



**Issue 2 February 2003**

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**What is QPILCH?**

This is the second issue of the newsletter of the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated (QPILCH). QPILCH assesses applications for legal assistance in public interest cases for referral to member law firms and barristers who act for free or at reduced fees. For details of our referral criteria and procedures, see the QPILCH website at [www.qpilch.org.au](http://www.qpilch.org.au).

**QPILCH Membership**

Our members are the cornerstone of QPILCH. It is thanks to our members that we provide services to the community. Members can support QPILCH in many ways, from contributing membership fees, to seconding solicitors, to providing technical and administrative help, to donating equipment, to giving advice, and most importantly, to taking up referrals in public interest cases. There are many creative opportunities for involvement of the legal profession – firms large and small, barristers, corporate and government legal units – in the work of QPILCH.

It is with pleasure that we announce that **Hunt & Hunt Lawyers** is our newest member. **Hunt & Hunt** is a national firm whose offices in Sydney and Melbourne are active members of the PILCHs there. We welcome **Hunt & Hunt** to QPILCH.

We want to increase our membership, and have started a membership drive. If you are not a member, please give consideration to joining.

**Our current members are:** Allens Arthur Robinson; Ash Solicitors; Franc Asis, Barrister; Bain Gasteen; Bar Association of Queensland Inc; BDO Kendalls, Chartered Accountants; Blake Dawson Waldron; John Bond SC, Barrister; Brian Bartley and Associates; Clayton Utz; Freehills; Griffith University Law School; Stephen Keim, Barrister; Legal Aid Queensland; Mallesons Stephen Jaques;

McCullough Robertson Lawyers; McInnes Wilson; Minter Ellison; MurphySchmidt; Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc; Queensland Law Society Incorporated; Darryl Rangiah, Barrister; Shine Roche McGowan; Walkers Solicitors (Toowoomba).

### **QAI training package**

The disability advocacy Group, Queensland Advocacy Incorporated (QAI) with assistance from Minter Ellison is in the process of updating a training package designed to raise or increase awareness among the legal profession of issues relating to people with disabilities. QAI is now entering into a consultation phase with groups at whom the training package is aimed so as to ensure that both the content and the style of the planned presentations are as relevant to participants as possible. The consultation will take place at QAI's offices on 18 February 2003. Representatives from the private, public and community legal sectors have already expressed interest in being part of this process and several members of the judiciary have agreed to give input in other ways. Please see the attachment for further information relating to this important and exciting project. If you would like to be involved in the consultation please contact Robert Reed at Minter Ellison (3119 6155 or robert.reed@minterellison.com) or Julian Porter at QAI (3236 1122 or julian@qai.org.au) as soon as possible.

### **Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic UPDATE**

After a successful launch on Tuesday 10 December 2002, the HPLC has started three clinics in the inner Brisbane area with two more to follow soon.

Weekly 2 hour clinics have been operating at the Mission Australia Community Café and St Vincent's Homeless Men's Hostel since early December and a fortnightly clinic has been operating at Wesley Mission since mid-December 2002. Despite a Christmas break in the middle, lawyers have already seen over 30 clients – with most clients returning each session for follow up assistance. We have been told by clients, agencies and lawyers alike that the service is significantly valuable and rewarding for all concerned.

Last week training was conducted for the Salvation Army Pindari clinic and the Red Cross Youth Night Café clinics. The Pindari clinic is scheduled to commence operating on Tuesday 18 February 2003 between 9.30am and 11.30am. The Red Cross Youth Night Café will hopefully commence operation shortly after that.

We have started consulting with indigenous legal services to determine an appropriate location for an indigenous specific Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic. We have one offer for a host already. It is hoped that this clinic will commence operation in March 2003.

Research is already being conducted by three dedicated law students for a submission on the *Vagrants, Gaming & Other Offences Act 1931*. Thanks go to Esther Lee, Julia Davidson and Anna Keim for volunteering approximately two days a week for at least a month so far!

## **New secondee at QPILCH**

QPILCH has been fortunate to have the services of Marissa Ker, seconded by Minter Ellison for two days per week for nine weeks to assess applications for assistance. Since commencing in mid January, Marissa has been engaged in considering some complicated legal issues, at a time when we have received a large number of applications. Marissa has also provided input into QPILCH's file assessment and administrative processes. Marissa's secondment finishes in mid March, permitting her to assist in the orientation of the first semester student clinic.

## **National Pro Bono Resource Centre**

The National Pro Bono Resource Centre (NPBRC) has commenced operating in Sydney, having been allocated start up funding and a recurrent grant by the Commonwealth for three years. The Centre will seek funding and in-kind assistance from other sources both for particular projects and for the Centre's core operations beyond 2005. The Commonwealth has indicated it may consider funding the Centre in future years should that be justified.

The Centre is staffed by a Director, Gordon Renouf and a Senior Policy and Research Officer, Jill Anderson. It is currently recruiting a Publications Coordinator and will shortly recruit additional project staff. The Centre will also be assisted by secondees from law firms, volunteers and/or student interns from programs such as the UNSW Law Faculty Social Justice internship project. The objectives of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre are:

1. To promote pro bono work throughout the legal profession (to enhance and consolidate delivery of services);
2. To promote and undertake research and projects to inform and enhance the provision of pro bono legal services;
3. To develop strategies to evaluate and address legal need;
4. To promote pro bono law to community organisations and the general public (to enhance access to services);
5. To support existing and potential pro bono service providers by providing practical assistance and developing and distributing information and resources; and
6. To effectively plan and manage the operations of the Centre including ensuring the ongoing viability of the Centre.

### **QPILCH MEMBERS**

*Allens Arthur Robinson  
Ash Solicitors  
Franc Asis, Barrister  
Bain Gasteen  
Bar Association of Queensland Inc  
BDO Kendalls, Chartered Accountants  
Blake Dawson Waldron  
John Bond SC, Barrister  
Brian Bartley and Associates  
Clayton Utz  
Freehills  
Griffith University Law School  
Stephen Keim, Barrister  
Legal Aid Queensland  
Mallesons Stephen Jaques  
McCullough Robertson Lawyers  
McInnes Wilson  
Minter Ellison  
MurphySchmidt  
Queensland Association  
of Independent Legal Services Inc  
Queensland Law Society Incorporated  
Darryl Rangiah, Barrister  
Shine Roche McGowan  
Walkers Solicitors (Toowoomba)*

The Centre is also interested in receiving input from law firms about the proposed 2<sup>nd</sup> National Pro Bono Conference. Please complete the attached survey and return to the NPBRC as soon as possible.

For further information, the Centre can be contacted on

T: (02) 9385 7381 or

E: [gordon@nationalprobono.org.au](mailto:gordon@nationalprobono.org.au); [jill@nationalprobono.org.au](mailto:jill@nationalprobono.org.au).

F: (02) 9385 7375

P: National Pro Bono Resource Centre

The White House

UNSW Sydney NSW 2052

The Centre expects to have a basic website operational from February 2003 at [www.nationalprobono.org.au](http://www.nationalprobono.org.au).

### **QPILCH referrals**

From 1 July 2002 up to 7 February 2003, we have received 96 written applications and have so far referred 21 matters to member firms and barristers, with approximately 24 awaiting assessment. We thank volunteer QUT students Cai Jing Chan and Dhakshmi Sivanathan for their assistance with case assessment.

### **Semester 1 2003 student clinic**

The QPILCH/Griffith University Law School student clinic "Public Interest Lawyering" will be getting underway again this year, starting on 6 March 2003. This innovative project involves six senior law students spending the Thursday of each week during semester at QPILCH under the supervision of the QPILCH coordinator. Students assess applications for assistance, undertake project work and lead seminars on public interest issues as part of their course assessment. For more information, see our website at [www.qpilch.org.au](http://www.qpilch.org.au).

### **Change of office address**

QPILCH has been fortunate to have been provided office space free of charge for its first year by QPILCH member Shine Roche McGowan. This arrangement comes to an end this month, so we have been actively looking for new accommodation. All our existing contact details should remain the same.

### **Subscription and feedback**

To subscribe (free) or unsubscribe to "In the Public Interest", the newsletter of the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated, or for more information about any item in this newsletter, please send an e-mail to [contact@qpilch.org.au](mailto:contact@qpilch.org.au) or contact us by phone or fax (see below).