

Minutes

VLAFL Prisoners Working Group (PWG)

Meeting number: 2 of 4

Date	Wednesday, 17 August 2016	
Time	2:00pm – 3:15pm	
Location	Collins Biggers Paisley, Level 23, 181 William St, Melbourne	
Attendance	<p>Carman Parsons Victorian Legal Aid (VLA; Chair) (CP)</p> <p>Samantha Sowerine Homeless Law, Justice Connect (SS)</p> <p>Tara Skinner Victoria Legal Aid (VLAFL) (TS)</p> <p>Gregor Husper Victoria Legal Aid (VLA) (GH)</p> <p>Kaye Norris Diversitat Community Program (DCP) (KN)</p> <p>Brendan Lacota Moonee Valley Legal Service (MVLS) (BL)</p> <p>Daniel Nguyen Prison Legal Education Assistance (PLEA) (DN)</p> <p>Grace Krutsch Prison Legal Education Assistance (PLEA)</p> <p>Eleanor Schott Prison Legal Education Assistance (PLEA) (MM)</p> <p>Michelle McDonnell Federation of Community Legal Centres (FCLC)</p> <p>Bonnie Renou Women’s Legal Service Victoria (WLSV) (LM)</p> <p>Lloyd Murphy Brimbank Melton Community Legal Centre (BMCLC)</p>	
Apologies	<p>Brendan Money Corrections Victoria</p> <p>Simon Roberts (Chair) Comm Unity Plus Services</p> <p>Chelsea Candy Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)</p> <p>Katia Lallo Darebin Community Legal Centre</p>	
Item		Attachment number
<p>1. Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country (CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “Our meeting is being held on the 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” 		
<p>2. Welcome new members and Introductions (CP)</p>		
<p>3. Corrections Victoria Attending the Meeting (CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● TS confirmed receipt of an apology from Brendan Money from Corrections (BM). The apology was noted. 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MM and GH attended a small meeting with two corrections staff members who were not familiar with the structure or purpose of the meetings with BM. • GH produced some notes from this meeting and these were provided to the Corrections staff (and the PWG), who have provided some brief amendments. • It was agreed that the best outcome for these meetings would be to the return to a meeting with BM. <p>Action: SR to arrange a follow up meeting with corrections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP suggested that one option would be to invite a policy officer or equivalent to the PWG general meetings, this was previously a useful information exchange opportunity. 	
<p>4. Minutes of previous meeting held on 19 May 2016 (CP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes accepted and most actions completed. 	
<p>5. Visa Cancellation PLE opportunity for CLC's (GH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VLA Migration team is able to offer a PLE session for interested CLC lawyers on on visa cancelations to prisoners. This could widen the pool of lawyers able to assist prisoners with responding to pending visa cancellations. • DN PLEA have picked up this topic and developed it into their community legal education program. • Discussion centred around other ways which the reach of this program could be improved, for instance an education presentation regarding dates and procedure for prisoners or their support people to use, where a lawyer to coordinate the paperwork is not available. DN mentioned that there is a kit in WA. • GH would advise VLA of this feedback. 	
<p>6. Prisoner Telephone Line (GH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CP noted that the update had been circulated prior to the meeting. • GH proposal included a number of details including a primary focus on new client matters and not individuals who already have legal representation. • GH noted that NSW prisoners hotline don't provide advice only information. Accordingly they do not have concerns with drop off rates. GH noted that if further assistance was needed the Prisoners legal service within NSW legal aid would book a longer phone call • GH is attended NSW Legal Aid Prisoners Legal service and Law Access in a few weeks to inform design of the service here. • GH noted that VLA had green lighted a design thinking approach to the telephone service. Wanted the service to be based on a client focused model. • BL noted his conference talk on design thinking from fast track last year that 	

GH may be interested in the material.

- GH expressed a desire to develop a specialisation within CLC's for prison work so that the telephone service would be able to refer on. Expressed that there is the opportunity for CLC's with an interest in this work to take it.
- CP optimistic that the service pilot would be running out of four prisons by the end of the year. GH noted that there may be a short delay with the implementation of a design thinking approach. This may include workshops for CLC's to be able to feed in their perspectives on the client experience.

7. Members will bring up to three major issues each that their organisations have identified since the last working group meeting in the areas of: legal needs, identified gaps in services, emerging issues and projects. (ALL)

- **Justice Connect (SS)**
 - 2 yr program at Port Philip has finished and has left a large gap. Tenancy work is high impact – primary focus on eviction prevention for short term prison terms and the debt matters are a huge issue which would benefit from an expanded Clean Slate model.
 - Issues with the Office of Housing and finding a large degree of variation between how their offices deal with matters.
 - Issue with still being dependant on prisoners reaching out to Justice Connect.
 - Happy for the telephone service to refer public housing or tenancy issues onto Justice Connect.
- **Diversitat (KN)**
 - Demand huge for financial counsellor within the prisons. Working within Barwon once a month. Expressed a large number of clients seeking assistance on a regular basis.
 - face to face contact is necessary for the work they undertake.
 - Noted recent issues with Child support hotline - child support debt can be an issue for some prisoners
 - Noted issues with Superannuation. Prisons are restricted by legislation from accessing their super to provide for family members whilst in prison.
- **WLSV**
 - Undertaking skype advice services with women's prison.
 - Noted that at DPFC there is a saturation of services.

- interest in assisting women prisoners with family law matters after they have contacted VLA's prisoners legal help line once operating.

- **MVLS**

- Noted that the Calling in provisions factsheet had been distributed to the PWG.
- Chelsea Candy, MM and BL approached the CIJ for a literature review/evidence base on the value of justice reinvestment. CIJ are interested and currently looking into it. Depending on timeframes they are looking to put together a program for first semester 2017. This is to develop a better basis for supporting justice reinvestment within Victoria.

- **PLEA**

- Large growth and develop of the program. Currently looking to have services in the Geelong prisons and Bendigo prison by March next year.
- Currently have 12 programs lined up to take out to the community.
- Zero funding means they are facing less funding issues.
- Currently in the final stages of incorporating.
- Expressed a desire to evaluate their work. Wanting to measure the impact of CLE and use this to further the study and program.

- **FCLC**

- Smart justice symposium has had a change of venues and the attendees have been notified of this. The symposium is currently at capacity. Expert panel session and afternoon workshop will be included in the program.
- Noted a clear focus on three issues:
 1. Post release housing
 2. Data collection issues
 3. Justice reinvestment
- Expressed a wish to develop a publication for afterwards. Trying to be an ongoing issue. A lot more work to be completed.
- Noted a continuing struggle to obtain information.

- **BMCLC (LM)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Funding has been obtained to look to scale up the Clean Slate program into the future. 	
<p>8. Report from quarterly Corrections Meeting (GH)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Minutes from this meeting will be circulated by TS. ○ Need to flag something as a systemic issue and not just individual issues. ○ DN would like to go to the meeting. Unsure on what the purpose was. ○ MM is happy to take questions to the corrections meeting. ○ GH noted that the Chair, FCLC and VLA attend the meetings. ○ DN wants PLEA to gather traction with corrections and wanted to have their programs heard with corrections staff. ○ CP noted that the PWG should be a advocate for PLEA and other members of the PWG and asked PLEA to identify key issues it would like raised. 	
<p>9. Revised terms of reference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Mapping legal assistance sector activities including referral pathways, prison visits, and other entry points</i> ○ <i>Considering and developing joint plans for legal education and information for people in prison.</i> ○ <i>Developing joint plans to address civil and family law needs of people in prison.</i> ○ <i>Identifying and responding to emerging issues – for example violence and deaths in custody, the impact of the changes to parole, overcrowding, conditions of people in prison who may interact with Government inquiries.</i> ○ <i>Acting as a consultative group on any proposed new services or service changes by organisations in the legal assistance sector.</i> ○ <i>Advocating for the legal needs of people in prison as appropriate."</i> ○ DN noted that the participating organisations needed to be changed on the list of services ○ Changes to terms of reference approved. 	
<p>10. Follow up on tasks list (see Agenda 19 May 2016)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NA 	
<p>11. Other business:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <u>Meeting ended at 3:15 pm</u> 	
<p>12. Additional information</p>	

Next Deputy Commissioner Corrections meeting:

VLAF PWG meeting: **Thursday 17 November, 10am – 12pm**

Location: **TBC**

PWG TASK LIST 19 May 2016

TASK	Responsible	Deadline	Met
GH to send summary of PLH project plan to BMCLC-VLAF to circulate to PWG	Gregor Husper (VLA)	17/06/16	Yes
BMCLC-VLAF to circulate VLA PLH project plan to PWG	Tara Skinner (VLAF) and Ursula Noye (BMCLC)	24/06/16	Yes
FCRC to send to BMCLC-VLAF details regarding financial counsellors currently doing work in prisons	Peter Gartlan (FCRC)	17/06/16	Yes
BMCLC-VLAF to circulate information to PWG	Tara Skinner (VLAF) and Ursula Noye (BMCLC)	24/06/16	Yes
VLAF – VLA - BMCLC to look into the development of an online forum for PWG members to share prison work information (eg Slack or Google docs)	Tara Skinner (VLAF), Gregor Husper (VLA) and Ursula Noye (BMCLC)	1/08/16	
VLA - IA - PLEA report on what prisoners are demanding from legal services by data collection over a 6 month period	Gregor Husper (VLA), Helen Yandell (IA) and Daniel Nguyen (PLEA)	1/11/16	Yes
FCLC (Smart Justice) – MVLS – VALS – Develop a brief to CIJ (?) re higher level research/empirical data to show value of justice reinvestment. Narrow brief initially to survey/review of existing literature as will then need program data to conduct instant review	Brendan Lacota (MVLS), Chelsea Candy (VALS) and Michelle McDonnell (FCLC)	1/08/16	
BMCLC to obtain and circulate information to PWG members on the operation of FLS prison telephone line	Ursula Noye (BMCLC)	3/06/16	Yes
BMCLC – to draft a TOR around advocacy to circulate to PWG members for approval within 7 days. New Term to be added before next meeting.	Ursula Noye (BMCLC)	3/06/16	Yes
ALL – to review redraft of TOR around advocacy and response within 7 days.	ALL	10/06/16	Yes
BMCLC to add new term before next meeting	Lloyd Murphy (BMCLC)	1/08/16	Yes

TASK	Responsible	Deadline	Met
VALS - DCLC – draft a case study on healthcare issues at Hopkins and send to BMCLC to report to the Deputy Commissioner Corrections	Chelsea Candy (VALS) and Katia Lallo (DCLC)	3/06/16	
DCLC to draft a case study on G4S debts and send to BMCLC to report to the Deputy Commissioner Corrections	Katia Lallo (DCLC)	3/06/16	
VALS - IA to draft a case study on Thomas Embling costs and send to BMCLC to report to the Deputy Commissioner Corrections	Chelsea Candy (VALS) and Helen Yandell (IA)	3/06/16	
ALL to send additional issues to BMCLC to raise with Corrections Deputy Commissioner	ALL	3/06/16	
VALS to circulate opinion on impact of changes in access to compensation legislation for prisoners to the group for consideration for advocacy	Chelsea Candy (VALS)	1/08/16	
JusticeConnect - MVLS to provide PWG with a written update on the impact of the new legislation on the process for calling in warrants and other relevant parts	Sam Sowerine (Justice Connect) and Brendan Lacota (MVLS)	1/08/16	Yes
BMCLC - VLAF to send email to members four weeks before meeting requesting input to summary document for Corrections.	Ursula Noye (BMCLC) and Tara Skinner (VLAF)	18/07/16	Yes
ALL – provide BMCLC - VLAF with a descriptive paragraph and issues to be raised with Corrections at least two weeks before meeting.	ALL	1/08/16	
BMCLC - VLAF – to collate the information received into summary document and provide to Corrections ten days <u>before meeting</u> .	Ursula Noye (BMCLC) and Tara Skinner (VLAF)	Mid/08/16	Yes
VLAF – to post the sector wide prisoners need report of the VLAF website	Tara Skinner (VLAF)	3/06/16	Yes
FCLC to circulate information on event to PWG for consideration of input	Michelle McDonnell (FCLC)	20/06/16	
PLEA – provide BMCLC with details to circulate to the broader PWG	Daniel Nguyen (PLEA)	3/06/16	Yes

TASK	Responsible	Deadline	Met
BMCLC to run a Google doodle poll to determine the most appropriate date week commencing Monday 15 August 2016 for the next meeting requesting responses within 7 days	Lloyd Murphy (BMCLC)	23/05/16	Yes
ALL to respond to Google doodle poll within 7 days of receipt	ALL	30/06/16	Yes
Arrange meeting for Chair (BMCLC), VLA and FLC and Deputy Commissioner Corrections etc before end June 2016 and send invitations	Tara Skinner (VLA), Ursula Noye (BMCLC) and Gregor Husper (VLA)	9/06/16	Yes