheard the exchange, was on the floor with laughter when Maria advised the woman to "have a haircut and develop and join new activities or social groups." A month later the woman called back to thank Maria for her advice – she had found a new boyfriend.

Another time, a non-English speaking client rang and insisted on making an appointment for "eternity". Maria replied it would be difficult to make an appointment forever. However, Maria tried to ascertain details of the problem. The client explained in halting English, "You know, when a man and a woman go to bed together and a baby comes out". It transpired that the enquiry was about the more manageable issue of "paternity."

With the help of database-supplied statistics, observation and anecdotal evidence at the front desk, Maria has identified trends in legal problems and helped provide direction for the Centre

Maria is also a mine of information accumulated through her years at the Centre. Workers at the Centre often ask "Do you remember our client with the 70 cats? Do you recall the client with the unique-sounding name and equally unique employment issue? And where can we find the post-it notes?" It is extraordinary that in an office which is not large, Maria can find so many hidey holes for stationery.

Through the decade, Maria has seen several people fill the roles of Coordinator and Principal Solicitor. Each one of those has put their particular stamp on the Centre's systems and practice. Janet Loughman, for example, was interested in legal systems and procedures, access for CALD and ATSI clients, family law and children's issues. Pip Davis contributed to the development of the credit and debt, fines and victims' compensation areas. Emma Keir improved the Centre's capacity to deal with employment and discrimination matters.

As IRO, Maria has been faithful to an innovation introduced by Janet Loughman. Despite all advances in IT making the case for a paper-free office, Maria has stuck to the index card and logbook which are all that remains of a client's history after the paper records have been destroyed.

Maria herself introduced a minor innovation one day when she noticed how long it took to locate a particular Tenancy Service file among the piles of buff-coloured records in the office. Despite a budget constraint on stationery supplies, Maria managed to organise to colour code the different services' client file folders. This made it easier and faster to locate records.

Maria holds a Master of Arts in Journalism and she has put these skills to use in the Centre's annual reports. For a time, Maria had the goal of increasing the size of the annual report each year. However, in recent times, Maria has recognised concerns about the Centre's carbon footprint, and has limited the size of the annual report to

a more modest dimension.

15,000 information queries, Maria looks forward to the next decade of service to the community through the Marrickville Legal Centre.

One of the persistent features of the Centre while Maria has been here has been that the Centre is always busy. Maria claims we don't really have to advertise as people always find our service, often by word of mouth. Maria has said, "Our service announces itself. People outside our borders and catchment area try to come to MLC because of word of mouth, the quality of our service, the extraordinary attention we give to clients and the success of our matters. As I once told a local newspaper 'We're part of the social landscape.'"



However, the Centre's good reputation has not stopped Maria from promoting the business of Marrickville Legal Centre to the public and local businesses. These promotional opportunities have arisen during the annual Law Week Open Days, at stalls during Marrickville Festival and at many other centre celebrations and anniversaries. One year, Maria was able to convince many businesses in the area to display Open Day posters as well as donate food for the Open Day.

One of the highlights of Maria's tenure at MLC was during the twenty-first anniversary celebration of MLC at Marrickville Town Hall when a huge number of current and former staff, volunteer solicitors and law students past and present turned out to reminisce old times and help usher the service into its third decade.

Maria recalls the times when she has worked like an octopus as she multitasked between cradling the phone, data entry of client records, attending to walk-in clients, and dealing with requests for petty cash and other administrative issues. However, the institution of a volunteer system has helped with the work load. The daytime volunteers have helped deal with the enormous client base and legal problems they bring to the Centre. Many of these daytime volunteers have gone on to fruitful careers in the community legal sector, court system, government agencies and corporate firms but have never forgotten the lessons and life experiences they have picked from volunteering at the Centre.

After attending to over 10,000 clients at the first instance and fielding nearly

Marrickville Legal
Centre Financial
Statements
For The Year Ended
30 June 2007

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MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - 30 JUNE, 2007

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Report by the Committee

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE

The Committee, which is the Board of Directors of the Company, presents its report on the financial statements for the year ended 30 June, 2007.

The Committee has determined that the Company is not a reporting entity.

DIRECTORS

The following persons are Members of the Committee at the date of this report:

Dianne Anagnos
Appointed: 16/10/06

Colin Hesse
Appointed: 16/10/06
Ceased: 07/03/07

Kristian Bolwell
Appointed: 16/10/06

Julie Venamore
Appointed: 16/10/06
Ceased: 02/04/07

William Dermody
Appointed: 16/10/06

James Koulouris
Appointed: 02/11/98
Ceased: 16/10/06

John Michael Gooley
Appointed: 16/10/06

Hannah Sophia Robert
Appointed: 06/12/04
Ceased: 28/09/06

Janet Loughman
Appointed: 16/10/06

Noel Patrick O'Keefe
Appointed: 24/10/05
Ceased: 16/10/06

Patricia McDonough
Appointed: 16/10/06

Nick Yetzotis
Appointed: 16/10/06

PRINCIPAL ACTIVITIES

The Company's principal continuing activities during the year involve the provision of legal advice for migrants, children under 18 and adults in special underprivileged need.

REVIEW OF OPERATIONS

The surplus from operations for the year was \$74,324.
(2006: surplus of \$6,308).

Report by the Committee
continued

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

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MATTERS SUBSEQUENT TO THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR

At the date of this report, the Committee is not aware of any circumstances which have arisen since 30 June, 2007 which would significantly affect:

- (a) the Company's operations in financial years subsequent to 30 June, 2007;
- (b) the results of those operations; or
- (c) the Company's state of affairs, in financial years subsequent to 30 June, 2007.

LIKELY DEVELOPMENTS

At the date of this report, the Committee is not aware of any matter or circumstances that have arisen since 30 June, 2007 which would significantly affect:

- (a) likely developments in the operations of the Company; or
- (b) the expected results of those operations.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS' BENEFITS

Since 30 June, 2006 no Committee Member has received or become entitled to receive a benefit because of a contract made by the Company or related body corporate with the Committee Member or with a firm of which he or she is a Member, or with a Company in which he or she has a substantial financial interest.

COMMITTEE REMUNERATION

All Committee Members act in an honorary capacity. No fees are paid or payable and no statistics kept on attendances.

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION

A copy of the Auditor's Independence Declaration as required under Section 307C of the Corporations Act, 2001 is set out on Page 3.

Signed at Marrickville this 8 day of OCTOBER 2007.


.....
~~Committee/(Director) Member~~


.....
Committee/(Director) Member

Auditor's
Independence
Declaration

SANDRA D. GROLLMUS

Registered Company Auditor
Registered Tax Agent

7 BURRANEER CLOSE
ALLAWAH 2218
TELEPHONE 9546 7366
FAX 9546 2267

AUDITOR'S INDEPENDENCE DECLARATION
UNDER SECTION 307C OF THE CORPORATIONS ACT, 2001
TO THE DIRECTORS OF MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE

I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, during the year ended 30 June, 2007, there have been:

- (i) no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act, 2001 in relation to the audit; and
- (ii) no contraventions of any applicable code of professional conduct in relation to the audit.

Dated 21/9/07


SANDRA GROLLMUS

Registered Company Auditor

Registered No. 1254

Balance Sheet
as at 30 June 2007

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2007</u> \$	<u>2006</u> \$
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>			
Cash	5	409,822	322,859
Receivables		12,473	9,001
Prepayments		9,874	8,623
		<u>432,169</u>	<u>340,483</u>
<u>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</u>			
Property, Plant & Equipment	6	23,592	27,698
Prepayment		19,312	21,072
		<u>42,904</u>	<u>48,770</u>
<u>TOTAL ASSETS</u>		<u>475,073</u>	<u>389,253</u>
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
Creditors & Accrued Expenses		38,377	38,672
Deferred Grants		5,326	18,729
Provisions	7	46,927	38,228
		<u>90,630</u>	<u>95,629</u>
<u>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>			
Provisions	8	119,762	101,507
Deferred Grant		19,312	21,072
		<u>139,074</u>	<u>122,579</u>
<u>TOTAL LIABILITIES</u>		<u>229,704</u>	<u>218,208</u>
<u>NET ASSETS</u>		<u>\$245,369</u>	<u>\$171,045</u>
<u>EQUITY</u>			
Accumulated Funds		<u>\$245,369</u>	<u>\$171,045</u>

The above Balance Sheet should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes.

Income Statement
for the year ended
30 June 2007

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2007</u> \$	<u>2006</u> \$
Operating Revenue	2	774,006	719,130
Interest Received		23,534	18,770
		<u>797,540</u>	<u>737,900</u>
Less			
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Administration		95,320	78,303
Client/Community Servicing		14,185	18,152
Occupancy		10,876	11,693
Staff		602,835	623,444
		<u>723,216</u>	<u>731,592</u>
OPERATING SURPLUS		74,324	6,308
Accumulated Funds brought forward		171,045	164,737
ACCUMULATED FUNDS carried forward		<u>\$245,369</u>	<u>\$171,045</u>

Cash Flow Statement

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2007</u> \$	<u>2006</u> \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES & GOVERNMENT GRANTS			
Receipts from clients/legal costs awarded/community (incl. GST on Government Grants)		203,076	116,129
Government Grants		736,130	705,262
		<u>939,206</u>	<u>821,391</u>
Payments to creditors, employees and GST		(873,184)	(815,803)
NET OPERATING CASH FLOWS		66,022	5,588
Interest Received		23,534	18,770
		<u>89,556</u>	<u>24,358</u>
NET CASH FLOWS FROM ALL ACTIVITIES		89,556	24,358
Payments for property, plant & equipment		(2,593)	(8,606)
NET INCREASE IN CASH HELD		86,963	15,752
Cash at the beginning of the financial year		322,859	307,107
CASH AT THE END OF THE FINANCIAL YEAR	5	<u>\$409,822</u>	<u>\$322,859</u>

The above Cash Flow Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying Notes.

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This financial report is a special purpose report prepared for use by Directors and Members of the Company, and the funding bodies. The Directors have determined that the Company is not a reporting entity.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the relevant Accounting Standards, other mandatory professional reporting requirements and the disclosure requirements of Schedule 5 of the Corporations Regulations.

The results of operations and financial position of the Centre are accounted for and reported in these financial statements under the historical cost convention. Such convention has no regard either to the changing value of money, or the increased cost of replacing operating capability used in operations.

These policies are consistent with previous years.

(a) Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated on a straight line basis to write off the net cost of each item of property, plant & equipment over its expected useful life. Additions are depreciated from date of acquisition.

(b) Income

Special purpose Grants from which benefits will be derived in future periods are credited to deferred Grants for release in such future periods.

(c) Cash

For purposes of the Cash Flow Statement, cash includes deposits at call which are readily convertible to cash on hand and which are used in the cash management function on a day-to-day basis.

(d) Employee Entitlements

The amounts expected to be paid to employees for their pro-rata entitlement to long service and annual leave are accrued annually at current pay rates. In accordance with employment contracts an amount has been set aside in the event of redundancy.

Notes to Financial
Statement
continued

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$	\$
2. OPERATING REVENUE		
Grants received from:		
Legal Aid Commission - Commonwealth	145,257	139,324
Legal Aid Commission - State	246,662	225,182
Legal Aid Commission - Deferred Grant	13,600	-
Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service	253,410	238,891
Domestic Violence CAS	90,801	88,265
Other	3,824	2,586
Legal Costs Received	9,873	13,953
Donations & Memberships	806	547
Other	9,773	10,382
	<u>\$774,006</u>	<u>\$719,130</u>
3. OPERATING SURPLUS		
Operating Surplus is arrived at after charging the following specific items:		
<u>Charges</u>		
Depreciation - Plant & Equipment	9,847	11,639
Provision for Employee Entitlements	54,538	58,219
	<u>64,385</u>	<u>70,858</u>
4. INCOME TAX		
Marrickville Legal Centre is exempt from Income Tax, being a charitable institution under Section 23 (e) of the Income Tax Assessment Act.		
5. CURRENT ASSETS - Cash		
Cash at Bank	5,271	15,329
Deposits at Call	404,551	307,530
	<u>\$409,822</u>	<u>\$322,859</u>

Notes to Financial
Statement
continued

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$	\$
6. NON-CURRENT ASSETS - Property, Plant & Equipment		
Land & Buildings		
Leasehold Improvements - at cost	38,000	38,000
Accumulated Amortisation	(38,000)	(38,000)
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Plant & Equipment		
At cost	101,657	98,338
Accumulated Depreciation	(78,065)	(70,640)
	<u>23,592</u>	<u>27,698</u>
Total Property, Plant & Equipment	<u>\$23,592</u>	<u>\$27,698</u>
7. CURRENT LIABILITIES - Provisions		
Employee Entitlements	33,106	30,859
Equipment Replacement	13,821	7,369
	<u>\$46,927</u>	<u>\$38,228</u>
8. NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES - Provision		
Employee Entitlements	<u>\$119,762</u>	<u>\$101,507</u>
9. REMUNERATION OF AUDITOR		
Audit Fee	3,520	3,000
Other Benefit	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
10. INCORPORATION		
Marrickville Legal Centre was incorporated on 16 May, 1983 as a Company Limited by Guarantee. In accordance with Clause 7 of the Company's Memorandum of Association, each Member's liability is limited to \$100.		

Notes to Financial
Statement
continued

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

11. SEGMENT REPORTING

The Company provides legal advice for migrants, children under 18 and adults in special underprivileged need within Australia, its revenue being principally derived from State and Commonwealth grants.

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$	\$
12. RECONCILIATION OF NET CASH OUTFLOW FROM OPERATING AND GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES TO OPERATING SURPLUS		
Net cash inflows from operating activities & government grants	89,556	24,358
In Kind Donation	3,148	-
Depreciation & Asset Replacement	(16,299)	(19,008)
Change in operating Assets and Liabilities		
Increase/(decrease) in Receivables	3,472	445
Increase/(decrease) in Prepayments	(509)	(16,523)
Decrease/(increase) in Creditors & Accrued Expenses	295	(11,849)
Decrease/(increase) in Employee Entitlements Provision	(20,502)	40,499
Decrease/(increase) in deferred grant	15,163	(11,614)
Operating Surplus	<u>\$74,324</u>	<u>\$ 6,308</u>

13. DEFERRED GRANT

A grant of \$44,000 received during the year ended 30 June, 1993 related to the lease premium and is being recognised as revenue over twenty-five years as benefits are derived from the lease.

Income Statement
for the year ended
30 June 2007

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

INCOME STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Grants - Legal Aid Commission		
Commonwealth	145,257	139,324
State	246,662	225,182
Deferred Grant	13,600	-
- Tenants Advice and		
Advocacy Service	253,410	238,891
- Domestic Violence CAS	90,801	88,265
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	749,730	691,662
Unspent Grants brought forward	403	440
Other Grants	3,421	2,146
Casework Income		
TAAS Subsidies/Refunds	-	203
Legal Costs Received	9,873	13,750
Consultancies	2,835	2,353
Interest Received	23,534	18,770
Membership Fees & Donations	806	547
Seminars/Conferences	1,000	2,264
Sundry Income	1,350	811
Workers Compensation Claims	4,588	4,954
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	797,540	737,900
Less		
<u>EXPENDITURE</u> - Schedule	723,216	731,592
	<hr/>	<hr/>
<u>SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR</u>	\$74,324	\$ 6,308
	<hr/>	<hr/>

Schedule of Expenditure
for the year ended
30 June 2007

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

SCHEDULE OF EXPENDITURE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE, 2007

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2006</u>
	\$	\$
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
<u>Administration Expenses</u>		
Accounting Fee	14,984	-
Advertising/Staff Recruitment	8,045	3,766
Audit Fees	3,582	3,000
Bank & Financial Charges	1,352	1,419
Committee/Miscellaneous Expenses	275	180
Computer Expenses	6,355	6,760
Depreciation	9,847	11,639
Equipment - Minor	150	2,590
- Replacement	6,452	7,369
Insurance - General/PI	6,150	6,821
Levies	5,968	5,075
Postage/Courier	2,951	2,301
Stationery/Office Supplies	5,295	5,145
Subscriptions/Library	7,263	5,058
Telecommunications	16,651	17,180
	<u>95,320</u>	<u>78,303</u>
<u>Client/Community Servicing Expenses</u>		
Catering/Venue Hire	1,086	1,456
Community Development	1,234	330
Interpreters	-	168
Non-recoverable Disbursements	560	647
Printing/Production	8,197	13,210
Travel/Accommodation	2,501	1,269
Volunteers' Expenses	607	1,072
	<u>14,185</u>	<u>18,152</u>
<u>Occupancy Expenses</u>		
Cleaning	4,337	3,845
Electricity	2,763	2,533
Rent/Leasehold Expenses	1,760	1,760
Repairs/Maintenance	1,338	2,133
Security	678	1,422
	<u>10,876</u>	<u>11,693</u>
<u>Staffing Expenses</u>		
Conferences/Seminars	1,654	3,574
Consultants	1,993	5,111
Other Salary Related Expenses	1,691	912
Practising Certificates	863	1,440
Staff Training	709	3,816
Superannuation	44,580	50,710
Wages/Salaries	547,363	554,631
Workers Compensation Insurance	3,982	3,250
	<u>602,835</u>	<u>623,444</u>
<u>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>\$723,216</u>	<u>\$731,592</u>

Committee's/(Directors')
Declaration

MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)
A.B.N. 53 699 012 017
A.C.N. 002 059 485

COMMITTEE'S/(DIRECTORS') DECLARATION

The Committee/(Directors) Members declare that:

1. the financial statements and notes, as set out on pages 4 to 12, are in accordance with the Corporations Act, 2001 and:
 - (a) comply with Accounting Standards and the Corporations Regulations, 2001; and
 - (b) give a true and fair view of the financial position as at 30 June, 2007 and of the performance for the year ended on that date of the Company.
2. the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Finance Officer have each declared that:
 - (a) the financial records of the Company for the financial year have been properly maintained in accordance with Section 286 of the Corporations Act, 2001;
 - (b) the financial statements and notes for the financial year comply with Accounting Standards; and
 - (c) the financial statements and notes for the financial year give a true and fair view.
3. in the Committee/(Directors) Members' opinion there are reasonable grounds to believe that the Company will be able to pay its debts as and when they become due and payable.


.....
Committee/(Director) Member


.....
Committee/(Director) Member

Signed at Marrickville this 8 day of OCTOBER 2007.

Independent Audit Report
to Marrickville Legal
Centre Members

SANDRA D. GROLLMUS

Registered Company Auditor
Registered Tax Agent

7 BURRANEER CLOSE
ALLAWAH 2218
TELEPHONE 9546 7366
FAX 9546 2267

INDEPENDENT AUDIT REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF
MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)

SCOPE

I have audited the financial statements of MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE (A Company Limited by Guarantee) for the year ended 30 June, 2007 as set out on pages 4 to 12. The Company's Committee Members are responsible for the financial statements. I have conducted an independent audit of these financial statements in order to express an opinion on them to the Members of the Company.

My audit has been conducted in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards to provide reasonable assurance as to whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. My procedures included examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and other disclosures in the financial statements, and the evaluation of accounting policies and significant accounting estimates. These procedures have been undertaken to form an opinion as to whether, in all material respects, the financial statements are presented fairly in accordance with Accounting Standards and other mandatory professional reporting requirements and statutory requirements so as to present a view which is consistent with my understanding of the Company's financial position, the results of its operations and its cash flows.

The audit opinion expressed in this report has been formed on the above basis.

INDEPENDENCE

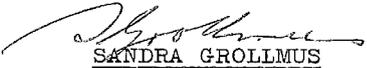
In accordance with ASIC Class Order 05/83, I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief that the Auditor's Independence Declaration set out on page 3 of the financial report has not changed as at the date of providing my audit opinion.

AUDIT OPINION

In my opinion, the financial statements consisting of Balance Sheet, Income Statement, Cash Flow Statement, Schedule and Notes of MARRICKVILLE LEGAL CENTRE are in accordance with:

- (a) the Corporations Act, 2001, including:
 - (i) giving a true and fair view of the Company's financial position as at 30 June, 2007 and of its performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - (ii) complying with Accounting Standards in Australia and the Corporations Regulations, 2001; and
- (b) other mandatory professional reporting requirements in Australia.

Dated 21/9/07


SANDRA GROLLMUS
Registered Company Auditor
Registered No. 1254

Media Contact

Inner West Courier February 13, 2007

Rental crisis hammered home

Joseph Sumegi & Isaac Wilson

The rental property shortage in the Inner West is hitting the hip pocket of families the hardest, according to the Inner West Tenancy Advice Service.

Felicity Johnson from the peak resource unit said families were struggling to find rentals and it was "easier for singles with disposable incomes to share a place and pay higher rent".

"Families have more of a fixed budget and cannot stretch how much they put aside for rent every week like someone with a high disposable income, so medium and large families are the ones who are starting to miss out on quality rental," she said.

Carlene Nolan, who is a property manager with Devine Real Estate in Strathfield, said she never encourages people to pay more than the advertised price but still finds prospective tenants are applying to pay between \$10 and \$20 extra a week.

"When people come to a property and see at least 20 groups there, they are thinking they've got a better chance if they apply with a little bit extra money," she said.

Matthew Blackmore, a property manager with Elders Real Estate Burwood, said there were fewer available rental properties.

"Towards the end of last year we had 40 to 50 properties, now we've only got about 20," he said. "We had



Real estate agents deny there are rental auctions in the Inner West but say availability is at an all-time low. Photo: Alan Place

17 rental increases last week. Because there's a shortage, the owners are taking advantage of the situation."

One person caught in the Inner West rental squeeze is bar manager Kate Noiles. After endless bidding wars and a failed attempt to secure a home by offering \$360-a-week on a

place advertised for \$330, Ms Noiles said she and her flatmate were so desperate they settled on a property they hated and paid too much for.

"We were paying \$400-a-week for a two-bedroom terrace that was falling down around us," she said.

The Sydney Chamber of Commerce

is concerned the market will force low income earners out of Sydney, risking the livelihood of local businesses.

"To maintain Sydney's interstate competitiveness, it's critical that there is an availability of housing to cater for our diverse workforce," executive director Patricia Forsythe said.

Rental squeeze forces tenants to offer extra cash

Kelly Burke
Consumer Affairs Reporter

COMPLAINTS about steep rises in rent and difficulties in finding affordable accommodation – particularly in the inner suburbs – have risen considerably over the past six months, tenants' groups say.

Desperate prospective tenants are being forced into cut-throat bidding wars as the squeeze on Sydney's rental market tightens.

Existing tenants were becoming more reluctant to take action against unreasonable demands from landlords, Mary Flaskas, from the Inner Sydney Tenants' Advice and Advocacy Service, said.

"They know what the market is like, and they feel if they complain about anything they'll just get kicked out ... they'll be told, 'If you don't like it then leave'," she said.

Eloise Finlay, a tenants' advocate in the inner west, said more people were bringing in stories of long queues at prop-

erty inspections at which desperate would-be tenants offered property managers a higher rent than advertised to secure a tenancy agreement.

Some callers suggested the real estate agents were encouraging the practice, but this has been strongly denied by the real estate industry.

Michael Stavrianos, the director of LJ Hooker Woollahra, said between 5 and 10 per cent of rental seekers were making offers above the advertised price, "but we certainly don't encourage it".

Such offers were conveyed to the property owner, who made the final decision, he said, "and we let the other [potential] tenants know".

George Hatzaras, the manager of the Newtown branch of Richardson & Wrench, said offers to pay more than the advertised rent were not common but did happen.

"We can't stop people from coming in and offering to pay an extra \$20, but we don't encour-

age it," he said. "We don't think it's healthy".

In the inner west, rental prices for family homes had risen 20 per cent in 12 months, Mr Hatzaras said, while rents for units had risen between 10 and 15 per cent.

Over the same time, the vacancy rate dropped from 3.5 per cent to 1.5 per cent.

At an inspection last Saturday for a house in Gladstone Street in Newtown, 50 people turned up during the 15-minute process, Mr Hatzaras said.

The Real Estate Institute of NSW, which is lobbying for the abolition of land tax on all residential properties, said the state's rental accommodation shortage was the result of property investors opting for alternatives such as superannuation.

"But tenants cannot live in a share portfolio," said Cristine Castle, the institute's president. "It will take a major confidence boost to encourage investors to return to residential property, which can still deliver substantial returns over the long term."

International Union of Tenants Down Under

The International Union of Tenants visits Australia.

Magnus Hammar, Secretary-General of the International Union of Tenants (IUT), toured Australia during November. Mr Hammar visited the Tenants' Unions of Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, NSW and Queensland. His visit coincided with the 20th anniversary of the Tenants' Union of Queensland and the 30th anniversary of the Tenants' Union of NSW.

The International Union of Tenants was founded in 1928 by the Swedish Union of Tenants. The IUT participates in the United National (UN) Economic and Social Council as well as in the European Council. The IUT has 54 members from 42 countries (including the Tenants' Union of NSW).

While in Sydney, Mr Hammar visited a Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service in Marrickville as well as a housing co-operative in the inner city and he spoke at the office of the Tenants' Union of NSW.

Mr Hammar spoke about the state of rental housing in Europe where many countries have conservative governments who are moving towards the sale of their public housing assets. The main problems facing tenants in Central and Western Europe are rent increases, 'invisible' landlords, bad management, ignorance (of their rights) and insecure tenancies.

The state of rental housing is grimmer in the Balkan States where there is little

protection for tenants. Many properties have been handed back to the relatives of those forced to leave during WW2. The new owners often see this property as an unexpected windfall and pay little regard to the tenants.

Some of these new owners, in an attempt to force an eviction, increase the rent by 200% or send 'hit men' to cut off the power supply or take out windows (in the middle of winter with the excuse that they are upgrading the windows).



L-R: Lisa Woodgate, Eloise Finlay & Magnus Hammar,
Secretary-General of the IUT

Mr Hammar also said that the IUT welcomes African tenant organisations to membership. Many African tenants suffer from inhumane removals which leave families homeless. Some of the problems faced by African tenants' organisations are the lack of legal protection for tenants as well as the rapid urbanisation that is accompanied by unplanned settlement.

The IUT is committed to putting housing on the agenda of the European Council as well as working with the UN to stop unfair evictions and inhumane removal. For more information about the International Union of Tenants visit www.iut.nu.

Opinion & Letters

■ FIRST WORD

No solution in a callous return to dogs and cages

Your report "Less help for young Aborigines in custody" (July 3) exposes the shameful truth that the Department of Juvenile Justice is still failing young Aboriginal people. You would think removing all six Aboriginal program support officers was bad enough, but the foolishness doesn't stop there.

In this year's budget the NSW Government reduced funding for residential care and child support by 11 per cent in real

terms, with funding to non-government organisations also cut by 8 per cent. The budget papers refer to a "community integration program", however no detail is provided as to the nature of this program or its intended results.

While post-release and preventive programs lose much-needed resources, admissions to detention facilities are expected to increase by 6 per cent in the next 12 months.

According to the budget papers, 4300 young people are expected to go through custodial services this year.

In detention, a much harsher regime now operates after the proclamation of the Children (Detention Centres) Amendment Act on July 1. This legislation allows adult corrections officers to use attack dogs in juvenile detention centres, allows for indefinite segregation of a detainee and extends isolation

of a detainee to 24 hours as a form of punishment.

This not only offends international human rights standards, it contravenes several recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. It will do nothing to break the cycle of crime. It will further entrench recidivist behaviour.

Shame on the NSW Government. By putting more young Aboriginal people in detention it

turns its back on the principle of crime prevention, diversion and rehabilitation.

The Government might win a few more "law and order" votes but it condemns our whole community by failing to break the cycle of imprisonment and crime.

Michelle Burrell NCOSS,
Julianne Elliot Youth Justice Coalition
James McDougall National Children's and Youth Law Centre,
Brett Collins Justice Action, Sydney

turns its back on the principles of crime prevention, diversion and rehabilitation.

The Government might win a few more "law and order" votes but it condemns our whole community by failing to break the cycle of imprisonment and crime.

Michelle Burrell NCOSS,
Julianne Elliot Youth Justice Coalition,
James McDougall National Children's and Youth Law Centre,
Brett Collins Justice Action, Sydney

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2006

NEWS innerwestcourier.com.au

Free advice



Christmas is a busy time at the centre. Photo: Timothy Clapin

Marrickville Legal Centre is providing free tenancy advice five days a week for people living in the Marrickville, Ashfield, Burwood

month at the Summer Hill Community Centre from 10 am to noon. Tenancy advisor Felicity Johnson said every year around



a Wolters Kluwer business



NSW: Winners of the 2006 Justice Awards

Wednesday, 01 November, 2006

The 2006 Justice Medal, for outstanding individual achievement in improving access to justice, was presented to Peter Stapleton on 31 October at Parliament House Sydney. His work over four decades included the establishment of community legal centres (Redfern and Marrickville), the Aboriginal Legal Services, pro bono programs for law firms and he was recently named Chair of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre.

Ms Chris Ronalds AM SC was 'Highly Commended' for advising governments on access to justice issues and as a champion of reform in areas including affirmative action, sex discrimination, disability discrimination, and her support for Indigenous students and barristers.

The Aboriginal Justice Award was presented to Mr Lester Bostock for his role in raising the profile of the unmet legal needs of Aboriginal people with disabilities, promoting and protecting their human rights, and advocacy on their behalf.

Ms Vera Lovelock was 'Highly Commended' for her work supporting families and individuals and her efforts to help police, courts and lawyers better understand the communication issues faced by Aboriginal people in the criminal justice system.

2006 Law And Justice Volunteer Award: presented to Balmain For Refugees for the group's voluntary efforts to help asylum seekers at Villawood Detention Centre and those released without funds into the community

'Highly Commended' was Mrs Ruth Alley who, in her 80s, still volunteers three days a week helping visitors to Newcastle Court.

2006 Pro Bono Partnership Award: presented to Otto Stichter & Associates and The Exodus Foundation for a 20 year partnership that has assisted many of the Foundation's clients with legal problems and by providing pro bono professional services to the Foundation, which can then concentrate on what it does best - delivering services to disadvantaged people.

2006 Law Society President's Award: presented to Ms Salina Sadiq for accepting referrals in a variety of legal areas including Criminal, Civil and Immigration matters.

The 2006 Combined Community Legal Centres Group (Cclcg) Award: presented to Mr Paul Boers for his volunteer work at the Inner City Legal Centre especially his work on issues relating to Family Law and gay and lesbian parents and families.

Mr John Gooley of Marrickville CLC was 'Highly Commended' especially of his work on employment issues.

2006 Liac Centre of Excellence Awards were presented to:

- Richmond-Upper Clarence Regional Library for its monthly free legal advice service at the Casino Library.
- Port Stephens Library for its activities during National Law Week 2006, which raised awareness of the law@your library service and its resources.

The 2006 Law and Justice Address was delivered by The Right Hon Malcolm Fraser. The full text of the speech is available [here](#).

**Marrickville Legal Centre
338 Illawarra Road
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ABN 53 699 012 017**