



# THE WORD ON THE STREET

## FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

Issue 9

Spring 2008 Edition

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2008 / 2009 has seen an increase in funding to the Financial Counselling Unit. The Department of Child Protection that funds this program recognises the importance of ensuring that children are suitably housed and cared for. For the many families relying on government benefits managing on low incomes is increasingly difficult.

A major component of this funding provides the Financial Counsellor with the resources to assist clients with budgeting skills. This includes working through income and expenditure statements and looking at where savings can be made. Often clients are not aware of rebates they may be entitled to, the Financial Counsellor is able to explain these to the client and assist them in making appropriate applications.

As a result of the increased funding Sussex Street has been able to increase the service from 4 days per week to a full time service and additionally employ a trainee Financial Counsellor. Accordingly the service is in a better position to meet the increased demands associated with the current economic crisis as a consequence of the mining boom. Increased costs have resulted in higher rental and associated costs

that cannot be met by those on low incomes and benefits.

Marise Resuggan is our trainee, she is looking forward to the challenge of this new position. As part of her training she will be doing the Certificate IV in Community Services (Financial Counselling) at TAFE. In addition Marise is being trained in house by Iris Watt. Iris has been at Sussex Street for over eight years and has a vast amount of skills and knowledge that she is able to pass on to Marise (Iris and Marise above)

Prior to taking on this position Marise had been a counsellor working with people with drug and alcohol problems and also worked at Sussex Street in our Night Legal Service.

Another area in which the Financial Counsellor can assist is in community education. We do this by undertaking visits to organisations and community groups providing education in budgeting skills and assisting people to understand their income and expenditure.

If you or your group would be interested in the Financial Counsellor coming or would like an appointment contact the office on 6253 9500.

## FAMILY LAW INFORMATION SESSIONS



**Luciano Sales** delivering the Family Law Information Sessions.

Sussex Street Community Law Service has been providing free advice in Family Law since 1984. This is the area of law in which we have the greatest demand for services.

The law has changed during that time and in an effort to make the process less daunting for those undergoing breakdown in family relationships litigation is used as a means of last resort and more reliance has been placed on mediation.

Family Law Information Sessions now form a mandatory part of the Family Law process. Sussex Street runs these accredited sessions on a regular basis at the Gowerie Centre in Belmont. See page 4 for further information on dates and times.

## RENOVATIONS

Sussex Street has been planning renovations for some time now and at long last all the pieces are coming together. Work will commence in the next couple of weeks. We have chosen Metrocon Pty Ltd to complete the works for us.

The changes will be most noticeable when you enter the front door. The reception desk will move closer to the front door and the area will be reduced. Most of the time there are only 1 or 2 peoples waiting for an appointment and this space is wasted.

New administration offices will be constructed and the staff room will be relocated to the old reception area. The Assistant Manager will be relocated into the administration area. This will result in two additional offices for the caseworkers and provide improved services for clients. Currently most caseworkers are sharing offices which becomes awkward when interviewing clients.

We apologise for any inconvenience that will occur during the renovations.

## Footy Tipping

Well another year of AFL football home and away matches has come to an end, and I'm sure that WA football fans will be glad to see the back of the 2008 year.

Staff enjoy friendly rivalry in the office and the annual Footy Tipping gives us a chance to put our skills to the test. Once again it has been a tight finish with the battle at the top having many leaders. Finally the winner is Edwin 124 beating Penny and the girls 122 followed by Nick 119.

Whilst the battle at the top has been tight there was another battle of wits happening for the wooden spoon which finally went to Karen Bond when the Jef and Louellyn pulled away in the last couple of weeks.

Congratulations to all the winners (and losers) and to those clever people who were lucky enough to pick 8 round winners during the season. Bring on 2009!

## FREEHILLS PRO BONO CONTRIBUTION



Sussex Street Community Law Service has been fortunate over the years for the support from Freehills law firm. This relationship has been ongoing for many years and the support throughout that time has been exceptional. In 2004 Sussex Street and Freehills won the Prime Ministers Award for the Community Business Partnership. This recognition was due to the strong support that is provided by Freehills which has taken the form of ongoing placement of secondees on 2 week rotations of their Restricted Practitioners and included a 3 year partnership of providing a 12 month secondment of a solicitor. (Pictured are some of the more recent placements)

The latest in that partnership has been Rebecca Tedder who relocated from Queensland to take up the opportunity of spending 12 months in a Community Legal Centre. During her time at Sussex Street Rebecca has worked in a range of different areas of law including family, civil, welfare rights (Centrelink matters) and most recently in the Disability Discrimination Unit.



**REBECCA**

## Family Law Information Sessions

Sussex Street commenced 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.

Sessions are held in the mornings and evening, upcoming dates are

3 Sept	Property	10.00 - 11.00 am
18 Sept	Children	6.00 -7.00 pm
	Property	7.00 - 8.00 pm
1 Oct	Property	10.00 - 11.00 am
16 Oct	Children	6.00 - 7.00 pm
	Property	7.00 - 8.00 pm
5 Nov	Property	10.00 - 11.00 am
20 Nov	Children	6.00 - 7.00 pm
	Property	7.00 - 8.00 pm
3 Dec	Property	10.00 - 11.00 am
18 Dec	Property	6.00 - 7.00 pm
	Children	7.00 - 8.00 am

Interested people can contact the office on 6253 9500 for confirmation on times and dates.

## 21st Birthday



Zoë O'Neill our Tenancy Intake Worker recently celebrated her 21st Birthday with a theme party with her friends.

Congratulations Zoë we hope you remember the night for a long time.

## Editors Bits



### Goodbye

Sadly we say goodbye to Penny Robbins. Penny has been with Sussex Street since early 2006 where she started as an articled clerk progressing to a restricted practitioner (above). Penny is staying within the sector choosing to move to the Women's Law Centre. We wish her well as she takes the next step in her career.

### A New Baby Boy

We are delighted to announce that General Manager, Louellyn and her husband Graham have safely delivered a new baby boy. Young Grayden Albert and mother are doing well. All at Sussex Street wish them well.



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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.