

In the Public Interest

Newsletter of the Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated



Upcoming events

- [Walk for Justice](#) on Tuesday 15 May 2012 – registrations open soon
- [HPLC/RCLC Street Soccer](#) on Wednesday 25 July 2012

News

- [Generous support from the English Family Foundation](#) will help QPILCH expand mental health legal services through a student advocacy program, better service integration, and more outreach work.
- [QPILCH has established a Civil Justice Fund](#) with the help of the Public Trustee and Legal Aid to ensure long-term funding security for free and low-cost civil law services in Queensland.
- Our [Land Use Governance Project](#) finishes at the end of March and a paper will be published in the near future.
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Issue 25, April 2012

Don't forget to look at www.qpilch.org.au for details of all QPILCH's activities.

Upcoming events

Walk for Justice – Tuesday 15 May 2012

Get your team together for the fifth annual *Walk for Justice* on Tuesday 15 May 2012. The walk celebrates the work of legal professionals working to promote access to justice in Queensland. It's an international event with thousands of participants walking on the same day in London, Manchester and New York. Last year over 1700 walkers participated across Australia and raised around \$34,000 for the pro bono clearing houses.

In 2012 the Brisbane walk will be lead by QPILCH's Patron, the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, Chief Justice of Queensland and raise money for the QPILCH disbursement fund which was established to assist with the costs associated with running pro bono cases. The fund is available for use by Queensland community legal centres and in matters referred by QPILCH.

Registration will open soon. For more information contact Elizabeth Pendlebury on HPLClawyer@qpilch.org.au.

HPLC/RCLC Street Soccer

A date has now been set for the much anticipated inaugural HPLC/RCLC Street Soccer tournament –

Wednesday 25 July, 2pm-6pm. This soccer tournament between our HPLC/RCLC volunteer firms will be run in conjunction with the Big Issue Street Soccer program, and held at New Farm Park. We hope to raise money and awareness of both programs through this event. At the moment we have ten firms interested in participating, so keep an eye out for more details over the coming weeks!

News

Support from English Family Foundation for mental health services

QPILCH has been fortunate to secure generous funding and support from the **English Family Foundation** to expand and integrate mental health legal services in south east Queensland. Allan English is a Brisbane entrepreneur and philanthropist with a passionate commitment to innovative social responses to assist those most in need. People with mental illness often face a range of

complex social, economic and legal issues and are among the most disadvantaged members of our community. We are incredibly honoured that Allan, through the Foundation, is willing to support QPILCH to address the legal needs of people with mental illness.

Although mental health issues have been highlighted in the media and government policy of late, there has been little attention and no government funding provided for the increasing demands for legal services for people with a mental illness.

With English Family Foundation funding for the next 3 years, QPILCH will seek to address the gap in legal services for people with mental illness in three ways:

1. We will be piloting a student advocacy project in which student volunteers provide support and advocacy for patients on involuntary treatment orders who are appearing before the Mental Health Review Tribunal. Currently, less than 2% of patients have any representation at MHRT hearings despite the potential for serious consequences including detention and involuntary treatment. QAI will continue to provide advocacy for the most serious of matters in the Tribunal and for people on a forensic order. The pilot project will provide additional services for those people in southeast Queensland on an involuntary treatment order who cannot be assisted by QAI. A similar scheme has operated with great success in Tasmania for the last 10 years. We see that such a scheme has the potential to support mentally ill people, enhance the quality of information to the Tribunal, and provide a valuable experience for our student advocates. We are also grateful for the support of the Mental Health Tribunal President, Mr Barry Thomas.
2. Legal services for people with a mental illness in Queensland are piecemeal, under-resourced and disparate. Over the next 3 years we will work with other agencies to identify means to better fund, integrate and coordinate civil law services for people with a mental illness.
3. We will expand our outreach clinics for people with a mental illness. QPILCH in conjunction with DLA Piper is currently piloting an outreach civil law clinic at Open Minds. Through our Mental Health Law Clinic, we also provide an outreach clinic for people at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. Feedback about the Open Minds Clinic has been extremely positive. We hope now to expand this model and establish outreach clinics within other mental health services.

We express our sincere gratitude to Allan English and the English Family Foundation for supporting this initiative.

Civil Justice Fund

With the kind support of the Public Trustee of Queensland and Legal Aid Queensland, QPILCH has established a sub-fund of the Queensland Community Foundation, with a view towards the longer-term security of funding for free and low-cost civil law services in Queensland. The new fund is called the *Civil Justice Fund*. QPILCH's status as a Public Benevolent Institution with Deductible Gift Recipient status means that donations to the fund are tax deductible.

Members would be aware of the current funding difficulties that community legal centres face in finding and maintaining secure funding, to the extent that many successful recurrent services are funded from non-recurrent sources. QPILCH decided that we had to act decisively although the benefits of establishing a perpetual fund will not be seen for many years.

With the approval of the then Attorney-General, the Hon Paul Lucas MP, the Public Trustee, Peter Carne, LAQ Chair Rachel Hunter and CEO, Anthony Reilly, recognised the need to seed the fund so that QPILCH could build it up over the next decade to a point where it will be able to fund civil law projects and casework for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

Andrew Buchanan, first president of QPILCH, is chairing a QPILCH sub-committee to oversee the development of the fund and **Kathleen Singleton** of Eliquent is kindly offering marketing assistance. Over the next few months, we will be developing and implementing a marketing strategy. We hope that all lawyers will embrace the development of the fund. With your support, we anticipate that over the next decade we will grow the fund to provide a sufficient level of interest to make a practical contribution, particularly for the development of innovative services to respond to emerging civil law needs.

We thank **Allens Arthur Robison**, particularly lawyer Christie Green and partner Peter Allen for their legal advice associated with establishment of the fund, including obtaining a positive ruling from the ATO.

Limitation Schedule

Clayton Utz has kindly again revised the Limitation Schedule that QPILCH makes available for all CLCs to assist them to quickly identify limitation dates in common legal areas. The updated schedule is available on our website.

WH&S Policy

The recent changes to Workplace Health & Safety legislation has made it necessary for most community organisations to revisit their WH&S policies. **Minter Ellison** is kindly reviewing QPILCH's policy and procedures to ensure compliance with the new regulatory regime, particularly as it impacts on the roles and responsibilities of management committees. If your community organisation would like to use our policy as a template or obtain advice about the changes, please [contact Karen Kearney](#).

New members

QPILCH welcomes new members: **QPILCH Barrister Members** Lee Clark, Janice Crawford, Chato Alexander Page, Kila Pedder, Domenico Ferraro and Richard Williams **QPILCH Firm Members** Littles Lawyers **Bar Pro Bono Referral Service Members** Richard Williams, Kila Pedder, Janice Crawford, Chato Page, Tracy Fantin, Chris Tam, Lee Clark, Nicholas Andreatidis, Michael Labone, Gavin Handran, Robert Brandon and Caleb Spicer **QLS Pro Bono Referral Service Members** Radcliff Taylor Lawyers and Anne Murray & Co.

Recent training

Preparing self-represented parties for mediations and conferences

In December 2011, volunteer solicitors received training to assist them in preparing self-represented parties for mediations and conferences. Feedback from volunteers who attended the session was overwhelmingly positive and it is likely the panel, mediator **Dr Cate Banks**, Holding Redlich partner **Toby Boys** and QCAT member **Patricia Hanly**, lead in their discussion by accredited mediator **Margaret O'Donnell**, will be called upon to provide similar training in the future. Thanks to **Corrs Chambers Westgarth** for hosting.

Tips and tricks for assisting self-represented parties with discrete tasks

In February 2012, new and existing volunteers were updated on the Service's policies and procedures and provided with tips and tricks for assisting self-represented parties with discrete tasks in the context of the appointment-based service. Thanks to **Clayton Utz** for hosting.

Training for community workers

The second **Training in Legal Basics** was held on March 15. Over 65 community workers from more than 25 organisations in the homelessness sector received free training in issues such as debt, tenancy, child protection and mental health. The HPLC thanks the Commonwealth and State

Ombudsman for hosting and catering the day, and the following presenters: Paul Holmes, Nigel Miller and Suellan Walker-Munro from **Legal Aid Queensland**, Selina Toohey from **Tenants' Union of Queensland**, Kristy Neilsen from **SPER**, Emma Cotterill from the **Commonwealth Ombudsman**, Peter Cantwell from the **Queensland Ombudsman**, Georgina Warrington from the **Welfare Rights Centre**, Phil Macey from the **Special Circumstances Court** and Julie Hearnden from **Queensland Advocacy Inc.**

Homeless Persons' Legal Clinic and Refugee Civil Law Clinic

The HPLC & RCLC program has had a busy start to 2012. This financial year we have seen 340 new clients in our clinics across Queensland. After a year's hiatus our fourteenth clinic, at Pindari Women's Hostel, has reopened with Clayton Utz as the partner firm.

The volunteer lawyers have worked hard to get some great outcomes for our clients, for example:

- Volunteer lawyers from **Corrs Chambers Westgarth** have been assisting a refugee client since 2009 with a criminal injuries application to the Western Australian Government. The client applied for compensation for injuries suffered during a violent assault by her husband, and had been relocated to Queensland in accordance with a safety program. Late last year the volunteers received the good news that the client was awarded \$75,000, the maximum available in the jurisdiction. Over the past few years the lawyers have also assisted her with various other legal issues including debts, a change of ownership of a vehicle, and making a successful claim under her Loan Protection Insurance to pay off her car loan in full.
- Volunteer lawyers at the **Townsville Drop-In Clinic** helped a client, who was the victim of a stabbing, with a criminal compensation claim. The volunteers gave the client advice and assisted them through the lengthy claim process. The client was ultimately successful in the claim.
- The HPLC also facilitated a referral to QPILCH member accountancy firm **BDO** to assist one of our Brisbane Youth Service clients with their tax debt of approximately \$5,500 to the ATO. The client was a 22-year-old female from Ethiopia. She had been sending money via a chain of transfers to her grandmother back in Africa, and had completed her tax return incorrectly. The HPLC assisted the accountant volunteers to negotiate with the ATO, and after months of correspondence the ATO finally waived the debt in full. This outcome would not have been achieved without BDO's involvement, and the client told her caseworker that she "was not able to put it into words" how much the hard work and support meant to her.
- **Clayton Utz** volunteers helped a client to successfully resolve a consumer dispute with a storage company that had sold some goods below the reserve agreed upon. The company paid the client over \$700 in settlement, which represented the difference in sale and reserve price of goods sold in 2010 and accountant fees incurred by the client in calculating the difference.

New HPLC & RCLC Coordinator

HPLC & RCLC Coordinator Amy Heading is heading overseas to Boston to complete her Master of Laws, so we will soon welcome Cameron Lavery into the role. Cameron currently coordinates the QLS and BAQ Referral Service and was previously at the Self Representation Service, so is well qualified for the role and looking forward to moving into the team! We thank Amy for her valuable contribution to the HPLC program and QPILCH.

Homelessness Stories published

The HPLC, with the help of clinical students from the University of Queensland, recently interviewed residents at an emergency accommodation centre. The interviews, along with analysis by HPLC Policy Officer Sue Garlick, have resulted in the publication '[Homelessness Stories](#)' in which six people share their accounts of life on and off the streets. We have already had a great response from this

publication and are keen to get as much feedback as possible, so when you read it, please email your thoughts to hplc@qpilch.org.au

Mates Helping Mates – Sunday 26 February at Musgrave Park

On Sunday 26 February, the HPLC organised a legal help stall as part of the *Mates Helping Mates* BBQ in Musgrave Park. *Mates Helping Mates* is an organisation set up by a former Big Issue vendor, Grant Richards, who was homeless for many years and is well-known in Brisbane for blogging about his experiences. The organisation arranges BBQs for the homeless every 2-3 months, and a number of community organisations attend these to give information and services. HPLC volunteers went along for the first time in February to give homeless attendees one off advice and also to connect those that require ongoing legal assistance to the clinics.



We thank the volunteer lawyers for their help on the day: **Sarah-Jane Johnson, Peter Nicholls, Kimberley Davis, Michele Lim, Tarryn Brown, Juliet Davis, Jennifer Porter, Randal Dennings and Sewok Yang**, and law students **Bianca Kabel, Lucy Farmer and Will**.

2011-12 Management Committee

At the 2011 AGM, the following members were elected to the QPILCH management committee:

Robert Reed – President – Special Counsel, Minter Ellison
Darryl Rangiah SC, Vice-President – Bar Association of Queensland
Michelle Hutchinson – Secretary/Treasurer – Senior Associate, Clayton Utz
Matthew Holmes – Partner, MurphySchmidt
Tony Denholder – Partner, Ashurst
Dr Judith McNamara – Queensland University of Technology Faculty of Law
Noela L'Estrange – CEO, Queensland Law Society Incorporated
Sarah McBratney – Senior Associate, McCullough Robertson
Rochelle Carey – Corporate Counsel, Xstrata Copper
Andrew Buchanan (co-opted member)

Self Representation Service

Now in its fifth year of operation, QPILCH's Self Representation Service is well versed in assisting self-represented parties in the Brisbane Supreme and District Courts, Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal and the Brisbane district of the Federal Court and Federal Magistrates Court. Volunteer solicitors from participating firms, including new participant **HWL Ebsworth**, give generously of their time to assist clients of the Service.

The Service is distinct from duty-lawyer or 'door-of-the-court' schemes as clients are offered assistance throughout the progress of their proceeding, from drafting initiating documents through to enforcing or observing orders. The stories below demonstrate how this unique aspect of the Service can influence outcomes achieved.

At the State Courts:

- A 70-year-old man was assisted throughout the course of his litigation to successfully obtain judgment in his favour in the District Court. The order entitles the man to recover his share of an insurance payout after a property he jointly owned with his brother was destroyed by fire and the client's brother, having obtained the payout, refused to give the client his share.

- A 63-year-old disability pensioner with a complaint before the Health Quality and Complaints Commission obtained an extension of time (which was due to expire three weeks from the date of the client's application) to bring a claim for medical negligence against a hospital. The pensioner was assisted during two separate appointments, firstly to contact the hospital's representatives to discuss the matter, and secondly to take steps in accordance with the hospital representative's suggestions to preserve the client's rights to bring a claim at a later date.

At the Federal Courts:

- A client contemplating judicial review proceedings in the Federal Court in relation to various decisions and actions of Centrelink was given advice through a series of telephone appointments, followed up with a detailed letter. The advice set out the law as it applied to the client's circumstances and advised him that the course of action he proposed was unlikely to succeed. The client accepted the advice and is not commencing review proceedings. The client recently advised that he is pursuing other options recommended by the Service, including a complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

At the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal:

- A victim of domestic violence was provided with a series of telephone appointments (the client was residing in a women's refuge interstate) to assist her to re-open residential tenancy proceedings instituted against her and her ex-partner. The Tribunal had made an order that the client and her ex-partner were jointly liable for over \$6,000, however the client received no notice of the proceedings as she had left the property. The client was assisted to complete the necessary forms, draft a statement setting out her story, and prepare for the final hearing of the matter, which she attended by teleconference. The Tribunal made orders relieving the client of all liability for the arrears.
- A woman pursuing anti-discrimination complaints on behalf of her children accepted the Service's advice to not pursue an appeal of the Tribunal's decision to grant the opposing party leave for representation at an upcoming hearing of the matter. The Service had provided a number of appointments to the woman from the time her children's complaints were referred to the Tribunal. This meant that by the time the Service needed to advise the woman of the limited circumstances in which an appeal of an interlocutory decision would be successful, the Service had built up a rapport with the woman, who accepted that her energy would be best spent preparing for the substantive hearing of the complaints. The Service will continue to assist this client through the proceedings.

In certain cases, the Service seeks involvement of barrister and firm members who have offered to assist in other ways, including providing opinions, conducting mediations and conferences, and representing clients who the Service identifies as not capable of representing themselves.

We thank the following members who have accepted our calls for help through our mediation, court of appeal, fair work conciliation and tribunal representation panels:

- **Alicia Hill** of **McInnes Wilson Lawyers** and **Natalia Wuth** have offered to co-mediate a defamation dispute between two former business partners.
- **Stephen Lee** of Counsel is mediating a dispute in an alleged case of elder abuse where a 59-year-old widow is seeking to recover \$230,000 from her daughter and son-in-law, who allegedly reneged on an agreement to use the widow's money to build a granny flat.
- **Minter Ellison lawyers** and **Richard Lilley SC** and **Justin Carter** of Counsel represented a client in a successful appeal against orders striking out the client's legal proceedings to remain in possession of the unit in which the client has resided for the last twenty years.
- **Stephen Lee** and **George Kalimnios** of Counsel conducted three Fair Work conciliations for the Federal Courts Service on 31 October 2011.

- **Keyon Bayani** from Bayani Harvey Lawyers and **Farley Tolpen** from Farley Tolpen Mediations conducted four Fair Work conciliations for the Federal Courts Service on 14 December 2011.
- **Paula Morreau** of Counsel represented a client who was previously assisted by QPILCH member firm **Clayton Utz** to settle Supreme Court Proceedings for specific performance for the sale of the client's home (the client agreed to auction her home while admitted in hospital for post traumatic stress disorder). In 2010, the Public Trustee was appointed for a limited purpose – to assist the client to settle the Supreme Court proceedings – however the Public Trustee's appointment was expanded to a full administration order which ultimately frustrated the client's attempts to purchase a new home and negatively impacted her health. With the assistance of Counsel, the client obtained a declaration of capacity and a refund of tens of thousands of dollars in legal and administrative fees removed by the Public Trustee from the client's account. The client was ecstatic to regain control of her affairs, and recoup lost funds, just prior to Christmas. She has now entered into a contract for a new home.

Referral Service

So far in 2011-2012, we have received 339 applications (compared with 291 this time last year), and we have successfully referred 127 matters (compared with 88 this time last year). We currently have 148 QPILCH member firms and barristers and 157 QLS and BAQ Referral Service participants.

Just some of the many matters taken on recently:

- **DLA Piper** and **Alex Nelson** of Counsel are assisting a disabled man who was allegedly induced to transfer \$850,000 to his pastor, which he did by taking out a loan against his family home. The man was recently ordered to give the bank possession of his home plus \$960,000.
- **Patricia Feeney** of Counsel, instructed by secondees from **Corrs Chambers Westgarth** and **McCullough Robertson**, assisted an unemployed, former alcoholic man who faced deregistration from his profession. The man reached a favourable settlement with the regulators in a QCAT compulsory conference.
- **Barry Nilsson** is assisting a single mother from central Queensland trying to access a fund set up for the son's secondary education, where the father is refusing to release the money.
- **Chato Page** of Counsel is advising a homeless and unemployed single mother on various issues related to her personal and financial hardship, including Centrelink, child protection and a driving offence. The client was referred to QPILCH by the **Townsville Community Legal Service**.
- **Holding Redlich** is assisting with lease negotiations on behalf of a not-for profit that provides creative education and employment services for Indigenous young people.
- **Justin Carter** of Counsel provided an opinion on options and prospects for a woman with a mental illness involved in Supreme Court proceedings against her former solicitor.
- **Irish Bentley** is advising a single mother who is owed around \$440,000 by her abusive ex-partner. The partner appears to have acted deliberately to extort money and is now preventing the woman from entering her home and accessing her personal possessions.
- **Hunter Trotman** of Counsel assisted a disability pensioner to settle his community housing neighbourhood dispute. **MurphySchmidt** HPLC volunteers prepared a brief to Counsel.
- **Butler McDermott** and **Guy Sara** of Counsel are representing a 66-year-old disabled man in court proceedings to set aside mortgages that were fraudulently obtained over his property.
- **Dianna Worrell** of Counsel is providing an opinion to the **Tenants' Union of Queensland** on the prospects of an appeal which may have significant implications for tenants who reside on land under perpetual lease from the Crown.
- **BDO** assisted a number of formerly homeless clients to complete their tax returns, helping them to get their lives back on track.

- **Hugh Scott-Mackenzie** of Counsel provided an opinion to a 78-year-old pensioner who seeks to remain in her family home. The woman's interest in her home is under threat as a result of guarantees she purportedly made to secure loans for her daughter and son-in-law.
- **Hynes Lawyers** are assisting clients of QPILCH's IP & Technology Law Clinic, two Brisbane-based games developers, to protect their copyright and trademark in a new game they would like to make available for a small fee online.
- **Stephen Lee** of Counsel is assisting a 45-year-old NZ citizen who has lived in Australia since he was a toddler and now faces deportation on character grounds.
- **Ashurst** are advising a North Queensland not-for-profit that supports people with schizophrenia and other mental illnesses about the terms of a proposed lease.
- **Caleb Spicer** of Counsel provided an opinion to a woman seeking to obtain her entitlements, after her employment was allegedly misrepresented as a contract arrangement.

We also acknowledge all of the other QPILCH member firms and barristers and QLS & BAQ Referral Service participants that have accepted referrals this financial year or are currently working on pro bono matters.

Please [contact us](#) if you're interested in becoming a QPILCH member or participant in the QLS and BAQ Referral Service.

Flood and Cyclone Legal Help

So far this financial year we have received 19 applications for assistance arising from the floods and Cyclone Yasi. 56 files have now been opened. There are very few we have not referred (mostly because we're waiting on responses from the clients) and we are grateful to the profession for an acceptance rate of nearly 100%. In particular we thank **Edward Goodwin, Susan Fajardo, Anand Shah** and **Jo Chapple** of Counsel, **The Law Place, Piper Alderman, Ashurst, Dibbs Barker, Shine Lawyers** and **Sparke Helmore Lawyers**.

A number of the matters involve a dispute regarding the source of water and the meaning of the "flood" exclusion in insurance policies. Others relate to a contractual dispute over incomplete building work, a dispute with a builder for faulty workmanship and a possible conflict of interest of a charity worker who facilitated the use of the Premier's Relief Funds for that purpose. We still await opinions from Counsel regarding some matters referred last year.

Land Use Governance Project

Since October 2011, QPILCH has been undertaking a land use governance project to investigate ideas employed around the world for decision-making in land and natural resource use and planning and other issues that impact directly on the environment. Many people want to have an input into these decisions, but, for a variety of reasons, cannot access the Planning and Environment Court.

The project is focusing on coal seam gas, an example of an issue where stakeholders appear to be dissatisfied with the existing processes, and the speed with which it is occurring leaves little time for proper examination of its impacts. The aim is to find new mechanisms and ideas that will lead to more accountable and transparent processes and will reduce the need to resort to litigation to resolve disputes. Specifically, the project has been investigating how stakeholder consultation can be improved and how science and technical knowledge can be better incorporated into the decision-making process.

Catherine Cocks has coordinated the project and was supported by:

- Student volunteers from the **UQ Pro Bono Centre**: Lisa Fairley, Jessica Thrower, Ying Tay, Paula Hughes, Sarah Brown, Rachel Gallagher, Amy Quintin and Stephen Grace;
- Members of the Environmental Law Roundtable;
- Professor Poh-Ling Tan and Griffith University, which enabled QPILCH to employ Alex Wolhuter as a research assistant.

The project is funded through a one-off grant from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and finishes on 31 March. QPILCH will publish a paper on the issues we have identified through our research.

QPILCH is actively seeking additional funding to allow us to consult with interested stakeholders and produce a final report. We are interested in obtaining feedback on the paper when it is finalised. If you are interested, please contact Catherine Cocks on projects@qpilch.org.au or (07) 3846 6317.

Secondments

The **Corrs Chambers Westgarth** secondment continues with Matthew Hodgson-van Daal now in the role. The Corrs secondee performs a vital function in boosting our ability to meet demand in the referral service. We thank Corrs Chambers Westgarth for this ongoing contribution and assistance.

A secondment from **DLA Piper** to QAI and QPILCH to develop the **Open Minds Mental Health Law Service** ended in January with the successful commencement of the service and several months of very effective operation. Kristie Swainton from DLA was seconded part-time for six months to establish the service at the community based mental health support service *Open Minds* at Woolloongabba. Lawyers from DLA Piper attend the clinic and give civil law advice to people whose legal problems have arisen as a consequence of their illness. The service is run on the HPLC model. Kristie worked mostly at QAI, giving advice to Open Minds clients, coordinating and supporting other DLA staff members and learning about QAI's role in the Mental Health Review Tribunal. DLA staff will be trained to also help QAI clients in the Tribunal, to augment QAI's work there. We thank DLA Piper for this very valuable secondment and for Kristie's great work in establishing the service. Ann Herriot has now taken over Kristie's role in coordinating the service.

The **Australian Government Solicitor** has seconded staff to the PILCHs in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane, and a new secondee commenced at QPILCH for one day per week from 30 March. The AGS makes a significant pro bono commitment under the guidance of Bronwyn Neroni. We thank the AGS and Bronwyn for this renewed contribution to QPILCH.

Allens Arthur Robinson has kindly responded to a call to our members for a short-term secondment commencing in early May for 3-4 weeks to replace Karen Kearney while she is on leave.

Seeking administration assistance

QPILCH is in need of some administrative support. Over the last 10 years, QPILCH has grown substantially, starting with a three day per week solicitor and three day per week administrative assistant and now employing 20 legal staff (14.1 FTE), a full-time administrative assistant and a 2 day per week bookkeeper. We would value a short-term secondment to help reorganise our administration. This could be an opportunity for a member to include administrative staff in its pro bono program. If this opportunity interests you, please contact Tony Woodyatt on 3846 6317 or contact@qpilch.org.au.

Student clinics and volunteers

HPLC Student Clinic (University of Queensland)

The HPLC is hosting six keen law students again this semester. They will look at the nexus between homelessness and the child protection system and we have a series of speakers to contribute their perspectives. The goal of the clinic is to examine what types of interventions or supports the HPLC can develop to address failures within the system. We would like to thank the firms that are hosting a student: **Minter Ellison, McInnes Wilson, McCullough Robertson, King & Wood Mallesons, Ashurst, Freehills, Holding Redlich** and **MurphySchmidt**.

Administrative Law Clinic (Bond University)

Our current administrative law clinic students are Rachel Lucas, Joshua Francis, India Bevacqua, Georgina Nielson, Aaron Williamson and Caitlin Murdoch. This semester the students have worked on a range of matters including: assisting clients with Centrelink and child support debts; and drafting complaints to the Ombudsman. We are grateful to Matt Black, Nitra Kidson, Reeanna Maloney, Emma Cotterill and Bernie McCabe for sharing their wisdom and experience with the students once again.

Mental Health Law Clinic (University of Queensland)

This semester's students are Alexandra O'Connell, Daniel Tang, James Schlunke, Yer Thao, Jian-xing Lee and Michael Neumeier. This semester the clinic has provided outreach services for patients on involuntary treatment orders at the Princess Alexandra Hospital. We have provided advice and assistance to clients on the Mental Health Act, liaised with doctors and family members and provided advice on a range of civil law issues.

Public Interest Research Clinic (University of Queensland)

Students this semester are Louise Lu, Samantha Walker, Simon Chen, Charlotte Anderson-James, Alisa Poh, Sharin Mattar. They are undertaking two research projects. One group is looking at the impact of the new income management policy set to be introduced in Logan in July this year. The other group is doing research on representation of people with mental illness before mental health tribunals in Australia.

Social Justice Lawyering Clinic (Griffith University)

Students this semester are Diana Bora, Cecile Masingue, Mary O'Donovan, Shaaira Ibrahim, Elizabeth Bowden and Gavin Reece. The students work on Public Interest, QLS Bar Service and Flood & Cyclone Legal Help files and present seminars on two research projects - Employment Law and Elder Financial Abuse. They will review QPILCH files to identify the current need and services available, with the aim of making recommendations for specific resources or services. Thanks to Justice Roslyn Atkinson, Anthony Reilly, Russell Thirgood and staff at **Caxton Legal Centre** for discussing the connection between social justice and the law.

Student volunteers

Our current student volunteers are: Michael Esteban, Austin Kneller, Helina Tewodros, Venecia Bachee, Kate Dodgson, Aaron Brooks, Yuan Wu, Jacqueline Scanlan, Anna Stewart, Benjamin Strick, Ashlee Miller, Phebe Wong, Caroline Karlsson, Munpreet Singh, Nina Brewer, Jasmine Ross, Natasha Grewal, Stephanie Lagerstedt, Alexandra Bose, Alexandria Utting, Siobhan Clair and Suvinee Gunasena. Ryan Ainscough, Scott Gruar and Russell Faulkner are doing QUT student internships and Shelia Mushosho and Dr Jenny Ng are doing PLT student placements.

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 or contact us on (07) 3846 6317.

What is QPILCH?

The Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House Incorporated (QPILCH) is an initiative of the legal profession to assist people who cannot obtain legal aid or afford private legal services in civil law cases. QPILCH draws on the resources of the wider legal profession - private firms, barristers, government, corporate lawyers, university law schools and works with other community based agencies to assist those who are the most disadvantaged and marginalised. In addition to public interest pro bono referrals, QPILCH manages the QLS and Bar Pro Bono Referral Services and operates direct services – the Homeless Persons’ Legal Clinic, Refugee Civil Law Clinic, Self Representation Service (Supreme and District Courts, QCAT, the Federal Court and the Federal Magistrates Court), Administrative Law Clinic, Mental Health Law Clinic, and IP & Technology Law Clinic – with the support of its members. For details of our referral and direct services, criteria and procedures, see the QPILCH website at www.qpilch.org.au.

QPILCH Members

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