

Changes to service delivery by some Community Legal Centres and other organisations delivering legal services to disadvantaged people in NSW and the ACT in response to Covid-19

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Abstract:

Many community legal centres as well as other services which provide legal assistance to disadvantaged people in NSW and the ACT have made changes their service delivery practices in response to Covid- 19. The following sets out which centres and organisations have changed their practices, as well as how those practices have changed.

Arts Law Centre

The Arts Law Centre of Australia is currently operating remotely. Legal services will continue as usual. Phone access to the centre is currently limited, however Centre staff are addressing this issue, and hope that normal phone access will be available shortly. The contact numbers for the Arts Law Legal Centre is 02 93562566 or 180022457 (toll-free). Until telephone issues are addressed, the centre is best contacted by email (for general inquiries) at: artslaw@artslaw.com.au, and on their Legal Query form (for legal inquiries) which can be accessed [here](#).

Australian Centre For Disability Law (ACDL)

The Australian Centre for Disability Law remains operational, however all staff and volunteers are working remotely until further notice. The ACDL's preferred method of communication by email at advice@disabilitylaw.org.au, or on their message form available [here](#) The ACDL is also contactable on their telephone Advice Line on 1800800708, or for people who are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, through the National Relay Service (NRS) available [here](#). As the ACDL is operating with reduced staff and volunteer numbers there may be a delay in which they return calls. They are currently endeavouring to respond within 3 to 5 business days. Further information can be obtained on their website available [here](#).

Consumer Law Centre of the ACT.

The Consumer Law Centre of the ACT will be providing all advice and help over the phone where this is possible. They can be contacted by telephone on 02 61430044 or by email at clc.admin@carefcs.org.

Environmental Defenders Office (EDO)

All operations of the EDO will be undertaken remotely and/ or online. The EDO is intending to deliver outreach workshops, seminars and other educational programs by way of online webinar if possible. Where it is not possible, those programs will be postponed.

All physical offices will be closed from however people will still be able to access the EDO by phone, email and our website. The contact details for individual offices are available [here](#). All new procedures will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, and details of future changes to service delivery will be found [here](#).

Human Rights Law Centre

The Human Rights Law Centre has closed its Sydney and Melbourne offices and staff are now working remotely, All travel has been cancelled and arrangements are being put in place so that meetings and activities can occur online. The Centre can still be contacted by telephone, and numbers are available [here](#). Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Hume Riverina Community Legal Centre (HRCLC)

The HRCLC has closed its office but is making appointments by telephone. Appointments can be made by calling 1800 918 377, or by contacting the office through their website, which can be done [here](#). Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Immigration Rights and Advice Centre (IRAC)

The IARC's offices are currently closed, however they continue to offer appointments by telephone. For assistance, the online enquiry form, available [here](#), should be completed. The IARC will then telephone the person seeking assistance as soon as possible. Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Intellectual Disability Rights Service NSW (IDRS)

The staff of the IDRS are all working remotely until further notice. They can still be contacted on their usual telephone numbers or through their online inquiry form, both of which are available [here](#). Further information, including any changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Kingsford Legal Centre NSW (KLC)

The KLC office is closed and staff are working offsite. Consequently, they are unable to provide the full level of service. Currently the KLS is only giving advice to people by telephone if they have urgent matters. Urgent matters include:

- Urgent employment law problems, such as job loss or wages not being paid;
- Being evicted from home;
- Not being paid Centrelink payments;
- Being taken to court for a debt;
- Being charged with a criminal matter that is going to court; and
- Advice to victims of domestic violence.

If a matter is urgent, an appointment request form must be filled out. This is available [here](#). Staff will then call back. Telephone lines will be open from 10am to 1pm on weekdays to assist people who can't complete an online form. No legal advice will be given during this time. The telephone number for the centre is 02 93859566. Further information, including changes to service delivery is available [here](#)

Macarthur Legal Centre (MLC)

MLC is providing all advice and assistance by telephone, and Centre is closed to the public, with no face-to-face appointments available until further notice. MLC contact numbers are available [here](#). They can also be contacted by email at macarthur_admin@maclegal.net.au. Further information including changes in service practices is available [here](#) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MacarthurLegalCentre1.

Marrickville Community Legal Centre

The Marrickville Community Legal Centre is operating its daytime and evening legal advice clinics via telephone. The centre can be contacted on 02 95592899. Essential in-person meetings will occur in line with clients' needs and clients will be screened prior to appointments being made. If the client

answers 'yes' to any question that indicates risk of COVID-19, they will have to attend the meeting via telephone. Further information including changes in service practices is available [here](#).

Mid North Coast Legal Centre (MNCCLC)

The MNCCLC is limiting visitors to offices in Coffs Harbour and Port Macquarie. Staff are working remotely where possible and usual legal services by take place by telephone. The Centre can be contacted on 02 65802111 or by email at info@mncclc.org.au. Anyone who requires a face to face meeting will be asked screening questions. Further information, including changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#)

Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre

The Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre is no longer seeing clients face to face; however they are still providing advice by phone. The Centre can be contacted on the following telephone numbers:

- Legal advice: 02 66211000
- Tenancy advice: 02 66211022
- Domestic Violence service: 02 66211044

Further information, including changes to service delivery practices is available [here](#).

Prisoners Legal Service Qld (PLS)

PLS remains open, however staff are working remotely from home and the centre is operating at a reduced capacity because volunteers are unable to come into the PLS office. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC)

Staff at PIAC are working remotely until further notice As such, the Homeless Persons' Legal Service clinics running remotely as phone clinics. Phone advice is also available at all regular clinic times. The Centre can be telephoned on 02 8898 6545 to obtain information on how best to reach PIAC lawyers. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Redfern Legal Service, Sydney (RLC)

The RLC staff are providing legal assistance remotely and can be contacted by filling in the online inquiry form available [here](#). Staff aim to respond to inquiries within 5 business days. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS)

All staff from RACS are working remotely from home. As such, all legal advice is by telephone. A call back service is being implemented, enabling people to email or send a Facebook message and receive a call back from a lawyer. The contact details for this service are as follows:

- email: admin@racs.org.au
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RACSAustralia/>

All RACS legal outreach face-to-face services in Auburn, Parramatta and Westmead are cancelled, however welfare and food bank support are still available at the Jesuit Refugee Service and Asylum Seekers Centre and they will refer people needing legal support to RACS. People not receiving support from these organisations can contact RACS. RACS telephone support services remain open and will be increased to deal with a higher volume of calls. RACS can be contacted by telephone on 02 83557227. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Seniors Rights Service, Sydney

The Seniors Rights Service will continue to provide legal and advocacy services over the telephone to clients across the state. The service can be contacted by telephone on ;1800424079, Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) 13 14 50 and on the National Relay Service 13 36 77 (then ask for 02 9281 3600). They can also be contacted on their online inquiry form available [here](#) The service has cancelled booked education sessions until the end of June 2020 and plan to make alternative bookings for later in the year. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

South West Sydney Legal Centre

The South West Sydney Legal Centre has closed its doors and advice is only available by telephone. They can be contacted on 02 96017777. Domestic violence services are still available, and the contact numbers for these can be found [here](#). Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#)

Welfare Rights Centre NSW

The Welfare Rights Centre has closed its offices and are giving advice by telephone. Their advice lines are open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 9.30am until 12.30pm. If resources are available advice lines may also be open at other times. The advice can be reached by phoning 02 92115300 or 1800 226 028 (toll-free from outside Sydney metro area) Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Western Sydney Community Legal Centre.WSCLC)

WSCLC will conduct legal advice services by telephone until further notice. The Centre will also provide:

- Court Support at the Children's Court of NSW at Parramatta and Surry Hills Courts;
- Home Building telephone advice services;
- Tenancy telephone advice services;
- Parramatta WDVCS telephone support and referral services

The contact details for advice, as well as for other services offered by WSCLC can be found [here](#). Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Womens Legal Centre ACT

The Womens Legal Centre ACT has closed its physical offices

The Centre will be focused on supporting ongoing clients and providing urgent legal advice and assistance to women in relation to family and employment law matters. They will be prioritising women who are most at risk. The Centre's phone line is open (and can be contacted on 02 62574377 or 1800634669. The centre will also continue to take referrals, which can be made by phoning 026257 4377. If a message is left, staff will call back as soon as possible. Messages can also be sent by

email at admin@womenslegalact.org. Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Women's Legal Service NSW

Women's Legal Service NSW are no longer taking face to face appointments to clients. The evening advice lines are suspended until further notice and all other advice services and outreach clinics will be conducted by phone. The numbers are available [here](#). Further information, including changes to delivery practices is available [here](#).

Tenants Union of NSW

Different sections of the Tenants Union of NSW have changed their practices in response to Covid-19. Information on changes is available [here](#).