

Snapshot of North & North West Community Legal Service Inc

The North & North West Community Legal Service Inc is a free and confidential legal advice and assistance service. We provide advice, assistance and support to people living in the New England and the north and north west region of NSW. We help those who have least access to the legal system and the least power to help themselves. We aim to help clients to be better informed of their legal and social rights and responsibilities and inform clients of the options available to them.

Our Service first began in 1993 as the Armidale Community Legal Service and was run solely by volunteer Solicitors. In 1996 the Service received its first round of Commonwealth funding allowing for employment of Legal and Administration staff and it was then that the North & North West Community Legal Service Inc was created.

The office was based in Armidale and continues to be today. Along with the Armidale office, and after receiving our initial funding, an extensive Outreach Program was commenced stretching throughout our entire catchment. Our Legal Service continues to support this catchment with a population base of approximately 181,555 people over an area of 99,144 sq kms.

We provide legal advice, information, casework and some Court representation in Armidale. Our Outreach Program has clinics in Walcha, Werris Creek, Quirindi, Gunnedah, Narrabri, Wee Waa, Moree, Glen Innes, Glen Innes Correctional Centre, Inverell, Tenterfield, Guyra and the University of New England of which we visit every month. We operate our Tamworth clinic on a fortnightly basis. When face to face appointments aren't possible for clients, we offer telephone appointments to everyone in our catchment.

Additionally, we operate a Court Liaison Program in Armidale and in Tenterfield. These Programs offer assistance to Court users on the day, directing them to the Duty Solicitor and assisting them in their Court experience generally. The Program is designed to provide advice and in some instances representation to clients in matters that fall outside of the Duty Solicitor guidelines and for those that cannot afford a private practitioner.

Our Service assists with many matter types including Family Law issues (excluding property settlement and child support matters), Power of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship, Wills (without real property), consumer complaints, credit and debt issues, discrimination, employment and workplace issues, criminal Law, traffic offences, victims support, Apprehended Violence Orders, neighbourhood disputes and youth issues. We also offer community mediation services, providing an accessible, quick and free alternative dispute resolution method for our clients to utilise.

Additionally we offer legal education sessions to our communities and groups, aiming to increase people's knowledge and understanding of the law and their legal rights. Through our passion of legal education, we also host a fortnightly radio program "Law Matters" on our local radio station 2ARM 92.1FM speaking on many and varied legal topics. This station broadcasts to a potential audience of 30,000 people. We have a strong belief in community involvement and participate in local and outreach community Expo's and events.

The North & North West Community Legal Service is funded by the Commonwealth and State Government through the Community Legal Service Program with Legal Aid NSW. We are led by a committed and strong Board, overseeing governance and strategic planning. Our staff is a dedicated and passionate team who works collaboratively to empower and assist clients as we work towards a more just, equitable and accessible society for all people.

