Justice for a stronger community

DARWIN COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) began in 1991 with volunteer lawyers providing free legal advice sessions in Darwin. Over time, the service has grown, expanded its geographical coverage and the range of matters on which it provided assistance. Now a multi-disciplinary service, DCLS consists of a General Legal Service, Tenancy Advice Service, and Seniors and Disability Rights service. DCLS plays host to a variety of special projects such as elder abuse prevention and NDIS appeals.

General Legal Service (GLS)

The GLS assists people who are financially disadvantaged with a variety of civil law matters. Centrelink issues and entitlements to benefits are significant areas for our practice. Our case work recently has thrown up issues with sham or unfair employment contracts for newly arrived migrants and refugees. We have also been engaged in discussions with the finance sector around implementing recommendations from the Royal Commission in the NT context, in particular relating to areas of elder abuse and access to banking services for those with profound disabilities.

Tenants' Advice Service (TAS)

The TAS is an NT-wide, community-based advice and advocacy service for all residential tenants, public, private or community housing. TAS supports tenants and workers across the Top End to advance tenants' rights through legal advice, information, advocacy and representation, and community legal education.

TAS is also engaged in systemic and law reform and has been working with the NT Department of Housing on housing strategy and review of policy in the NT, as well as advocating for the long-awaited review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

Senior and Disability Rights Service (SDRS)

The SDRS assists older people or people with disabilities and their representatives to promote their rights, through information and community education, and to access aged care services or disability support. SDRS also assists people in relation to guardianship issues. A specialist NDIS Appeals Service assists people with disabilities navigate through the process.

Reform and empowerment

In order to advance the interests of our community and to support access to justice DCLS is involved with contributing to law and systemic reform and educating and empowering the community on legal and advocacy matters. We Identify areas of law reform through casework, collation of evidence and collaboration with other services. DCLS regularly makes submissions to government and relevant agencies on policy that impacts vulnerable people and groups within the community.

Recent work has involved:

- Proposals for review of the *Residential Tenancies Act*;

- Submission to the Royal Commission on Aged Care Quality and Safety and support to individuals and organisations who want their stories to be told;

- Monitoring and seeking reviews of the NDIS process;

- Collating stories of those with disabilities who are not being served by the system;

- Seeking support for those subject to guardianship orders and reform of current law and practice to better align with the wishes of those represented;

- Running workshops and education sessions and producing resources to better inform and assist members of the community and service providers. ∎

You can find more information at: www.dcls.org.au

DARWIN COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) is seeking volunteers for our after hours legal advice clinics. We have roles suitable for lawyers, legal students and those without a legal background.

Our volunteers not only gain an insight into the needs of the Darwin community, they also develop professional skills and connections.

Darwin	Palmerston	Casuarina
Every Tuesday & Thursday	4th Monday of each month	2nd Saturday of each month
5:30-7:30pm	6:00-8:00pm	10:00-11:45am

For more information, and to sign up as a volunteer contact:

📞 08 8982 1111   ✉️ volco@dcls.org.au   🔍 www.dcls.org.au