

## **Queensland Law Society and Bar Pro Bono Referral Services**

The Queensland Law Society (QLS) and Bar Pro Bono Referral Services were established to coordinate and target pro bono referrals in civil matters for people experiencing hardship. The Services commenced on 2 February 2009 and are managed by LawRight's Pro Bono Connect Service on behalf of the QLS and the Bar Association of Queensland (BAQ). The Services are funded by the Queensland Attorney-General from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund and the QLS and BAQ. These Services are distinct from LawRight's Public Interest referral service in that the matter does not require a public interest element but rather needs only comply with the means and merits test to be eligible for referral.

### **Participation**

Participating law firms and barristers do not have to pay a fee. Registering as a participant does not compel a barrister or firm to accept pro bono work. It will be at your discretion whether or not to take up a matter. The main benefit for law firms and barristers is that LawRight gathers the information and documentation and assesses the legal merit of the matter, so that a firm or barrister knows, in considering whether to accept a referral that the matter has prospects of success (if it involves dispute resolution) and is deserving of assistance. Sometimes we ask barristers to assess a case for legal merit when the matter is complex and outside our expertise.

Importantly, participating law firms and barristers are under no obligation to accept a referral.

### **Benefits for participating law firms and barristers**

- You are supporting the pro bono service of their professional association.
- You are part of an innovative pro bono program which aims to redress some of the inequities which result from unequal access to justice in civil matters.
- The work of the services focuses on people experiencing hardship.
- There is no obligation to accept a referral – the services are entirely voluntary.
- If you are approached by individuals seeking pro bono assistance, you can refer them to LawRight for assessment.
- When you accept a referral from LawRight, you know that the matter has legal merit and that there is a real need for the work to be performed.
- You will receive an organised brief once you accept a pro bono referral.
- You will have the opportunity to assist your community through a structured and targeted system.
- We can match matters with you based on your location, expertise and capacity to assist.
- Your contribution will be formally acknowledged and recorded by LawRight.
- The QLS and Bar Pro Bono referral services are managed with LawRight's existing Public Interest referral service to provide a one stop shop for people seeking pro bono assistance.
- LawRight can organise requests for assistance with discrete tasks so that you can make a contribution instead of being burdened with the cost of full representation.
- You can access low cost training in the areas of law which the services primarily support.

## **Procedure**

LawRight receives referrals from any source including law firms, barristers, the QLS, the BAQ, other community legal centres, Legal Aid Queensland and Members of Parliament. For an applicant to be eligible, they must satisfy the merit and means tests.

LawRight then assesses the matter and if it satisfies our eligibility criteria we invite participating law firms and/or barristers by email to take up the case. If a law firm or barrister accepts the matter, LawRight prepares a brief and sends the brief to the firm or barrister. In the case of law firms, the applicant then becomes a client of the firm. A model Solicitor/Client Pro Bono Agreement for this purpose is accessible from the LawRight website at [www.lawright.org.au](http://www.lawright.org.au)

LawRight has established a limited disbursement fund which is accessible by law firms and barristers for disbursement expenses by prior approval in cases where a client cannot meet disbursement costs, for example travel costs.

On completion of the matter we ask law firms and barristers to complete a simple matter closure form so that we can report on the pro bono work of the profession.

For more detailed information, please view the approved QLS and Bar Pro Bono referral service Guidelines which are available on our website at [www.lawright.org.au](http://www.lawright.org.au)

### **Become a participant now! It's free!**

To register your interest in this program, please complete the registration form which is available on our website at [www.lawright.org.au](http://www.lawright.org.au) and post, email or fax the completed form to LawRight at:

LawRight  
PO Box 12217  
GEORGE STREET QLD 4000  
E: [admin@lawright.org.au](mailto:admin@lawright.org.au)  
F: (07) 3846 6311

### **There is no fee for registration.**

For more information, contact LawRight on (07) 3846 6317 or [probonoconnect@lawright.org.au](mailto:probonoconnect@lawright.org.au)