

NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE

Pro Bono News Issue 27: Volume 1/2007

Welcome to the first edition for 2007 of the *eNewsletter* of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre (the Centre). The Centre is affiliated with the Faculty of Law at the University of New South Wales and is funded by the Attorney-General Departments of the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments. To access archived e-newsletters [click here](#).

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1 Aspirational target – Foundation Signatories

In November 2006 (see [newsletter, Issue 25, Vol 6](#)) the Centre established a national 35 hours per lawyer per year pro bono aspirational target. The aim was to raise the profile of pro bono across the profession and to send the message that lawyers embrace pro bono as a fundamental professional and ethical responsibility. Those who signed up before 1 January 2007 became ‘Foundation Signatories’, each agreeing to monitor progress towards the aspirational target. Commencing in July 2008, the Centre will each year release de-identified data to show the number of signatories and the percentage who have met the 35 hours a year target. At 1 January 2007, there were 44 signatories, representing over 3000 individual lawyers. To see the list or to **sign up** go to www.nationalprobono.org.au/target.

2 Results of national survey competition

As part of the national survey of solicitors to establish accurate information about pro bono service delivery, the Centre offered 6 bottles of Wirra Wirra Church Block 2004 to the solicitor in each state/territory* who suggested the most imaginative collective noun for a group of pro bono solicitors. Unfortunately for Queenslanders, the competition commenced AFTER they had participated in the pilot survey ([preliminary results here](#)).

In the many entries there were 13 **gaggles** and 14 **prides**. We are not sure what was in the minds of the 6 entrants who suggested a **murder** of pro bono lawyers, nor those who suggested a **coven** and a **sponge**! There were 5 **posses** (and one **posey**). Positive responses included– an **optimism**, an **altruism**, a **symphony**, an **aspiration**, an **honour** and an **irresistible force**. There were some less positive responses including an admonition **don’t reduce pro bono to the trivial**. We were impressed with the

respondents' familiarity with the music scene (several **U2s of pro bono lawyers** were preferred) and with their erudition. There was one suggestion of a **dispauperment** of pro bono lawyers (see RSC (1883) O.XVI, Part 4, which we assume to be the English Supreme Court Rules) and also a **beneficium** and an **immunis**. There was a tendency for many entrants to imply that pro bono lawyers are few and far between with suggestions of an **improbability**, a **drought**, a **scarcity**, a **sprinkling**, a **paucity**, a **pittance** and a **punnet**. Paradoxically, there was also a tendency to imply a plentiful supply – a **plethora**, a **profusion** a **flock**, a **bevy**, a **horde** and a **herd**. We detected a leftish bias with some entries (a **commune**, a **proletariat** and a **collective**) and a warm and fuzzy response in a **cuddle**, a **virtue**, a **generosity**, a **treasure**, a **smiley** and a **godsend**. Some very pragmatic suggestions included a **non-billable unit**, a **too-much-to-do** and a **glass-half-full**.

Winners for the states where the survey has been closed off:

NSW: a 'paragon' of pro bono lawyers

SA: an 'altruism' of pro bono lawyers/

VIC: a 'wig' (warm inner glow) of pro bono lawyers and a 'dispauperment'

WA: a 'symphony' of pro bono lawyers.

Winners will be sent their bottles by the end of the month.

The survey of *individual practitioners* continues in Tasmania, NT and the ACT and can be completed by [clicking here](#). Readers in Tasmania, NT and the ACT are urged to complete the survey and to encourage colleagues to do so in order to provide valid statistical results.

The national survey of *law firms* will soon be available.

3 Pro bono in Tasmania

On 2 February for the opening of the Legal Year 2007, the Law Society of Tasmania hosted a Professional Development Seminar entitled 'Pro Bono Schemes - Is Tasmania ready for one?'. Chaired by Stephen Estcourt QC of Malthouse Chambers in Hobart, and held in the criminal court of the Supreme Court of Tasmania, the seminar was addressed by Centre Director John Corker and by David Hillard, pro bono partner from Clayton Utz. About 50 practitioners attended the seminar. The Council of the Law Society will meet shortly to discuss the possibility of proceeding with a pro bono scheme.

4 Aurora Project – national register of native title lawyers

The Aurora Project comprises a number of programs working to build capacity within Australian Indigenous communities and organisations. Now, in collaboration with Monash University, it is developing a national register of legal practitioners with experience or an interest in native title. Registrants can express interest in fulltime or temporary locum work, outsourced legal work or mentoring less experienced lawyers working at Native Title Representative Bodies (NTRBs). The register will be publicly available on the [NTRB](#) and [Aurora](#) websites and will be circulated to NTRBs. To be listed on the register, email amyward@auroraproject.com.au. (Amy Ward was recently a much valued social justice intern at the Centre.)

5 Private lawyers, legal aid and pro bono

A response to the national pro bono survey from a NSW family law practitioner provides an interesting perspective on the issue of whether – and where - pro bono intersects with legal aid. With permission, it is reprinted here, in part. The Centre would be pleased to receive further considered responses on this issue.

...In all matters of substance, the real cost of doing a legal aid matter is usually a multiple (in whole numbers) of the legal aid fee. In very hard-fought, long cases, we have had a number of matters where the time costing is 10-fold the legal aid payment. Legal aid work is clearly pro bono in the proper sense of the expression. No one can do legal aid work unless they choose to earn far less than their colleagues in family law (not to mention, arguably, other areas of practice). No small legal practice can do a large amount of legal aid work and stay in business - unless the principal is happy with well under average weekly earnings for him/herself. The only possible exception is those who have many court hearings regularly on the same day with great cost efficiencies...

6 Law school pro bono – UK

TheLawyer.com, a weekly legal publication in the UK, has reported on a survey undertaken by LawWorks (previously the Solicitors Pro Bono Group) that showed that 53% of UK law schools now have pro bono projects. Another 12% plan to launch pro bono programs this year. In total, this is a 50% increase in pro bono law school programs since the last survey in 2003. The only ‘dark spot’ is the lack of funding. LawWorks chief executive Robert Gill says that universities that provided better funding would ‘see the investment paid back exponentially’. Funded by international law firm DLA Piper (see [here](#) for details of DLA Piper (US) pro bono commitment), the survey was overseen by a former head of pro bono at the College of Law - who of course carried out his 50 hours of work ‘pro bono’.

The Centre has been working with the Council of Australian Law Deans (CALD) to raise the profile of student pro bono in Australian law schools.

7 New Directors for NPBR

The Centre welcomes new Centre Directors Kelly Hick (WA) and Robert Reed (QLD).

Kelly Hick: is the new Manager of the WA Law Access Public Law Clearing House. She also manages the Francis Burt Law Education Centre, the Litigation Assistance Fund (WA) and Law Week in WA. She was admitted in 1996 and practised with Minter Ellison in Perth where she also held the role of Human Resources Manager and Business Development and Marketing Manager. Prior to joining the Law Society in 2007, Kelly ran her own consultancy business in the areas of business development and marketing, recruitment and learning and development.

Robert Reed: is a Senior Associate with Minter Ellison in Brisbane where he was responsible for formulating the Community Benefits Program which in 2003 became the national Community Investment Program. He has continued to manage the Program and coordinates all of the Brisbane office's community work including pro bono legal assistance, donations & sponsorships and staff volunteering. He is on the Queensland Law Society Pro Bono & Access to Justice Committee, the CEO Challenge Board, the Brisbane Community Corporate Network Committee and is

Secretary/Treasurer on the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Management Committee.

8 NSW Community legal centres funding review

The report on the review of NSW CLCs funding was released on 15 February by Australian Attorney-General Phillip Ruddock and NSW Attorney-General Bob Debus. The review's recommendations will be considered by the NSW and Federal governments in relation to the management of the joint funding program. Copies of the report can be obtained from the Legal Aid Commission of NSW (02) 9219 5086.

9 Subscribe/Unsubscribe

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

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

10 Centre contact details

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