

NATIONAL PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTRE

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Welcome to the sixth edition for 2004 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 Attorney-General's Department. Archived eNewsletters are available at www.nationalprobono.org.au/publications/index.html

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1 Government lawyers paper

On 29 October 2004 the Centre published an information paper titled [*Government Lawyers and Pro Bono*](#). It was launched by Michael Napier, the Pro Bono Envoy to the Attorney General for England and Wales, at a luncheon hosted by Blake Dawson Waldron and attended by lawyers from State and Federal Government agencies and by the NSW and Federal Attorney-Generals' departments as well as a number of the larger firms.

The paper provides information and ideas to encourage the development of pro bono work by government lawyers. It identifies barriers to undertaking pro bono, looks at overseas initiatives and at possible projects and activities in Australia. The paper has been distributed to the Federal and State and Territory Attorney-Generals suggesting that they consider developing policy to support and encourage their government lawyers to undertake pro bono work. This new resource is available on the Centre's website at www.nationalprobono.org.au.

2 Pro bono partnership award

NSW Parliament House was the venue for the presentation on Thursday October 7 of the Law & Justice Foundation of New South Wales *2004 Justice Awards*. The Law and Justice address was delivered to over 360 people by Tim Costello, CEO of World Vision Australia. The (inaugural) Pro Bono Partnership Award, sponsored by the National Pro Bono Resource Centre, was awarded to the partnership between Mission Australia, the Salvation Army and Freehills. Freehills first formed a partnership with Mission Australia to open the Shopfront Youth Legal Centre in 1993. When Shopfront moved in 1997 to the Salvation Army building in Victoria Street, Darlinghurst, the Salvation Army became a partner in the project. Staff provided by Freehills give free legal advice, representation and support to hundreds of disadvantaged young people. In 2003, Freehills and Mission Australia launched an innovative pilot legal advice clinic for participants in the New Enterprise Initiative Scheme (NEIS). It gives long-term unemployed people the opportunity to receive training, mentoring and financial support to set up their own businesses.

3 Victoria moves on Government conflicts protocol

The Victorian Department of Justice is consulting key stakeholders with a view to incorporating a conflicts protocol into the Victorian Government Legal Services Panel Contract. The protocol is identical to that developed and advocated for by the Centre except it adds a definition of 'conflict of interest'. Private law firms have indicated a reluctance to provide pro bono legal services in matters against government because of a perception that this may prejudice them in securing or maintaining government legal work. Adoption of a form of the protocol is also being considered in the current review of the Federal Government's Legal Services Directions. The Centre's [Information Paper on government conflicts](#) the Protocol and [responses from other State and Territory Attorneys-General](#) are available on the Centre's website.

4 Family law affidavit training

On 13 October 2004, as part of the 'Pro Bono Family Law Project', a project set up by the National Pro Bono Resource Centre with the National Association of Community Legal Centres, Freehills hosted a training session in their Sydney office on drafting family law affidavits for lawyers who have an interest in undertaking pro bono work with community legal centres in the area of family law. The training was conducted by Catherine Carney, Principal Solicitor with NSW Women's Legal Service and Garry Watts, partner at Watts McCray. About 20 lawyers attended the training session, which focused on rural and remote areas, and helping Aboriginal clients coming before the local court for family law matters. This session was the second seminar organised under this project in response to one of the largest unmet legal needs faced by community legal centres. The first seminar was on child support law and was held in April 2004.

5 Pro Bono Students Australia (PBSA) website

The University of Western Sydney (UWS) has put online the detail of its trial of the PBSA program. The new web resource contains a guide for Western Sydney organisations interested in assistance from law students – and for UWS law students seeking opportunities to undertake pro bono law related work. The site contains all the project forms and agreements that were developed by the Centre for the PBSA project. UWS expect to formally launch the program early next year. The PBSA/UWS site is at <http://www.uws.edu.au/about/acadorg/clb/sl/probono>.

6 ACT Pro Bono Clearing House

The Law Society of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) will launch the *ACT Pro Bono Clearing House* on 15 November 2004. Speaking at the event will be Mr Jon Stanhope MLA, Law Society President, Bill Redpath and the Centre's director, John Corker.

The aim of the clearing house is to match people and organisations in genuine need of pro bono legal assistance with legal service providers able to provide that assistance. Acknowledging that a strict 'public interest' test is too narrow for the type of matters the ACT Clearing House is likely to deal with both public interest and 'private interest' matters, subject to its criteria and guidelines. The scheme does not involve membership by way of fee payments from lawyers. The Law Society will provide the administrative and coordination support. ACT practitioners are encouraged to become members to participate in assessment of Clearing House matters, and to be available to undertake work referred by the Clearing House. Any inquiries about the Clearing House should be directed to Debbie Sims at the ACT Law Society, on (02) 6247 5700.

7 RRR pro bono in Queensland

The Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House (QPILCH) has received funding from the Grants Committee of the Queensland Law Society to establish the Rural Regional and Remote Pro Bono Law Project (RRR Project). The project aims to assist the provision of pro bono legal services to rural, regional and remote areas of Queensland by fostering relationships between regional/rural firms and metropolitan firms.

Two pilots will be developed with two regional firms developing links with two metropolitan firms so that contacts can be made and resources utilised in the provision of pro bono legal services in regional Queensland. A set of protocols will be developed from the pilots to provide a governing document setting out the relationship between the firms, as well as the scope of work and the assistance to be provided. It is hoped that after the pilot phase, the protocols will have wider application and may be used by other regional and rural firms to support and enhance their pro bono work. For more information about the project, contact Rochelle Spedding at QPILCH (07) 3012 9773 or via the website www.qpilch.org.au.

8 National pro bono roundup

LIV President's Pro Bono Award – is a new award to be conferred at the annual Law Institute Legal Awards Luncheon on 25 November 2004. The awards are made to individual Victorian legal practitioners in recognition of outstanding contributions to the community, professional excellence and the promotion and advancement of the legal profession www.liv.asn.au/calendar/20041125_Awards.html.

Chief Justice's Medal for Excellence and Community Service – is to be awarded annually to a graduating law student who has demonstrated academic excellence in her or his legal studies and a commitment to voluntary community activity and participation. For more information on this new award announced by the Victoria Law Foundation see http://www.victorialaw.org.au/Chief_Justices_Medal_for_Excellence_and_Community_Service.htm

Legal Aid Congress 2004, Brisbane 18-19 November - addresses the shape and direction of legal aid services in Australia, specifically how we will provide, improve and innovate to meet the future legal needs of disadvantaged Australians. Centre Director John Corker will be a panelist in a workshop 'Making a case for civil justice', on Thursday 18th November. Further information can be found at www.legalaid.qld.gov.au or by calling (07) 3878 9242.

Victoria Law Foundation pro bono workshop 2004 - On Monday 18-Tuesday 19 October 2004, the pro bono secretariat of the Victoria Law Foundation (VLF) held a pro bono workshop at Springs Retreat, Daylesford in Victoria. The workshop was well-attended by pro bono coordinators and partners from law firms, as well as representatives from the VLF and the National Pro Bono Resource Centre. The workshop provided participants with the opportunity to discuss practice issues, share ideas and learn from each other's experiences in providing pro bono services.

Bond University Administrative Law Clinic – a new partnership with QPILCH in which six Bond University Law School students will be supervised to give advice and assistance in administrative law matters. Launched by the Chief Justice of Queensland on 16 October 2004.

9 And so ends the 2004 year...

This is the last eNewsletter from the Centre for the 2004 calendar year—a year that has been both eventful and productive. Our AGM will be held before the end of the year and our Annual Report, currently being printed, will be distributed to major stakeholders during November. It will also be available on the Centre website.

The Centre will be closed from 24th December 2004 until Monday 3 January 2005. We wish our subscribers a safe and pleasant break over Christmas and the New Year. Our next eNewsletter will be published early in 2005.

10 Subscribe/unsubscribe

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