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### **What is QPILCH**

The Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated (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 also provides an opportunity to marshal the resources of private firms, government, corporate lawyers, university law schools and the community sector in advancing the public interest and through targeted projects, assisting those who are the most disadvantaged and marginalised.

### **On the RAILS**

QPILCH has started its second project – the Refugee and Immigration Legal Support Project (RAILS). Mallesons Stephen Jaques has seconded solicitor Kirsten Hagon to coordinate this important initiative until the end of August 2003. Through consultations with legal and non legal community organisation supporting refugees and asylum seekers, we have identified two main areas requiring assistance from the legal profession.

The first priority is the preparation of legal submissions in support of applications to the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) for refugees on three year Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs). Review of TPV applications has just begun and South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service (SBICLS), the only community legal centre focussing on immigration matters, anticipates over one hundred requests for assistance over the next two years. QPILCH hopes to support lawyers to become registered as migration agents to provide voluntary assistance to augment SBICLS services.

The second area is assistance with Federal Court and High Court appeals for judicial review of immigration decisions. QPILCH is seeking firms and barristers willing to meet this growing need.

We are looking at various ways to continue the coordinator's position past August and to fund a part-time position at SBICLS to coordinate the RRT process.

If you are interested in assisting with this project, please contact RAILS coordinator Kirsten Hagon at [projects2@qpilch.org.au](mailto:projects2@qpilch.org.au).

### **Public Interest Address**

QPILCH will hold its first public interest address in August. We are fortunate to have David Marr, lawyer, author of the recent book on the Tampa issue "Dark Victory" and host of the ABC's *Media Watch*. The address will be at the Customs House on Wednesday 20 August as a luncheon fundraiser. We invite all persons interested in hearing this stimulating and provocative speech to attend. Please telephone on 3012 9773 or e-mail to [contact@qpilch.org.au](mailto:contact@qpilch.org.au).

### **Office warming**

To meet and thank our friends and supporters, QPILCH is holding court on Friday 11 July at 5pm at our new offices located at level 2, 129 Margaret Street. Management Committee and staff welcome you to join us for drinks to celebrate the start of our refugee project (see above), two new homeless persons' clinics and see in the new offices. We look forward to seeing you.

### **Second National Pro Bono Conference - Transforming Access to Justice**

The second national Pro Bono Conference will be held in Sydney on 20/21 October 2003. For details about the conference, please see the conference brochure by clicking the button on the QPILCH homepage at [www.qpilch.org.au](http://www.qpilch.org.au).

### **Senate Inquiry**

The Senate Legal and Constitutional References Committee will conduct an inquiry into legal aid and access to justice. The inquiry will include community legal centres, pro bono legal services, self-representation and court and tribunal services in its investigation. It is expected to report by 3 March 2004. See [www.aph.gov.au/senate\\_legal](http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_legal).

### **New members**

We are very pleased to announce the membership of **Deacons**, associate membership of the **Queensland University of Technology Law School**, our first government legal unit member - the **Australian Competition and Consumer Commission**, and barristers **Jacoba Brasch**, **James Douglas QC**, **Jean Dalton**, **Liam Kelly**, and **Ross Mack** from Ayr. We are also happy to announce that **Energex Limited** is our first corporate legal unit member. We welcome these new members and thank them for their support. Please see our full membership list below.

As mentioned above, we are looking for new members to assist with our immigration law project. We have a number of other projects planned. We recently wrote to all barristers in Queensland inviting them to join, and encourage all members of the profession to investigate how QPILCH can offer benefits for all involved.

### **Pro bono seminar**

On Tuesday July 15, QPILCH and the Griffith University Socio Legal Research Centre will jointly host a free seminar, *Pro Bono Legal Service Delivery: International Developments*. The seminar starts at 5:30pm and will be held at the offices of Allens Arthur Robison, Level 31, Riverside Centre, 123 Eagle Street, Brisbane. Speakers at the seminar are Fred Rooney (City University of New York) and Professor Hugh Brayne (University of Sunderland). Gordon Renouf, Director of the National Pro Bono Resource Centre will comment on the presentations by the

speakers.

To RSVP or obtain further details, please contact Pamela Adams on 3875 3747 or [P.Adams@griffith.edu.au](mailto:P.Adams@griffith.edu.au).

### **QPILCH referrals**

Member firm MurphySchmidt has taken on several cases that have provided very effective outcomes for the community. In addition to prosecuting the 'no win no fee case', in two recent cases the firm assisted a disabled young man obtain his full entitlements under an income protection policy and an intellectually disabled woman find a solution in a claim for damages against her.

Member firm McCullough Robertson Lawyers and barrister Dan O'Gorman have taken on a pro bono referral in a discrimination matter involving considerable preparation and culminating in a five day hearing.

Blake Dawson Waldron helped two community organisations resolve a dispute through negotiation and prepared a deed of settlement.

These are just a few of the matters that have been referred to QPILCH members. We commend these members of the profession for their generous commitment to public interest pro bono legal services.

As part of our service to members, we have commenced a project to quantify the cost of in-kind legal services provided by members in the referral process.

### **Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic has expanded**

The Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic has increased the number of legal services it is providing to Brisbane's homeless by recently opening two new clinics at the Red Cross Youth Night Café under City Hall and the 4AAA Kurilpa Kiosk in West End.

The two new clinics supplement the services already being provided at Mission Australia Community Café, Pindari Homeless Men's Hostel, St Vincent's Homeless Men's Hostel and Wesley Mission Emergency Relief Service.

By locating its services at the Red Cross and 4AAA clinics, the Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic hopes to be even more accessible to some of the most vulnerable groups of homeless people: youth and indigenous people respectively. The legal service operates at Red Cross Youth Night Cafe (City Hall, Adelaide St) on Tuesday nights from 7pm to 9pm (Mallesons Stephen Jaques) and at the 4AAA Kurilpa Kiosk (155A Boundary Street, West End) every Friday from 12.30pm to 1.30pm (McCullough Robertson and McInnes Wilson).

Carla Klease's secondment has been extended for a further three months by Blake Dawson Waldron so that Carla can evaluate the first six months' operation of the clinics. QPILCH is looking at ways to continue the coordinator's position when Carla's secondment ends.

### **Community Legal Centres**

Community legal centres (CLCs) are a vital link in the provision of free legal services in Australia. They are under increasing pressure to deliver services tied to particular government programs, but still provide an array of generalist and other services through volunteer and in-house programs. In order to extend and enhance their services to the community, CLCs are partnering with law firms to develop innovative programs through secondments and other firm endorsed volunteering. Law firms can also provide research, administration, and support services to CLCs to assist with casework, publications and meetings. Many people needing advice and assistance, particularly representation, are referred to CLCs for important information on their legal rights and how to navigate the legal system. CLCs are also increasingly referring public interest cases to QPILCH. CLCs and QPILCH are links in the

strengthening chain of legal assistance for those who cannot afford private legal assistance or obtain legal aid.

### **Student clinic and volunteers**

The second clinic involving law students from Griffith University was completed at the end of May. The students continued the high level of enthusiasm and service started in the first *Public Interest Lawyering* course held in second semester 2002. Students assessed a number of cases that were taken up by member firms and commenced two projects – fee waivers available in various courts and tribunals in Queensland and information on available legal referral services.

We have also established a student volunteer program with law students from QUT and UQ. The students attend regularly to help with a variety of tasks including administrative work, research and case assessment. Former QLS communications office Helen Taylor has volunteered to coordinate the students' work. We are very fortunate to have the vital assistance of Helen and the students.

### **Awards**

Carla Klease, QPILCH Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic coordinator on secondment from Blake Dawson Waldron has been awarded a QLS Community Legal Award, presented by the Hon Justice Margaret McMurdo, President of the Court of Appeal. We congratulate Carla for her hard work on behalf of the homeless and the other people she assists through her voluntary work.

Mallesons Stephen Jaques has received an award from the Refugee Claimants Support Centre for its support of asylum seekers, including its pro bono work and involvement with QPILCH.

### **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).

<p><b>Firms</b> Allens Arthur Robinson, Ash Solicitors, Bain Gasteen, Blake Dawson Waldron, Brian Bartley and Associates, Clayton Utz, Deacons, Freehills, Hunt &amp; Hunt, Mallesons Stephen Jaques, McCullough Robertson, McInnes Wilson, Minter Ellison, MurphySchmidt, Shine Roche McGowan, Walkers Solicitors (Toowoomba) <b>Barristers</b> Franc Asis, John Bond SC, Jacoba Brasch, Jean Dalton, James Douglas QC, Stephen Keim, Liam Kelly, Ross Mack, Darryl Rangiah <b>Specified members</b> Bar Association of Queensland Inc, Legal Aid Queensland, Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc, Queensland Law Society Incorporated <b>Associate members</b> BDO Kendalls, Chartered Accountants, Griffith University Law School, Queensland University of Technology Law School <b>Government legal unit members</b> Australian Competition and Consumer Commission <b>Corporate legal unit members</b> Energex Limited</p>
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