



NSW Legal Information and Referral Forum Report to NLA

LIRF met on 25 July 2018.

Changing Lives documentary – Vivien Altman and Kat Armstrong

Changing Lives is a documentary in development that explores redemption, resilience and the transformative power of female mentorship. It is due to have its first public broadcast on the ABC in September (date to be advised). It tells the story of Kat Armstrong, who is a former jailed addict, and today the second ex woman prisoner to become a practicing solicitor and driving force behind the Women's Justice Network (WJN), an organisation which mentors women inmates coming out of jail to break the cycle of re-offending. Vivien and Kat told us about the making of the film, in which women tell their story about being caught up in the criminal justice system and the impact on their lives and those of their families.

The impact vision of the documentary is to contribute to the systemic reduction of women in the prison system. To achieve this, an outreach and education campaign is in development, which will use the film to educate our leaders and encourage them to be courageous about making significant changes to how we deal with vulnerable people and keep the community safe. The film-making team want to use the film to:

- Influence social policy and advocate for increased government funding for early intervention and services for women at risk;
- Advocate for bail and remand laws to be changed to allow women to participate in bail diversionary programs;
- Raise the profile of the work of the Women's Justice Network and support building their capacity to see their model adopted in other states and the Territory.

The documentary team recognises that they need to work with partners who have knowledge, experience, expertise and networks that can assist them to progress these outcomes. Vivien and Kat discussed some of the campaign initiatives, which will include targeting MPs and policy makers around the broadcast to engage them in a conversation to address the issue of the rapidly growing rate of women in prisons and how to address recidivism; encouraging professional/community screenings of the documentary, coupled with professionally led discussions about the issues raised, and the development of an education kit for schools.

If there is any way in which you or your organisation can assist with promoting the film, *Changing Lives*, and possibly any of the initiatives around it, you're welcome to contact Vivien. (Jane Kenny can forward you Vivien's details.)

Jane alerted everyone that *Changing Lives* is approved by Documentary Australia Foundation (DAF), which means that anyone who is interested in donating to it can do so via DAF and receive a tax deduction.

<http://www.documentaryaustralia.com.au/films/4064/changing-lives>

New work in legal information and referral

The various agencies attending provided information about newly produced legal information resources and initiatives for enhancing legal referral.

The final meeting for 2018 for LIRF will take place in October 2018.

Jane Kenny

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