

Minutes

VLAFL Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Working Group

Date	Thursday 3 March 2016	
Time	10am – 11:30am	
Location	Victoria Legal Aid, 350 Queen Street, Melbourne	
Attendees	<p>Annette Vickery Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (Chair) Carman Parsons Victoria Legal Aid Craig Cairney Victoria Legal Aid Daniel Nguyen Indigenous Law Students & Lawyers Association of Victoria - Tarwirri Clara Bradley Law Institute of Victoria Laura Wilson Human Rights Law Centre Patrick Warner Justice Connect Samantha Watson VLAFL Project Officer Jenna Davey-Burns Aboriginal Family Violence Protection and Legal Service</p>	
Apologies	<p>Katie Fraser Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc Emma Fox The Victorian Bar Chelsea Candy Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Wayne Muir Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service Liana Buchanan Federation of Community Legal Centres (Vic) Inc Ruth Barson Human Rights Law Centre Dan Nicholson Victoria Legal Aid</p>	
Item		Attachment number
1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country		
<p><i>"Our meeting is being held on the traditional lands of the Wurundjeri people and I wish to acknowledge them as Traditional Owners. I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders, past and present"</i></p>		
2. Minutes of previous meeting held on 19 November 2015 accepted		1
3. Scoping the sector		
<p>LIV</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working on a treaty with Aboriginal people, similar to treaties with First People in New Zealand and Canada Working with RMIT Centre for Innovative Justice on a research paper (including case studies) on the convictions of Aboriginal people. This information will be used for Taskforce 1000 <p>VLA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tabled RAP RAP includes (among other things) a guide to asking clients about Aboriginality through the triage process, how to deliver a welcome to country and when it is appropriate, creating new positions to address issues and work towards a culturally responsive VLA 		

- New positions created are an Associate Director (AD) and Aboriginal Field Officers (AFO). VLA is working to the plan and a little behind schedule however, the AD is currently being recruited and once the person is on board three AFO will be recruited. The location (rural v metro) of the AFO is yet to be decided as the AD will need to give their input
- The RAP is of strategic importance and VLA intend on going beyond what is set out in the Plan. This will be based on evidence gained through increased monitoring and evaluation
- VLA have increased cultural awareness through training – board members have just attended the last session and this will be rolled out further

Justice Connect

- Currently working on their RAP
- Rolling out cultural awareness training
- Implementing a student placement position to work in the their Indigenous team
- Homeless Law continues to work at Dame Phyllis Frost Centre and with DHHS on housing debt (debts are normally waived)

FVPLS

- Submitted their response to the Access to Justice review
- The child protection legislation amendments came in to effect on 1 March 2016 and FVPLS Victoria will closely monitor and analyse the impact on Aboriginal women and their children
- Successfully held their 100th Sister's Day Out and about to hold a fundraiser to raise money for future Sister's Day Out and their Sister's Day In after the funding was cut
- Currently recruiting a new Managing Lawyer as Jill Pryor is ready to move fulltime to The Law and Advocacy Centre for Women at the FVPLS hub
- Changes in their policy team

Indigenous Law Students & Lawyers Association of Victoria – Tarwirri

- Have a planning day on Saturday and will focus on formalising referral processes and cultural competency training

VALS

- Undertaking research into people with an acquired brain injury and access to justice
- The research will address issues for women in prison, homelessness and the Youth Detention Centre in Parkville

Human Rights Law Centre

- Laura Wilson just joined the team
- Working on a youth project – scope has not been finalised however it will be addressing issues surrounding young people in detention
- They will be contacting stakeholders to ensure they are not duplicating what is already being done in this space

4. Revisiting the terms of reference (TOR)

- TOR tabled
- All agree that the TOR are still relevant and there is still a lot to do in this space

2

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed that TOR 6 (identification of ways to improve access to culture awareness training for legal assistance workers in Victoria) should be prioritised more than it is currently: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VALS has an internal policy to only refer clients to services that are culturally appropriate and competent • VLA have committed to a pilot that will give prisoner's access to a legal advice line - prisons to take part in the pilot have not been confirmed however likely to include some male remand prisons, a women's prison and a minimum security prison. VLA will be ensuring prisoners are referred to culturally appropriate services 	
<p>5. Referral resource in consultation with the CLC tenancy working group – see survey responses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carman Parsons has provided feedback to Federation offline • Need more responses • Action: Carman, Patrick and Katie to progress this work 	3
<p>6. Consider a referral resource more generally</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park this item and continue to focus on housing at this point 	
<p>7. Other business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VALS and FVPLS to co-chair future meetings 	
<p>Additional information</p>	
<p>Next meeting: TBC Location: TBC</p>	