

Learning and Development Group

Report to NLAF (for plenary 14th September 2016)

From: Laurel Draffen Capacity Building Coordinator CLCNSW

This meeting was held at PIAC on November 11th. Members present included Legal Aid (Learning and Development), LIAC, CLCNSW, Law and Justice Foundation and PIAC.

Jessica Raffael from Women's Legal Service gave a presentation on Ask Lois. Ask Lois is a free online legal information site. Started in 2011, Ask Lois now has 2000 members (mostly from NSW). The website provides information for Community Workers and Lawyers on a range of legal issues. Webinars are provided every fortnight on a different topic and uploaded to Ask Lois as an ongoing resource. Fact sheets accompany the webinars and are pitched at different levels of legal knowledge. Ask Lois has an "Ask a Lawyer" feature (see screen shot below) which enables users to seek advice and receive a referral or information from Jessica who is the lawyer handling enquiries.

Jessica reported that the back end of Ask Lois is high effort involving developing and presenting the fortnightly webinars, managing webinar registrations and memberships, updating the website and responding to 'Ask a Lawyer' enquiries.

Start up costs were \$150,000 through the Attorney General's Department and NBN Leap funding. However Women's legal Service now funds this service from their core funding. Webinars are well attended and there are now 85 webinars available through Ask Lois, providing useful, credible information. Participant interaction is via the online chat functionality rather than voice to avoid poor quality sound and ease the complexity of being both the presenter and IT trouble shooter. Some people attend in groups as part of a staff meeting / staff development. Ask Lois and the webinars have enabled a broad reach to rural and regional areas. There is always a flow on affect in terms of volume of case work for Women's legal Service. Women's Legal Service also runs face to face outreach and Community Legal Education and charge a small fee for this.

Ask Lois is set up using the DRUPAL management system , and webinars are conducted using Citrix GoTo meeting which is converted to Vimeo for the website. Go To meeting costs about \$1800 per year. Guest speakers usually go the WLS office to present a webinar on site with Jessica.



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LOIS**

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Welcome to Ask LOIS

Ask LOIS is a secure website providing a *free legal online information service* (LOIS) for community workers in NSW, who are responding to women with legal needs. Ask LOIS is a project created and run by [Women's Legal Service NSW](#).

Ask LOIS provides community workers with free online training and advice on legal issues such as domestic violence, AVOs, family law, child protection, victims support and much more. It offers fortnightly webinars, a comprehensive resource library, case studies, videoconference appointments and a national DV service directory.

We have over 1500 members; why not [apply today](#) to join our growing online community?

Upcoming Webinars

[Assisting Clients with Interim Hearings](#)

Thursday 21 July 2016, 11.30 - 12.00

Got an idea for a webinar? [Let us know!](#)

Missed a webinar?

Stream or download our past webinars and watch them in your own time!

[Appealing Centrelink Debts](#) Presented by Jessica Raffal, Women's Legal Service NSW

[Taking Children Overseas and Recovering Them](#) Presented by Anna Swain, Women's Legal Service NSW

[Appealing Housing NSW Decisions](#) Presented by Jessica

Speak Up to End VAW!

Find referrals nationwide for women escaping violence or have your say how we can end violence against women at www.speakup.org.au



Ask a Lawyer

Ask a Lawyer is an online information and advice service for community workers to speak directly to a solicitor from Women's Legal Service NSW.



Case Studies

Read our latest case studies online:

- [Meet Shaida](#)
- [Meet Oksana](#)
- [Meet April](#)
- [Meet Lucy](#)
- [Meet Doris](#)

Helping Diverse Clients

Check out our **Barriers** and **Strengths** Mind Maps, find resources and read our case studies to increase your awareness of issues facing women!



The inherent value of Ask Lois is the increased awareness of Women's Legal Service, the increased reach across NSW as a statewide service and the inherent value in the provision of information and knowledge exchange. It is innovative and not expensive. Ask Lois is a great resource for both lawyers and non lawyers.

Attendees then provided an overview of their work:

Catherine Bryant spoke about the work of LIAC. She provided an overview of the breadth of their training including:

- LIAC trained 140 public library staff in 2015-16 through the Legal Information Workshop. 15 sessions were held in 10 locations. Participants came from 52 councils – including 19 metro and 33 regional. 58 local court staff were also trained 11 sessions were held in 6 locations.
- A Further 47 public library staff were trained in-house in 6 locations, by staff using training notes provided by LIAC
- 43 participants attended the annual LIAC Forum from 35 library services (councils) including 23 metro and 12 regional participants. The Forum has been an opportunity for the State Library and public libraries to share ideas and experiences, evaluate current strategies, and plan for the year ahead.
- LIAC presented at the Legal Aid staff induction day. This was a 20 minutes session describing the LIAC service and how to find legal information to assist clients

Catherine reported that 113 Law Week events were held in public libraries throughout the year, including law talks on a wide range of subjects with local solicitors, library displays, Legal Aid family life and the law talks and Law Week checkups, debates and plays with local high schools, events with government agencies such as Fair Trading NSW, and events targeted at specific groups including the multicultural community.

Sarah Ludowici from PIAC provided an update on the work completed by PIAC. This included the delivery of the first 6 months of their Annual training calendar. Sarah will shortly be delivering PIAC training in the Gulf Country with the Kwanyama Council and in Tasmania.

PIAC has been providing specialised training in partnership with Homelessness NSW and with Milk Crate theatre company for organisations on consumer engagement

Ryan Byrne from Legal Aid (learning and Development) reported on the recent successful roll out of Legal Aid's new employee induction program. The approach used was a drip feed model which ran over 12 weeks. Participants receive bi weekly emails with need to know information and induction material with links to the Youtube videos.

Ryan had hoped to be able to offer ten places to their leadership program but the course has been oversubscribed internally. However should there be any training available externally Ryan will let the L&D group know at the next meeting.

Jane Kenny from the Law and Justice Foundation reported that the Law and Justice Foundation will be celebrating their 50th Anniversary next year.

They are planning to hold a research seminar as part of the celebrations on single parents who have been identified as having the highest degree of legal need.

Laurel Draffen from CLCNSW reported on her combined role as state Accreditation Assessor and L&D coordinator. Laurel has conducted a number of accreditation assessments with CLCs and conducted 2 information webinars on Accreditation.

She has also facilitated sessions with board members of CLCs on governance and fundraising.

Ryan confirmed that Legal Aid will host the next meeting and will approach Legal Aid representatives from Legal Aid Family and Civil law to see if they would like to join the group.