KLC
kingsford legal centre

kingsford legal centre eBulletin summer 2009

KLC Director Anna Cody wins UNSW Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence

We are very proud to announce that Anna's passion and commitment to teaching UNSW law students has been recognised in being awarded the UNSW Vice Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence. Anna's teaching not only encompasses practical lawyering but also encouraging students to analyse the impact of the law on the vulnerable and disadvantaged. She is committed to ensuring all law students have some clinical legal experience during their studies. Clinical legal education has long term implications beyond the semester students spend here, for example ex-KLC students can be found on many clc's volunteer lists. Anna is a worthy recipient of the award – congratulations and well done Anna!

Community legal education

KLC has continued with its strong commitment to community legal education. In the past couple of months our activities included:

- the Guardianship Tribunal providing CLE as part of our Community Workers' Series. We had over 30 people in attendance at the training and there was great feedback from the audience.
- Women's Legal Services conducted a CLE for our Community Worker's Series on Domestic Violence and Law.
- Eastern Area Tenant's Service conducted CLE as part of the Community Worker's Series on tenancy with a particular focus on Department of Housing.

Open Yarnin Community Forum

A two hour community forum called "Open Yarnin" was organised by KLC's Aboriginal Access Worker in collaboration with La Perouse Aboriginal Youth Haven and was conducted on the 18th of October at Yarra Bay House, La Perouse, where approximately 30 people attended. The purpose of the forum was for the local Aboriginal youth and their families to ask questions from forum panel members about the law and its impacts on local Aboriginal youth. Panel members were from Bondi Outreach Project, the Shopfront Youth Legal Centre, Maroubra Police, Department of Justice and Attorney General and NSW Department of Juvenile Justice.

Topics discussed:

- Court Conditional Bail and Police Conditional Bail
- Statements – When to give one and when not to give one
- Court – Pleading guilty or not guilty
- The new Bail Act and its impact on young Aboriginal people
- Providing information to Police when approached
- Move on orders and searches

Some of the main issues that came out of the forum were:

- Parents and youth workers needing more education on what to do if their child is taken in Police custody? – KLC will develop a checklist for parents and youth workers to refer to as a guiding check list resource.
- CLE workshops for youth workers and parents on what their rights are in regards to dealing with the police.
- More specifically targeted CLE workshops for youth on the above mentioned topics.

Following the forum, a BBQ, funded by Randwick City Council was held for participants to meet with panel members. A follow up meeting with the La Perouse Aboriginal Youth Haven will be organised soon to discuss what future actions KLC can assist with regarding legal issues for Indigenous youth.

Open Yarnin Community Forum

Asian Women at Work Project

The employment clinic continues to develop what we hope will be a really productive relationship with Asian Women at Work (AWW) - a large organisation based around Auburn, Bankstown and other western Sydney suburbs in which community workers provide education and support for women primarily of Chinese and Vietnamese background, employed in a range of occupations, particularly as outworkers in the clothing industry.

Our concern has been that, while there is a plethora of employment law information available, it is still not accessible to many of the most vulnerable workers - either because of language issues, difficulties in comprehending the legal system or not having access to the internet. On 16 November we met to discuss providing some training to the AWW community workers and then had a meeting with the workers to discuss the best way to provide training and materials to their members. This may include a 'case studies project' for which AWW is currently seeking funding. KLC may then come on board to provide legal responses to the case studies generated by AWW which will then be translated into the workers' languages. This is particularly exciting as the project responds to our concern about how to develop and deliver effective training.

Older People and the Law
KLC, in partnership with Randwick Council, Botany Council, South East Neighbourhood Centre and Legal Aid, has held 3 free community legal education forums for older people in our local area over the past 6 weeks. The forums covered subjects such as power of attorney, enduring guardianship, family and finance, decisions that impact on eligibility for the aged pension and making a will. Response from our community has been overwhelming with a total of over 300 people attending the sessions to date. Further forums are being planned for next year to meet the demand. Special thanks to KLC volunteer Sue Mordaunt for her talk on wills which was very well received.

L-R, Sue Mordaunt (KLC Volunteer), Margaret Small (Older Persons Legal Service) & Fiona Poon (Freehills Secondee)

Law reform and policy work
The past few months have been very busy for law reform and policy work at the Centre.
KLC was very involved in making a submission on the need for a human rights act to the Brennan Committee consulting on human rights protection in Australia. Now that the final report has been released, we are now involved in the follow up campaign to persuade the Government to enact a Human Rights Act.

We have also made submissions in relation to the use of alternative dispute resolution by the NSW government and the importance of including this in the model litigant policy. In addition we made a submission about changes to the Family law Act and how this has impacted on women in situations of domestic violence.

The law reform and policy subcommittee of Community Legal Centres NSW has set priorities that include work on police complaints, and ongoing discrimination law reform, that involve work by KLC.

With the assistance of volunteer solicitor Gabby Hart, KLC has just completed a submission to the Commonwealth regarding the concluding observations made by the UN Human Rights Committee on Australia's compliance with the ICCPR.

KLC Edits December Edition of Human Rights Defender

KLC is editing the December edition of the Human Rights Defender, a publication of the Australian Human Rights Centre. We have focussed on the practice of economic and social rights with articles from various activists who work in Australia and internationally. These include discussions of homelessness within a human rights framework, the right to social security under the NT Intervention and how economic and social rights are implemented in Argentina.

Students

Prince of Wales Hospital Student Project
Students from the Kingsford Legal Centre and the Prince of Wales Hospital Social Work Department spent a day in each others' shoes once again following a successful partnership in 2008. Three social work students from Prince of Wales Hospital and 2 from the UNSW CD Project visited KLC to gain a better understanding of how law and social work often interact with each other. Staff and students from KLC spoke about the different aspects of law that we often deal with, as well as how to make quick and better referrals for clients to ensure they receive the appropriate services. On 29 September, ten KLC students spent a day in the life of a social worker at the Prince of Wales Hospital Social Work Department. Students were given an insightful tour of the hospital and the coordinators and team leaders spoke about the work involved in each of the four areas of work including aged care, acute care, spinal and oncology. All students who participated in the exchange had extremely positive feedback, noting that the experience provided them with a great insight into the role of social workers and lawyers and how they often need to collaborate to provide a more holistic approach to all their clients.

KLC students at Prince of Wales Hospital

Indigenous pre-law students
In late November we taught a group of 11 pre-law Indigenous students from around Australia who are exploring law as a future degree. The classes included an explanation of the work of the Centre and then working with a final year law student on a client file to understand better some of the work the Centre does.

This is part of the commitment which the Centre has to improving the experience and retention rates of Indigenous students in studying law at UNSW. The Centre is also active in the Indigenous Legal Education Committee of the Faculty of Law.

Donations

UNSW Law Revue Society Donation to KLC
The Law Revue is an annual sketch comedy show held on campus at UNSW in September each year. It comprises the talents of some 300 students across all faculties at UNSW, and is the single largest student-run event on campus annually. The Law Revue has a proud tradition of making donations to charity as a result of the proceeds of the show. Once again, they have chosen to make a very generous donation of $1,000 to KLC. KLC staff are very grateful for this donation and are proud to be associated with such a quality show.

AMP Foundation Donates $2000 to Kingsford Legal Centre
AMP Foundation runs a 'Celebrating Unsung Heroes' program where they recognise those employees who volunteer for not-for-profit organisations. KLC volunteer solicitor, Ting Tsia, was nominated and as a result, AMP Foundation made a very generous donation of $2000 to the Centre. We are very grateful to all at AMP for their support and would like to thank Ting for her continued work for our clients

KLC Volunteer Ting Tsia

Employment clinic

The changes to employment laws and procedures have resulted in increased applications for unfair dismissal as well as general protections matters (eg discrimination/unlawful dismissal) but also significant confusion for practitioners as well as government services and the tribunal. As NACLC employment network convenor, Linda is liaising with other clc workers around Australia to report on our concerns with the new system as we feel there are still a lot of rough edges to be smoothed over and clients are suffering as a result.

On the casework front, we had an extremely good settlement for our Mandarin speaking client (see above) as well as another very good settlement for a client who was sacked while on sick leave from her position at a childcare centre. As usual, the clinic is inundated with calls from women who have been sacked/made redundant/demoted when they have informed the employer they are pregnant or are about to take maternity leave or return from maternity leave.

Conferences and visits

NACLC conference
The National Association of community legal centres annual conferences was held in Perth in September. Keith Ball, Anna Hartree and Shirley Southgate presented a very popular workshop on working effectively with Indigenous communities.

Visits
During November we had a further visit as part of our cooperation under the Human Rights Technical cooperation agreement from the Beijing Legal Aid organisation of Rural Migrants as well as a visit from visiting Japanese judges.

Staff

KLC Principal Solicitor, Shirley Southgate, resigned
After over 4 years of hard work at KLC, Shirley has decided it's time to move on to a Manager position with the Office of the Information Commission in the NSW Public Service. Shirley has been an asset to the Centre in that time, participating fully in all aspects of the Centre. Her passion for policy and law reform work has inspired students and resulted in her convening the NSW CLCs law reform and policy committee. Her experience, calm and intelligence have meant she has been a popular teacher and mentor to our students who have also appreciated her openness and generosity. Staff have enjoyed her warmth and wonderful sense of humour and will miss her support and sense of fun. Shirley's last day at the Centre will be 8 January 2010 and we wish her the very best for the future.

The Principal Solicitor position will be advertised shortly on the BBS, the UNSW's website and in seek.com.

KLC Principal Solicitor Shirley Southgate

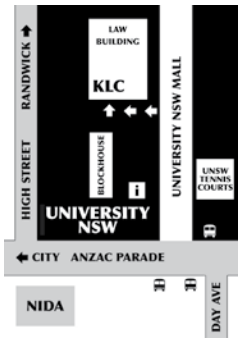
New Freehills Secondee for KLC - Fiona Poon
Fiona started her six month secondment at KLC in October. She completed her commerce/law degree at UNSW, spending her last semester on exchange at University of Texas, Austin. After graduating from UNSW, Fiona worked as tipstaff to Justice Einstein at the Supreme Court of NSW and has been at Freehills since, working in projects and litigation. Welcome Fiona.

Michelle Wibisono completed her 8 month secondment at KLC in October. Michelle gave heart and soul for her clients and will be sorely missed. We wish her all the very best for the future.

This is the last e-Bulletin for 2009 so we would like to thank all of our wonderful, brilliant, committed volunteers for all of their hard work in 2009. We would also like to thank all of funders and those who have given us donations, for their generosity. Thanks also to all of our colleagues at the UNSW Law Faculty for all of their support.

We hope that you all have a wonderful festive season and a great new year.

If you would like to subscribe (free) to this eBulletin or would like further information please email Denise Wasley at: d.wasley@unsw.edu.au. If you would like to unsubscribe to this eBulletin please email Denise Wasley at d.wasley@unsw.edu.au with "unsubscribe eBulletin" in the subject field.



LOCATION
Kingsford Legal Centre is located on the ground floor of the Law Building, University of New South Wales, Anzac Parade, Kensington.
Enter the university at the main entrance on Anzac Parade, walk down the main walkway and turn down the 2nd path on the left. The entrance to the legal centre is opposite the Uni Bar.

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