

NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE

Pro Bono News Issue 20: Volume 1/2006

Welcome to the first edition for 2006 of the eNewsletter of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre (NPBRC). The Centre is affiliated with the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales and is funded by the Commonwealth and State and Territory Attorney-General's Departments. To access archived e-Newsletters [click here](#).

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1 Centre news

Welcome to the Centre's first eNewsletter for 2006. Centre director John Corker has just returned from attending the US Pro Bono Institute (PBI) annual seminar held in Washington DC (see report below) and visiting other pro bono organisations in North America including Pro Bono Law Ontario. The seminar sessions I found most useful were those focussed on community organisations successfully 'pitching' pro bono projects to law firms. Posted on the Centre's website and [available for download](#) are notes from the seminar that provide tips from a law firm, a community organisation and the director of the PBI, Esther Lardent on how to pitch a new pro bono project to a law firm or in-house legal team. Whilst the US has a more developed pro bono environment than Australia, these basic tips are still highly relevant to the development of new pro bono projects in Australia.

There are Australian firms who are actively seeking 'signature projects' to be involved in, i.e projects that provide pro bono opportunities that can be met by a firm-wide effort perhaps focussed on a group of clients or a subject area of law. Community organisations who are interested in developing a pitch for such a project are encouraged to contact [John Corker](#).

The Centre is pleased to welcome its new Administrator, Stephanie Astle, a recently admitted lawyer, who has worked at the NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre and at Freehills. We are also seeking to appoint a new project officer ([see below](#)).

2 New Legal Aid Fund for public interest matters

The NSW Legal Aid Commission (LAC) has established a mechanism for providing legal aid funding for public interest human rights matters. A Legal Aid Public Interest Human Rights Committee has been formed to assess applications and make recommendations to the LAC. For the first year a budget allocation of \$100,000 has been made for international, national and state matters.

Members of the Committee include: Andrea Durbach (UNSW) – Chair; George Williams (UNSW alternate); Ben Saul (UNSW); Shauna Jarrett (NSW Law Society); Pauline Wright (NSW Law Society Alternate); Sarah Pritchard (NSW Bar Association); Nichols Poynder (NSW Bar Association Alternate).

Applicants must fulfill a means test and a merit test demonstrating the case is of significant wider public interest, is of overwhelming importance to the client or raises significant human rights issues.

More information about the application process is available from Stella Sykiotis, Director, Civil Law (LAC) (Ph: 02 9219 5828)

3 Firm initiative: latest tax information for charities and not-for-profits

Aware that tax laws relating to not-for profits change regularly, Blake Dawson Waldron (BDW) have set up a free email subscription list for charities and not-for profits. BDW will distribute bulletins and emails on relevant tax issues to all subscribers. [Click here to subscribe](#) to the list.

4 WA Homeless Persons Legal Clinic?

The WA Attorney General has approved a seed grant of \$25,000 to support an investigation into the feasibility of establishing a Homeless Persons Legal Clinic based in Perth, Western Australia. Pro bono lawyers have been advocating for the establishment of the Clinic in light of the successful models in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales. The grant will be administered by Minter Ellison lawyers and be overseen by an informal Steering Committee. For more information, contact David Ritter e: dritter@yamatji.org.au or Max Beckerling e: maxb@dch.com.au.

5 QPILCH funding for training framework

QPILCH has received \$22,554 from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund to develop a training framework for its clinics and clinical legal education programmes. As part of this project it intends to develop a computer-based system to manage, store and retrieve documents and information resources and redevelop its website. This will assist QPILCH to train and support the lawyers, students and volunteers who deliver pro bono services to clients. It will have application to future activities of QPILCH and CLCs and facilitate remote access. QPILCH would like to hear from any organisations and firms interested in sharing information and ideas related to the project. Contact Gayle Gasteen at pd@qpilch.org.au.

6 US Pro Bono Institute Seminar 2006

This year's PBI annual pro bono seminar 'Charting the Future of Pro Bono' was held in Washington DC from 2-4 March. It was attended by representatives from four Australian firms (Allens, Baker McKenzie, Clayton Utz and Freehills) and the Centre's director. The big news this year was the increase in the number of corporate in-house counsel looking to commence or improve existing pro bono programs. For years the PBI has been lauding the benefits of pro bono partnerships and this has now manifested itself in a significant increase in corporation's in-house legal teams wanting to get involved in pro bono projects, usually together with their law firm. The Centre is aware of three current initiatives of this nature being developed in Australia and hopes to be able to report on these later in the year.

While the US pro bono culture is quite different from that in Australia, some sessions such as 'Blending Pro Bono and Community Service' and 'Legal Ethics: Conflicts of Interest and Positional Conflicts' were particularly relevant to the way pro bono work is done in Australia. [Click here](#) for a full list of seminar session topics and if anyone is interested in papers on particular topics please contact [John Corker](#).

7 Research and policy officer/part time for NPBRC

The National Pro Bono Research Centre is seeking a committed and enthusiastic person to undertake research and policy work for 3 days a week. The successful candidate will have experience working with the legal profession and/or access to justice issues and a relevant degree, significant policy development and/or research experience. Salary range \$46K-\$57K/pro rata. Package to \$62,895/pro rata. For job description and selection criteria, contact Stephanie: info@nationalprobono.org.au or ph: 02 9385 7381.

8 Subscribe/Unsubscribe

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter please click here: [pro bono news](#).

This newsletter and back copies are available at:

<http://www.nationalprobono.org.au/publications/index.html>.

Please forward this newsletter to anyone else you think may be interested.

9 Centre contact details

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