# NATIONAL CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH LAW CENTRE

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

# 2016-2017



Proud supporters of NCYLC







# For more information contact

# Matthew Keeley

Director National Children's and Youth Law Centre T: (02) 9385 9585 E: <u>matthew.keeley@ncylc.org.au</u>

# Connect with us on

www.facebook.com/lawstuff.australia www.twitter.com/Lawstuff\_Aus National Children's & Youth Law Centre ABN 73 062 253 874 CFN 10092

# Contents

Director's report	3
Service summary	5
Legal assistance	5
Community legal education and information	5
Legal assistance	6
Classification breakdown	7
Demographic profile of our clients	9
Age	9
Indigenous status	9
Disability	9
Gender	9
Regional access	
Client surveys	12
Previous survey: July 2016 – April 2017	12
New survey: May 2017 – July 2017	13
Community legal education and information	14
Community legal education activities	14
Community legal information resources	15
Lawstuff performance	15
New Lawstuff pages	
Collaborative service planning and leadership	19
NGO Report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	
Contribution to 'Children and the Law in Australia' 2 <sup>nd</sup> Edition	
TeachLaw	20
Australian Pro Bono Centre's 'What Works' Guide	20
Financial Report	21

# **Director's report**

The National Children's and Youth Law Centre's (NCYLC's) mission is to work for and in support of children and young people, their rights and access to justice.

We advance this mission by providing legal services targeted at children and young people. Specifically, we provide:

- *Lawstuff:* the leading national, plain language community legal information website for young Australians; and
- Lawmail: the free, online legal advice service for young Australians.

In addition, we support and advocates for children and young people's rights, including through:

- collaboration with leading non-legal and legal service agencies to generate integrated responses to legal and non-legal problems; and
- contributions to the evidence base: leading research and development in the areas of youth law and policy, and children's human rights.

In brief, we provide the only practical and legal problem-solving service for all Australian young people under 25 and their advocates. Young people find us at their time of need by searching about their problems or concerns via Google and other search engines. When they do this, a client will be directed to our legal information website, Lawstuff (www.lawstuff.org.au). Here, clients will receive accurate, useful and plain English legal information. If they wish, a client may then self-select personalised information, advice, assistance or referrals at Lawmail: https://www.lawmail.org.au

In November 2016, we launched our new Lawmail ICT platform after many months of collaborative work. The new system has enhanced usability for both the client and the service and has resulted in a much smoother process for submitting and responding to client contacts.

The client contact form is a guided process with clear and helpful instructions and opportunities to re-direct parties that we cannot assist to a more appropriate legal service. The form appearance itself has also been updated. In addition, clients can now upload documents. The final advice that is sent to clients is in rich text formatting, being a more viewer-friendly format. We received the following comments about the new system from our staff and volunteers:

"The new Lawmail system is great – I love the track changed e-mail I get that compares what I drafted to the final response. This lets me see where I can improve. Other helpful features include the footnoting and comments features. They make reviewing much easier as you can see the drafter's legal research, and it reduces the time it takes you to review a response. I feel like the new system has helped our Centre to churn out more high quality advices, at a much faster rate." (On-site volunteer, 2017)

"The new Lawmail system has made a huge difference to my experience as a cybervolunteer. The system is significantly more intuitive and reliable than its predecessor, which has allowed new volunteers to pick it up much more quickly and has reduced time in each session spent solving technological issues. The feedback feature has made a big difference to all the volunteers because we now get a much clearer picture of how our drafts are changed by the Centre. I know that I have benefited greatly from seeing certain errors highlighted and I hope not to keep making them! The checklist and referencing features have also made it much easier to draft and check work and ensure the technical aspects of the work are right. All in all, I think the new system has been a huge success – it has certainly made volunteering much easier!" (Cyber-volunteer, 2017)

We would especially like to thank ICM Consulting for their work with us in developing our new platform and the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department for funding the development.

# Service summary

Activity	Progress
1. Advices	We provided 1677 legal advices to clients.
2. Legal tasks and/or other	We completed 9 legal tasks for 9 clients.
representation	
3. Legal information and	We provided 259 information services and referrals to
referrals	clients.
4. Community legal	We undertook 21 community legal education activities.
education activities	
5. Community legal	We developed 130 community legal information
information resources	resources.

The period has been a very productive one for the Centre.

# Legal assistance

We received overwhelmingly positive and grateful feedback from our clients. In particular, our feedback demonstrates high levels of satisfaction with our capacity to help clients understand their legal problems, and assist them to know where to get help in the future.

The data evidences that Lawmail is, in particular, an important source of civil law advice. Lawmail is also an important national source of advice on areas of Commonwealth law, including family law, workplace law, consumer law, and Commonwealth criminal offences.

# **Community legal education and information**

Lawstuff has grown to become an incredibly valuable source of free legal information, particularly in areas such as sexual assault (including age of consent laws), drug offences, cyber-safety, and police powers.

We continued to improve Lawstuff by constantly reviewing and updating pages for accuracy. We also integrated new features onto a number of Lawstuff pages, such as videos and interactive quizzes.

Lawstuff's end of year results were the strongest ever. Just over 1.4 million unique visitors visited Lawstuff in 2016-2017 to obtain their plain language legal information, amassing an incredible 2.5 million page views.

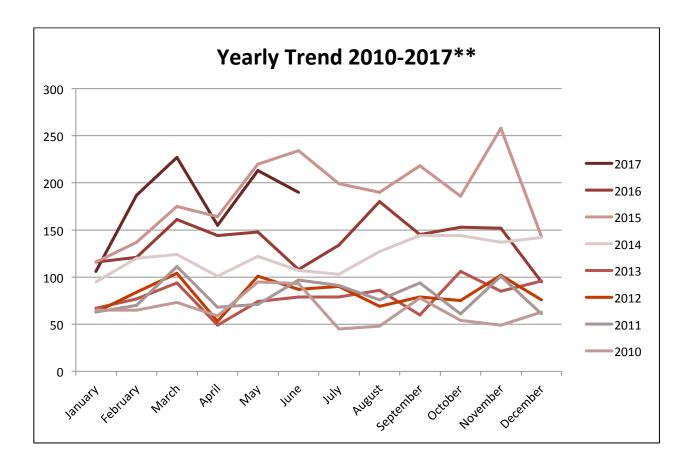
In the period, we also commenced development of a NSW-based pilot of a new, national community legal education project, *TeachLaw*.

# Legal assistance

For the period 8 November 2016 – 30 June 2017 \*:

- 189 Lawmails involved Commonwealth law;
- 125 Lawmails indicated a risk of harm to the client;
- 53 Lawmails indicated family violence; and
- 153 Lawmails asked about a cyber-related problem.

By February 2017 we began generally to meet an aspirational target of 50 written advices and information / referrals per week, roughly equating to an extraordinary 1.33 written legal advices or informations per service hour. Ultimately the target proved unsustainable from a resourcing and workplace safety perspective and was reduced to 30 to 40 advices per week, meaning that some advice seekers cannot be assisted each week.

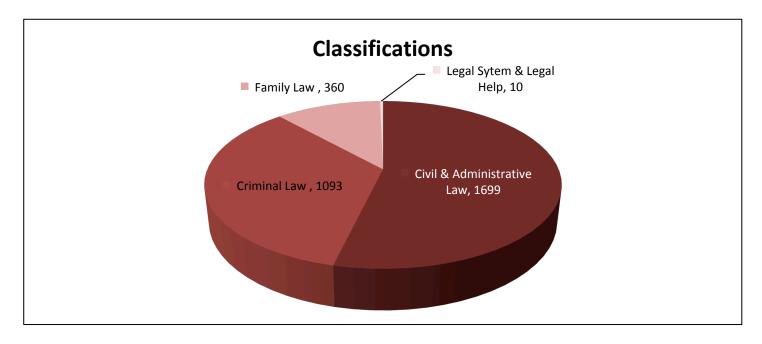


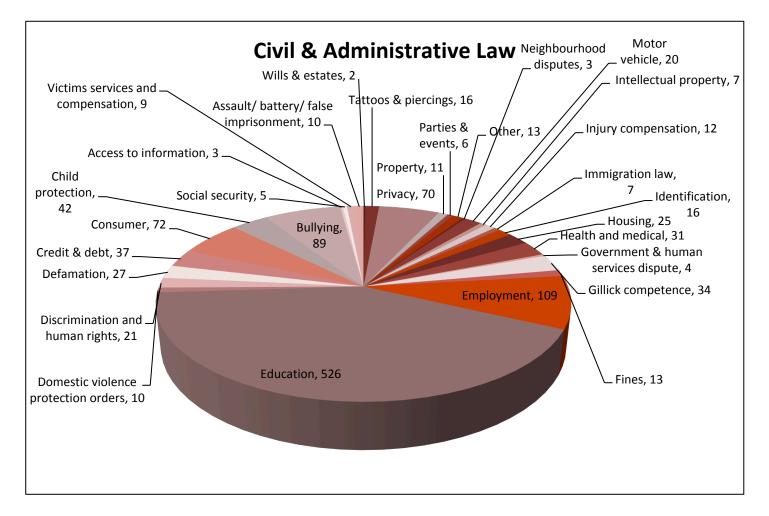
<sup>\*</sup> Note: Unfortunately, we don't have the above data for Lawmails earlier than 8 November 2016 because on that day we transferred Lawmail to a new IT system with this more sophisticated classification functionality. We will be reporting on these indicators into the future.

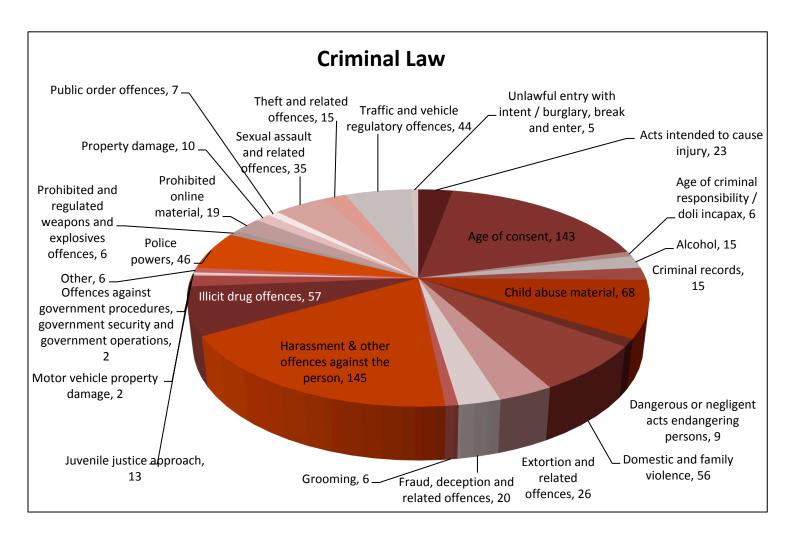
<sup>\*\*</sup> Note: this data includes legal advice, information, and referrals.

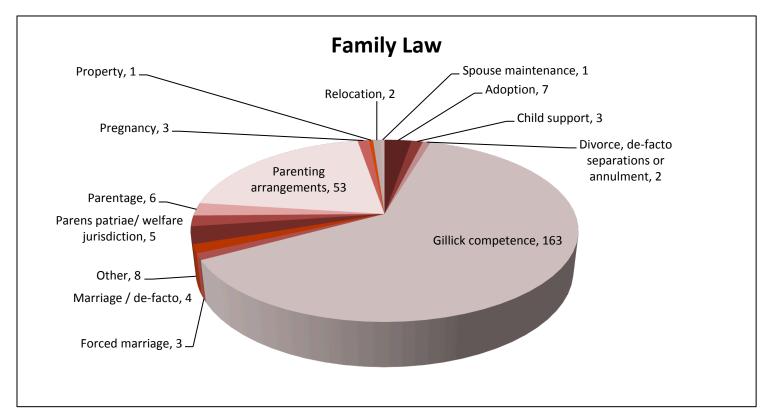
# **Classification breakdown**

Legal advice classifications may be more than the total number of advices in the period because many legal advices we give involve multiple legal issues.









# Demographic profile of our clients

## Age

We responded to 1119 Lawmails (advices, information and referrals) from children 18 and under, 404 Lawmails from adults writing on behalf of a child, and 347 Lawmails from young people aged 19-24. 39 people were over the age of 25 and were only given information and referrals.

# Indigenous status

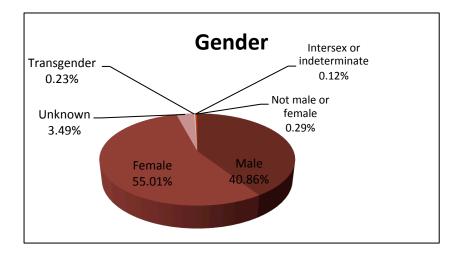
We advised 61 clients who indicated that they were Aboriginal, 5 clients who indicated they were Torres Strait Islander, and 18 clients who indicated that they were both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

# Disability

We had 23 clients that voluntarily disclosed a disability. Lawmail does not ask about disability.

### Gender

The figure below shows the gender breakdown of our clients for this period.



# **Regional access**

From 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2017, 1,936 written legal advices and informations were provided via email, and 1 legal advice and 5 informations were provided over the phone. New South Wales continues to have the highest number of *Lawmails* followed by Queensland, Victoria and Western Australia.

State/Territory	Number of <i>Lawmails</i>
Australian Capital Territory	30
New South Wales	676
Northern Territory	30
Queensland	530
South Australia	144
Tasmania	31
Victoria	297
Western Australia	186
Not stated	8
International	4
Total	1,936



Lawmail client distribution for 2016-2017.



Lawmail client distribution for 2015-2016.

The distribution of clients in 2016-2017 remains fairly similar to 2015-2016 with the majority of clients originating from major cities, and particularly capital cities.

We analysed the centre's outreach to RRR clients by examining 250 Lawmails from 1 April to 1 June 2017. Information only and adult Lawmails were removed from the sample as well as any inquiries which did not include a postcode<sup>1</sup> or suburb.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Postcode and state were extracted and then categorised using the Australian Standard Geographical Classification system (ASGC).<sup>2</sup> Accessed via: http://www.doctorconnect.gov.au/internet/otd/publishing.nsf/Content/locator

Classifications are:

- Major cities (RA1)
- Inner Regional (RA2)
- Outer Regional (RA3)
- Remote (RA4)
- Very Remote (RA5)

# Results

- Location of Lawmail inquiries generally mirrors the population spread of Australia across the above classifications (see below table).
- Majority of clients from NSW and Queensland
- Majority of very remote from Queensland (2 of 3)
- Majority of outer regional from NSW (11 of 19)
- Majority of remote from Western Australia (2 of 2)

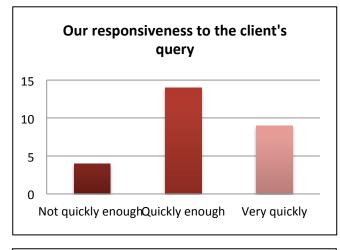
### Australian population spread compared with Lawmail spread

	RA1	RA2	RA3	RA4	RA5
Australia Total Population	68.4%	19.7%	9.5%	1.5%	0.8%
Lawmail Sample Data	68%	22%	7.6%	0.8%	1.2%

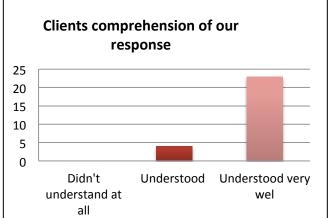
# **Client surveys**

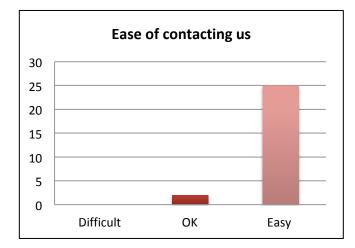
In May 2017 we created a new survey for client feedback. Below, we have collated the results from our previous survey (July 2016 - April 2017) and from our new survey (May 2017 – July 2017). In the period, we received 27 responses to the previous survey and 66 responses to the new survey.

This survey data displays a high level overall of client satisfaction with the advice, information and referral services we provide over Lawmail.

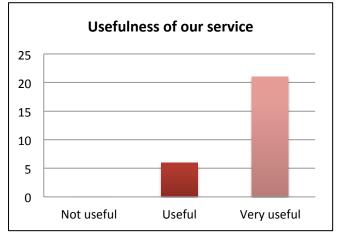


# Previous survey: July 2016 – April 2017



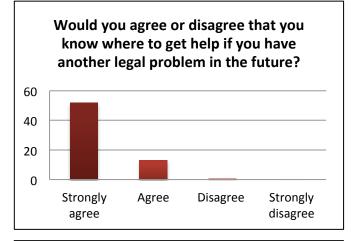


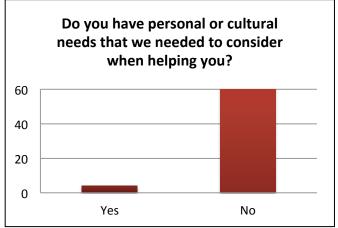


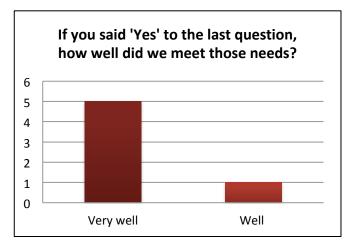


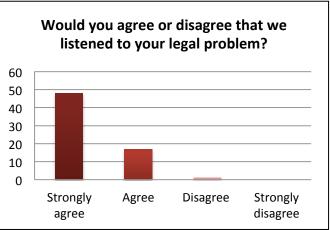
# New survey: May 2017 – July 2017

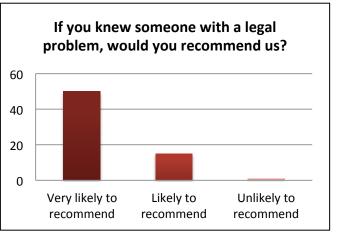


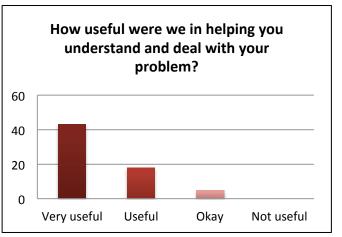












# **Community legal education and information**

# **Community legal education activities**

We participated in 21 community legal education activities during the period.

, Date	egal education a	Activity
11/08/2016	WA	Presented at NACLC National Conference on NCYLC's Digital
,,		Transformation Strategy.
11/08/2016	NSW	Stall at UNSW Experiential Learning Information Day.
16/08/2016	NSW	Hosted presentation to student volunteers by NSW Victims Services.
22/09/2016	NSW	Panellist at University of Sydney Online Harassment Panel organised
, ,	_	by Wom*n's Collective of the University of Sydney Students'
		Representative Council.
28/09/2016	QLD	Provided new Lawmail training to Brisbane Cyber Volunteers.
29/09/2016	NSW	Provided new Lawmail training to Sydney Cyber Volunteers.
30/09/2016	WA	Provided new Lawmail training to Perth Cyber Volunteers via
		videoconference.
30/09/2016	ACT	Provided new Lawmail training to Canberra Cyber Volunteers via
		videoconference.
05/10/2016	VIC	Provided new Lawmail training to Melbourne Cyber Volunteers.
10/11/2016	National	Spoke to Triple J's 'Hack' program about forced marriage.
21/11/2016	National	Presented for Bench TV on children's rights.
08/12/2016	National	Co-hosted AGD NGO Human Rights Forum.
17/03/2017	ACT	Provided new cyber volunteering training to Canberra Cyber
		Volunteers.
10/03/2017	WA	Provided new cyber volunteering training to Perth Cyber Volunteers.
20/03/2017	QLD	Provided new cyber volunteering training to Brisbane Cyber
		Volunteers via videoconference.
20/03/2017	VIC	Provided new cyber volunteering training to Melbourne Cyber
		Volunteers via videoconference.
23/03/2017	SA	Presented at the National Access to Justice and Pro Bono conference
		on innovation and technology.
07/04/2017	NSW	Provided new cyber volunteering training to Sydney Cyber
		Volunteers.
27/05/2017	NSW	Provided legal advice training to on-site volunteers.
30/05/2017	NSW	Presented at the Advocate for Children and Young People's Young
25/06/2017	National	Thinking Seminar Series – Child Rights Programming.
25/06/2017	National	Spoke to Triple J's 'The Hook Up' program about age of consent
		laws.

# **Community legal information resources**

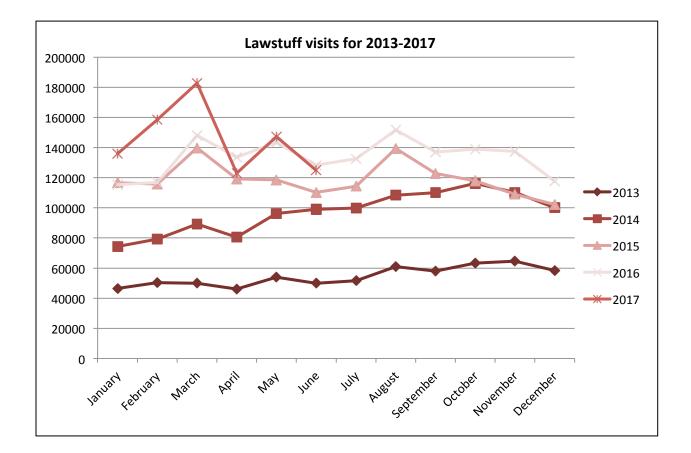
# Lawstuff performance

Lawstuff summary	
Total visits	1,687,451
Unique visitors	1,437,527
Page views	2,596,988
New visitors / returning visitors	84.59% / 15.41%

In comparison to the previous report period (1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016):

- There was an increase of 13.13% in total visits;
- There was an increase of 12.18% in unique visitors;
- There was an increase of 8.34% in page views.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Lawstuff visits in the past four years, reflecting its enduring value as a source of information about the law for children and young people nationally. There were over two times as many visits to Lawstuff in 2016 compared to 2013.



Search engines continue to be the primary method of accessing Lawstuff. This reflects the need for constant review of all Lawstuff pages to take advantage of key search terms to redirect browsers to Lawstuff.

Access to Lawstuff according to state indicates that NSW receives the most visitors, followed by Queensland and Victoria, as indicated by the thermal heat map.



# Lawstuff by topics

Approximately 61% of page views were concentrated in the top ten most popular topic areas:

- Sex (348,298 page views across sexting, age of consent, sexual assault and sexual harassment and pregnancy)
- *Privacy and defamation* (222,232 page views across privacy, defamation and photos and videos on your phone)
- *School* (204,309 page views across bullying, leaving school, searches and confiscations, suspensions and expulsions, discrimination, discipline and punishment and school rules)
- Drugs (159,515 page views)
- *Cars* (147,657 views across licensing, fake IDs, insurance, buying a car, road rules, property damage and travel and concession cards)
- Cyber law (120,763 page views across our pages on cyber-bullying and cyber-safety)
- *Employment* (104,569 page views across starting work, types of work, getting fired, trade unions, pay issues, apprenticeships, discrimination, leave entitlements and working conditions)
- *Police* (98,704 page views across police, transit officers and security guards, complaints about police and sniffer dogs)
- Alcohol (93,395 page views)
- Tattoos and piercings (84,535 page views)

# New Lawstuff pages

Over the period, we reviewed and updated a number of Lawstuff pages. Many of the pages were re-written with the generous assistance of law firms King & Wood Mallesons and Hall & Wilcox. Support was also provided by the Fair Work Ombudsman. Below is a list of the Lawstuff pages updated over the period.

Торіс	Commonwealth/	Individual State/	Date updated
	All States	Territory pages	
Birth Certificates		Qld	December 2016
Security Guards		All states (x8)	January 2017
Alcohol		All states (x8)	January 2017
Medical		All states (x8)	January 2017
Discrimination		All states (x8)	January 2017
Restraining Orders		All states (x8)	January 2017
Suing and Being Sued		All states (x8)	January 2017
Transit Officers		All states (x8)	January 2017
Privacy		All states (x8)	January 2017
Renting		All states (x8)	January 2017
Shopping – Your Consumer Rights		All states (x8)	January 2017
Shopping – Online Shopping		All states (x8)	January 2017
Shopping – Payment Methods and Fine		All states (x8)	January 2017
Print			
Shopping – Scams		All states (x8)	January 2017
Defamation		All states (x8)	January 2017
Employment – What Age Can I Start		All states (x8)	March 2017
Work?			
Employment – What Different Types of	Х		March 2017
Work Can I Do?			
Employment – Working Conditions	Х		March 2017
Employment – Pay Issues	Х		March 2017
Employment – Discrimination,	Х		March 2017
Violence, Harassment and Bullying			
Employment – Leave Entitlements	Х		March 2017
Employment – Trade Unions	Х		March 2017
Employment – Getting Fired	Х		March 2017
Apprenticeships	Х		March 2017
Sex		Qld	April 2017
Total	25 topics; 130 pag	es	

# **Collaborative service planning and leadership**

# NGO Report on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)

We prepared the "Children's Rights" section of the NGO Report for the 6th periodic report of the ICCPR.

The purpose of this report was to assess the implementation of the ICCPR in Australia (which was implemented in Australia on 13 August 1980).

In undertaking this report, the following issues were addressed:

- The Treatment of Children in Immigration Detention
- The Treatment of Children in the Juvenile Justice System
- Homeless Children
- Freedom of Movement
- Birth Registration

We made 10 recommendations to be included in the report with reference to Articles 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17 and 24.

# Contribution to 'Children and the Law in Australia' 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

We contributed to the writing of *Children and the Law in Australia* 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, edited by Lisa Young, Mary Anne Kenny and Geoffrey Monahan by developing several case scenarios on common legal issues faced by children.

The scenarios were based on common *Lawmail* queries received, and the advice provided. The purpose of these scenarios was to demonstrate how the law works in practice in advising children and young people throughout Australia.



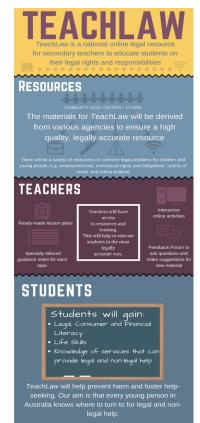


# TeachLaw

We commenced development of a new community legal education project, TeachLaw. TeachLaw will be a national, online platform to assist teachers in educating children and young people about the law.

Through TeachLaw, we hope to enhance young people's legal literacy and understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities and to place particular emphasis on ensuring that disadvantaged students, and students in rural, regional and remote locations are able to benefit from a high-quality, legally accurate educational resource.

We would like to thank Slater and Gordon for their grant of \$10,000 to be used in 2017-2018 to build a prototype for the NSW pilot of TeachLaw.



### Australian Pro Bono Centre's 'What Works' Guide

Our online service model was highlighted in "Pro Bono Partnerships and Models - A Practical Guide to What Works", published by the Australian Pro Bono Centre in October 2016. This is designed as a guide for providers of pro bono legal assistance. Lawmail and Lawstuff were included in chapter 26, 'Technology-Based Services: Telephone, Video Conferencing, Online and Mobile Technology,' as case studies of effective technology-based services in the pro bono sector.

You can access the publication online at <u>http://www.probonocentre.org.au/whatworks/</u>

# **Financial Report**

### DOBBS VUMBACA & CO. Chartered Accountants

onancica Accountants

SUITE 202 LEVEL 2 83-87 YORK STREET SYDNEY NSW 2000 POSTAL ADDRESS: GPO BOX 2590 SYDNEY 2001 Partners: NEIL A DOBBS CA GEORGE VUMBACA CA HELEN YIANNIKAS CA

PH: (02) 9299-6824 FAX: (02)9290-3168 EMAIL: admin@dobbsvumbaca.com.au

The Board of Directors National Children's and Youth Law Centre University of New South Wales SYDNEY NSW 2052

Dear Board Members,

In accordance with Section 307C of the Corporations Act 2001 and in accordance with the requirements of Subdivision 60-C of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, I am pleased to provide the following declaration of independence to the directors of National Children's and Youth Law Centre.

As audit partner for the audit of the financial statements of the company for the year ended 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017, I declare that to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to the audit, and no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements as set out in the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012, or any applicable code of professional conduct, in relation to the audit.

Yours faithfully, DOBBS VUMBACA & CO

hh

George Vumbaca CA Partner

26<sup>th</sup> October 2017 Sydney, NSW

### STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME For the year ended 30th June 2017

	Note	2017	2016
		\$	\$
Revenue	2	322,479	463,272
Employee Costs	3	(258,486)	(309,891)
Consultants		(1,480)	(10,575)
Depreciation and Amortisation	3,8	(9,793)	(1,914)
Insurances		(3,439)	(2,881)
Computer and Website Expenses		(28,285)	(15,044)
Auditor's Remuneration		(3,625)	(3,750)
Accounting & Bookkeeping Expenses		(16,723)	(25,212)
Design, Printing and Production Costs - Publications		(424)	(1,700)
Travelling & Staff Development		(13,259)	(15,704)
Administration and Overhead expenses		(6,947)	(6,260)
Profit/(Loss) before Income Tax		(19,982)	70,341
Income Tax Expense		-	
Profit/(Loss) for the year		(19,982)	70,341
Other Comprehensive Income for the year		-	-
Total Comprehensive Income for the year		(19,982)	70,341

### STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY For the year ended 30th June 2017

	<b>Retained Earnings</b>	Asset Replacement	<u>Total</u>
		Reserve	
	\$	\$	\$
Balance at 1st July 2015	190,461	11,676	202,137
Profit/(Loss) for the year	70,341		70,341
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-		· · ·
Balance at 30th June 2016	260,802	11,676	272,478
Profit/(Loss) for the year	(19,982)	-	(19,982)
Other Comprehensive Income for the year	-	-	
Balance at 30th June 2017	\$ 240,820	\$ 11,676	\$ 252,496

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION As at 30th June 2017

	Not	e	2017 \$		2016 \$
Assets			ψ		Û.
Current Assets					
Cash and cash equivalents	4		343,877		257,633
Trade and other receivables	5				12,729
Inventories	6		2,000		2,000
Other current assets	7		11,871		10,457
Total Current Assets			357,748		282,819
Non-Current Assets					
Property, plant and equipment	8		-		1,795
Intangible assets	9		151,953		103,017
Total Non-Current Assets			151,953		104,812
Total Assets			509,701		387,631
Liabilities					
Current Liabilities					
Trade and other payables	10		257,205		115,153
Total Current Liabilities			257,205		115,153
Total Liabilities			257,205		115,153
Net Assets		\$	252,496	\$	272,478
Equity			240.020		2(0.002
Retained Earnings			240,820		260,802
Asset Replacement Reserve			11,676		11,676
Total Equity		\$	252,496	S	272,478

### STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS For the year ended 30th June 2017

	Note	2017 \$	2016 \$
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES			
Receipts from grants, donors, projects & customers		534,906	510,726
Payments to suppliers and employees		(393,075)	(561,893)
Interest Received		1,347	4,265
Net cash from/(used in) operating activities	12	143,178	(46,902)
CASH FLOW FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES			
Purchases of Property, plant & equipment and Intangibles	8,9	(56,934)	(103,016)
Disposals of Property, plant & equipment and Intangibles	8,9		-
Net cash from/(used in) investing activities		(56,934)	(103,016)
Net increase/(decrease) in cash held		86,244	257,633
Cash at the beginning of the year	4	257,633	-
Cash at the end of the year	4	343,877	257,633

