

Updated Northern Territory Law Handbook launched online!

Richard Hunter

Development Manager,
AustLII

Stephanie Booker

Community Legal
Education Officer,
Northern Territory Legal
Aid Commission

The new online Northern Territory Law Handbook, an easy-to-read guide to law in the Northern Territory, was launched at an event at Government House on Monday 16 May 2016 to kick off Law Week celebrations in Darwin.

This new and innovative approach to providing the community with information on a comprehensive range of legal topics has been developed by the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII), the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission and the Darwin Community Legal Service with the support of the Law Society Public Purposes Trust. Now located online at www.ntlawhandbook.org, the updated Northern Territory Law Handbook was developed by AustLII utilising a collaborative 'wiki-like' platform, meaning information in the Handbook can be easily updated and corrected whenever changes are made to laws and regulations.

Attended by over ninety guests, the launch was opened by his Honour the Honourable John Hardy OAM, and guests were welcomed by Philip Chung (Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII)), Suzan Cox (Director, Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission) and Caitlin Perry (Director of Darwin Community Legal Service).

The production of the new NT Law Handbook was a collaborative effort and could not have been updated and produced online without the voluntary assistance of its contributors, many of whom attended the launch on Monday evening. Over seventy-five people from the legal community, government and community agencies donated their time, expertise and effort to ensure that the text is up-to-date and accurate.



There are many advantages to shifting the production of the NT Law Handbook online. Dr Philip Chung, AustLII's Managing Director explained that one of the advantages of the new collaborative platform is that the text is fully integrated with and hyperlinked to all the primary legal materials held on AustLII, the largest and most widely used free-access provider of online Australian legal materials. He notes that, "AustLII holds all the legislation enacted in every jurisdiction in Australia as well as the decisions and case law of all significant courts, tribunals and regulatory authorities in Australia and a database of nearly 100 000 articles from the major Australian law journals. This means that any law, regulation, court or tribunal decision referred to in the text of the Handbook is automatically hyperlinked to the primary source document and other expert commentary held in the AustLII system."

"The Law Handbook is a vital resource for the community"

said Suzan Cox QC, Director of the NT Legal Aid Commission and Chair of National Legal Aid. "Lawyers use it to provide preliminary advice to our most vulnerable members of the community and members of the public have been able to access it through public libraries. The new on line version of the Law Handbook allows people across the Northern Territory to access this excellent resource, for free. In addition, we can now ensure that updates are quickly incorporated in this online resource."

Caitlin Perry, Executive Director of the Darwin Community Legal Service notes "the Law Handbook has been an important community tool for lawyers and the community since 1993, when it was first published. We are very grateful for the many contributors who have made our first, online version, a success."

To ensure its sustainability, further contributions by volunteers and funding sources are required. If you are interested in being involved, or have any questions about this resource, please email Project Officer: stephanie.booker@ntlac.nt.gov.au

