



# THE WORD ON THE STREET

## Lotterywest Grant

Issue 7

Autumn 2008 Edition



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Sussex Street was pleased to welcome Ben Wyatt MP, Member for Victoria Park who came along to present a cheque for \$115,748 from the Lotterywest Grants program. Denise Beer, Assistant Manager and Marise Resuggan the NLS Liaison Officer are seen here showing Ben the new photocopier that has been purchased as part of the grant. This along with upgraded IT system and new telephone will improve the way we provide services to clients.

The new photocopier will mean that less of our valuable funds

are used on printing costs, it also provides a networked printing facility and acts as a fax resulting in faxes being emailed directly to the staff members in box. This will mean faxes are not left lying around in pigeon holes waiting to be collected.

The telephone system will mean clients will not have to be put on hold with each staff member having access to direct dial in service and voice mail. This will speed up the work for caseworkers when dealing with agencies which as a result will increase the service to clients.

The upgraded IT system will result in a fully networked service for the Sussex Street main office and the Belmont Outreach office. The system will increase the speed for all users and increase the internet access speed increasing the efficiency and effectiveness in the way staff perform their duties and resulting in a better service to clients.

The Belmont office will have direct access to information stored on the Services data base through the IT upgrade and more efficient telephone access. Documents at the main office will be able to be scanned direct to the Belmont solicitor.

## A Little Piece of History - Night Legal Service

As 2008 is our 30th birthday each newsletter for the year will include a little piece from the history file. This issue revisits the beginnings of legal services.

Sussex Street Centre officially became the Sussex Street Community Law Service on 1 July 1982 when the Hon Kim Beazley opened the centre and introduced a Night Legal Service on Thurs-

day evenings.

As the then Member for Swan Mr Beazley had been instrumental in lobbying for funding to provide access to legal services for those who could not afford a private solicitor.

In February the Night Legal Service (NLS) recommenced for 2008. Sussex Street is indebted to the many solicitors who volun-

teer their services free of charge to ensure this valuable community service continues.

This free service has expanded to Monday and Thursday evenings between 6.00 and 8.00pm. 30 minute advices are provided in family and civil law. For appointments call the centre during day hours between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

## Belmont Outreach

Rachael Lewis has now been back at Belmont for six weeks, how time flies, and has hit the ground running. Rachael has already conducted two Community Legal Education sessions and has been to court twice to represent clients. In addition she has given advice to many other clients.

The Belmont Outreach program is funded through Contributions Trust Funding and provides advice in family, civil and minor criminal law. The program provides assistance to those on low incomes who live in the City of Belmont.

If you would like Rachael to come and talk to your group about what her program does or any aspects of family, civil or minor criminal law contact the office. Similarly if you require assistance with a matter and would like to make an appointment to see Rachael call the office.

The office number is 9470 2676.

## Law Week - 7 May 2008

As in previous years Sussex Street will be celebrating Law Week and following on from the very successful 'Sausage Sizzle and Information Stalls' conducted last year will repeat this again.

Staff will be on hand to discuss a broad range of issues relating to the law. Information will be available on family, civil and minor criminal law, disability dis-

crimination, tenancy, Centrelink matters and finance and consumer issues.

Come along and enjoy a sausage raise issues that are concerning you and receive information and/or referral to other agencies and organisation's that can help you.

Further information can be obtained from the office on 94707626.



Enjoying Law Week 2007

## Disability Discrimination Unit

The Disability Discrimination Unit (DDU) at Sussex Street is one of seven in Australia. Funded by the Federal Attorney Generals Department under Community Legal Service Program funding it differs from other programs at Sussex Street in that it is state wide and to be eligible the only criteria is that you have a disability or are a family member or carer of a person with a disability.

Cheryl Collier has been running this unit since 2006 and has assisted many people across a range of discrimination matters including employment, education and access to recreational facilities.

As well as providing advice and representation the unit also provides education to the public through a range of formats. This includes brochures, information sessions, and workshops all of which can be customised to suit

the needs of different client groups, discrimination areas or agencies.

The position of Community Legal Education Worker has been vacant since Andrea left and we are pleased to announce that Bruce Horwood has commenced (see page 4)

Cheryl has had a steady stream of referrals to DDU and is kept very busy. Most clients only require advice and limited assistance from Cheryl for their matters to be settled. Others cases end up being referred to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HEROC).

Other duties that Cheryl becomes involved with are Law Reform and Legal Policy projects. One that she is currently working on is a submission to HEROC in opposition to an application by the Taxi Control Boards of WA and

QLD to be exempt from some of the transport standards in the Disability Discrimination Act.

Cheryl is going on maternity leave in April (see page 4) so is busy finalising her files for hand-over to her replacement. More about her replacement in the next issue.



Cheryl with a gift from an appreciative client

## TENANCY

Jenny Cogan is well entrenched in the Tenant's Advocate position with her client base filling up quickly. She has a number of cases she has taken over from Lauren when she left and new clients just keep coming in the door.

With the current economic situation in the state booming the disparity between those fortunate enough to be able to take advan-

tage of the boom and those on benefits or even in low paying jobs is increasing.

The cost of rent in the private sector keeps spiraling upwards as costs associated with property investment increase. For those on low incomes the reality of managing in private accommodation is becoming increasingly difficult. The priority waiting lists for Homeswest is now at 6 months

and rising, leaving many people homeless. However the true figure of homelessness is hidden as many people are in temporary accommodation with family and friends stretching living conditions out to the margins.

As with all programs Jenny is also available to come our to your organisation or agency and discuss issues surrounding tenancy. Contact the office on 9470 2676

## Staff Changes

### New Arrivals

#### **Bruce Horwood**

Bruce commences work with Sussex Street on 6 March 2008 as the new the Community Legal Education Worker in the Disability Discrimination Unit.

Bruce will be available to visit agencies and organisations with an interest in ensuring that those with a disability are not discriminated against. He will provide information on the disability discrimination, the rights of people with a disability to be treated fairly in all walks of life and how you can ensure that your organisations obligations in regard to disability discrimination are met.

To arrange for Bruce to attend your agency or organisation call the office on 9470 2676.

### Staff Departures

#### **Lauren Butterly**

It was with regret that we farewelled Lauren in February.

During her time with us Lauren worked in the Tenancy unit assisting clients with enquiries and issues they were having with Homeswest and private landlords.

Lauren is in her final year of her law degree and has taken up a position with the UWA as a research assistant. We wish her all the best in her new position and her future career in law.

## Family Law Information Sessions

Sussex Street is commencing Family Law Information Sessions in March. These sessions are approved by the Family Court. The attendees will receive a certificate approved by the Family Court for attending the session.

Initially two sessions will be run each month, one in the evening and the other in the afternoon. If there is demand further sessions will be considered. The evening sessions will provide an opportunity for working parents to attend at a more convenient time.

The sessions will be held at the Gowerie in Belmont but people can come from throughout the metropolitan area.

Interested people should contact the office on 9470 2676.

### Editors Bits



It is was with mixed feelings that we received the news when **Cheryl Collier** informed us that she is expecting a baby in

May, everyone was excited at the prospect of a baby for Sussex Street.

The downside is that we will be losing Cheryl for 12 months from mid April while she delivers her 3rd child. The Disability Discrimination Unit and colleagues will miss her.

Congratulations Cheryl and Alec and girls .

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If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter directly by email or post contact Denise Beer see above for details.