

# PILBARA COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICE NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our August newsletter!

This month the PCLS team was lucky enough to get all four offices together and go to Karijini to attend a 2 day training as well as meet the new members of our team. See page 4 for details and photos!

PCLS has also been extending its services to the communities around the Pilbara. Articles here include outreach to yandiyarra , the newman project– Djidji Nyitti Project and other important events that help raise the awareness of service that are available to the community.



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Pilbara Community Legal Service is a not for profit Government funded agency managed by a Board of Management and supported by a CEO and administrative staff. PCLS has four office locations, Karratha, Roebourne, South Hedland and Newman, however our services are delivered throughout the Pilbara region to isolated communities which include: Talka Warra, Yandiyarra, Marble Bar, Nullagine and Jigalong with occasional visits to Onslow, Tom Price and Paraburdoo.

### Our goal is:

To make sure that cost or access isn't a barrier to people in the Pilbara receiving the advice they need.

### We assist in the areas of:

**Financial counselling**– provide financial service information, budgeting, advocacy and support services for the purposes of assisting individuals who are in financial difficulty due to circumstances such as debt, over-commitment, unemployment, sickness or family breakdown.

**Tenancy Support**– provide tenancy advocacy, education and support services to tenants facing difficulties maintaining their tenancy. We assist and support people who are experiencing homelessness and ensure they are linked with mainstream services.

**Legal**– provide free education to the community as well as legal advice, primarily in the areas of Family Law, Criminal Injuries Compensation, Wills and Deceased Estates (we do not provide criminal law advice).

**Domestic Violence**- Provide support and advocacy for victims of domestic violence/ at risk clients, promoting safety planning to help ensure client wellbeing whilst helping to resolve crisis. DV assists with access to other related services such as legal advice, accommodation, health, income support and financial counselling.

**Migrant Settlement Services**– provide one on one casework, support, information and linkages to other mainstream services to assist migrants. community development activities are undertaken which include the implementation of projects that aim to support and empower newly emerging community groups.

### To find out more about our service:

- Visit our website: [www.pcls.net.au](http://www.pcls.net.au)
- Located in Karratha, Roebourne, South Hedland and Newman
- Open 8am – 4pm weekdays



## Outreach Encourages Women to Reach Out



Located on the bank of the Yule River 140km outside of Port Hedland, lies a remote Aboriginal Community, Yandeyarra. Originally settled on a pastoral station and only accessible via an unsealed, dusty road littered with potholes, stray livestock, and spinifex, the community has no mobile phone reception, internet access, or fuel station.

Unreported domestic violence incidents are common among the transient inhabitants, especially on 'pay day' when the community experiences a surge in funds allowing for bulk purchases of alcohol.

Community Outreach is increasingly being recognised as an essential

requirement in service provision to not only reach out and support women who may be experiencing family and domestic violence, but also to encourage and influence the rest of the community to effect positive change.<sup>1</sup>

This is the premise for the Keeping Women Safe community outreach program with HelpingMinds; a fortnightly outreach program where PCLS works together with other service providers to build relationships, teach women about healthy boundaries, and share stories to promote healing.

This July, our Domestic Violence team (Sonia Dopierala, Domestic Violence Outreach and Jessica Rankin, Keeping Women Safe), were lucky enough to link in with HelpingMinds and Bloodwood Tree Association on two separate occasions to provide much needed outreach support to Yandeyarra. These visits take place in the Yandeyarra Women's Centre, located within walking distance of the

school and modern health clinic. The Centre is a safe and sacred space for women to come together, do fun activities, bond, and share their stories. Men are forbidden from entering the centre unless invited by the collective.

Domestic Violence Outreach in Yandeyarra will continue every fortnight until flash flooding brought on by the inevitable wet season renders the passage inaccessible. Building and strengthening these relationships will help the DV team in their efforts to work with the women of Yandeyarra to 'Say No to Violence' and hopefully create a safer environment for the women and children of the community.

<sup>1</sup>Wendt, S., Chung, D., Elder, A., Hendrick, A., & Hartwig, A. (2017). Seeking help for domestic and family violence: Exploring regional, rural, and remote women's coping experiences: Final report (ANROWS) Horizons, 06/2017). Sydney: ANROWS.

### International FASD Awareness Day

Join Wirraka Maya Health Services and Telethon Kids in raising awareness of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

**Where:** South Hedland Town Square  
**When:** Friday, September 7th 2018  
**Time:** 3pm to 6pm



For more information contact  
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# Isolation and Identity Theft- The Arsenal of an Abuser

As a young woman, I really resonated with Julia Roberts' character in Runaway Bride. There is this pivotal scene where she realises she doesn't know how she likes her eggs, (having always eaten them 'just the way 'he' does') so she fries, poaches, scrambles, and boils them in a bid to answer the question. This simple scene encapsulates the loss of identity she suffers from; like a chameleon who absorbs the world around her, she constantly adapts her needs, wants, and desires to meet her partner's expectations.

Identity is far more complex than our likes and dislikes (and certainly more than how we like our eggs). In fact, identity is a fluid construct that constantly evolves in response to new stimuli, new relationships, and a changing society. What's important is that we are doing things according to our 'true self' and not as a result of fear or coercion by another person.

This formed the basis for the topic PCLS presented at the July KWS workshop; a monthly collaboration between Helping Minds, Bloodwood Tree Association, and PCLS.

To simplify identity constructs and demonstrate the overlap between a

relationship and our sense of self, Sonia Dopierala, Domestic Violence Outreach and Jessica Rankin, Keeping Women Safe, delivered an interactive group activity that encouraged participants to think about the things they felt were central to their core identity: 'things they like to do, activities they enjoy, clothes they like to wear, qualities they value in themselves'; and the qualities they value in a partner'. Core identity answers were added to one circle, and qualities in a partner were added to another. When the circles were joined together, there was an overlapping circle in between which represented the space for a relationship. The boundaries of the circles constituted 'boundaries'.

Once the circles had been filled in, participants were asked to consider how they might feel if they were no longer able to do these things, and what would they do to try to resist an attempt to isolate them from their friends or remove core parts of their identity. An abusive partner will often try to isolate their victims from any social connections they consider dangerous. This includes family members or concerned friends. If someone is trying to isolate you or stop you from doing things that make you

happy, this could indicate they are trying to control you. Controlling, manipulative and coercive behaviour is **emotional abuse** and it has no place in a relationship. Emotional abuse is one of the most insidious types of abuse and can lead to depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

PCLS received positive feedback from the event and participants described it as "easy to understand, and something that sticks in my head."

If you or someone you know is in a relationship that appears to be controlling or isolating, **reach out**.

*Keeping Women Safe is a monthly workshop that connects women who might be experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV) to local support, assistance, and resources. It provides a safe space for women to tell their stories, learn valuable information, and reminds them they are not alone.*

# Karijini



Pilbara Community Legal Service has 4 offices spread across the Pilbara. Due to staff working in these different locations and not being able to meet on a regular basis, we aim to meet twice a year for group training.

This year we were lucky enough to go to Karijini and stay at the eco retreat overnight.

When we arrived in Karijini all the staff met at the eco retreat and then headed off to explore some of the gorges. During this

time we all got a chance to meet the new staff members.

When we arrived back at the retreat everyone got rugged up in their warm clothes and met for dinner. Under the heaters.

It was so cold at night that several layers of clothing and 3-4 blankets were needed to go to sleep!

Training over the two consisted of discussing the values that PCLS has and should have moving forward.

A thorough discussion was held around the large number of policies and procedures that PCLS are required to have to be an accredited community Legal Centre. Break out groups were held to discuss the gaps in the Pilbara. All staff received additional training on the risk management guide to ensure compliance with the

requirements of NACLCL and our insurers.

Various team building exercises were held as it is important that PCLS staff, although disbursed across four offices, work collaboratively as a team to deliver the best services possible to the community.

After the training we went to explore a few more gorges before all saying our goodbyes and heading back home.

We would like to say a big thankyou to our CEO for allowing us to be able to get together to get to know each other and experience the amazing gorges in Karijini National Park!



## Djidji Nyitti Project



PCLS attended Newman on 30 July 2018 to the 3 August 2018. for the family court of Western Australia's inaugural 'Newman Circuit'.

Representatives from Legal Aid, Aboriginal Family Legal Service, the Family Court of Western Australia and Aboriginal Legal Service were all in attendance. The Project team was assembled by The Honourable Chief Justice Stephen Thackray in order to bring justice to 'the bush'.

The aim of the project was to provide an accessible and informal platform for families to attend to have their family conflicts resolved. The overarching theme of the project was indeed informality. The FCWA prepared a ground-breaking single page Family Court Form, for specific and simplistic use on the week's circuit. This was implemented to combat reservations and difficulties Aboriginal Australians have in relation to "Millie Millie", that is to say the voluminous amount of paperwork that comes with any Family Court matter.

Members of the Newman community and surrounds gathered outside Newman House and were casually and informally met by members of the project team.

Kanyirninpa Jukurrpa Rangers (KJ Rangers) attended Newman House and presented a seminar on Cultural awareness which elaborated on the intricacies of the Martu Aboriginal people's family dynamic. The presenters John Anderson and Melita Metcalf gave some running commentary on some of the politics in the surrounding aboriginal communities and provided opinion on governance.

Client conferences and consultation were conducted with clients outside Newman House as per previous days. Some of the members of the Project team attended the Parnpajinya community outside of Newman. There is currently a project afoot to develop an Aboriginal Men's Healing Centre on this community. The centre will house and educate perpetrators of domestic Violence. The centre is aimed to provide an alternate to incarceration to perpetrators of domestic violence should the circumstances provide.

Project team conducted client consultation for the day as per

previous days. That evening the Project team panelled at a seminar organised by the Chief Judge. Community members attended the panelled discussion and spoke openly about the project, the family court process, the difficulties with the justice system in remote areas and the focus that the children are at the forefront of the courts agenda. The team were given an opportunity again to introduce themselves to those in attendance and provided information about our services.

Fortuitously, the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's day fell the Friday of the project. In the spirit of the project and in light of the mandate of the Family Court of Western Australia being that children are the primary consideration of the court, the members of the project team joined the community of Newman on Boomerang oval for the morning. Organizations in attendance had stalls and information for families about the services on offer that worked to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children.



## Purple Bench Movement



Pilbara Community Legal Service Karratha has been participating in the campaign initiated by the Women’s Counsel of WA alongside local council, Karratha Women’s Refuge, Soroptimist International and Mission Australia to honour local victims of domestic violence.

The Purple Bench Movement is a visual reminder of the prevalence of Family

and Domestic Violence here in the Pilbara.

Over time, judicial understanding of Family and Domestic Violence had developed and there is a growing acknowledgment of the complexity and diversity. Domestic Violence now extends to the following:

- Physical violence and harm
- Sexual and reproductive abuse
- Economic abuse Emotional and psychological abuse
- Cultural and spiritual abuse
- Harassing, stalking and monitoring

- Social abuse
- Exposing children to domestic and family violence
- Damaging property
- Animal abuse
- Systems abuse
- Forced marriage

The Purple Benches hopefully will act as a stark reminder that as a society we can make a difference and hopefully bring an end to Family and Domestic Violence.

## Indonesian Independence Day

As a Community Migrant Support Worker, I had the pleasure to join the Hedland Indonesian community on the 25th of August for a wonderful night of celebration, food and cultural performances.

The event marked the 73rd anniversary of Indonesian Independence. The Indonesian community is one of the biggest in our town. As a Community Migrant Service worker, I was happy to assist migrants from various Indonesian regions who came to Australia on family stream visas or skilled visas.

Among the entertainment were songs performed by the band “Ardi and Friends”, traditional dances from Java, North Sumatra, Bali and East Nusa

Tenggara, door prizes, as well as the fashion show of the national costumes of some of the provinces in Indonesia.

Indonesia is one of Australia’s closest neighbours and a favourite tourist destination for many Australians. In recent years, the relationship between the two countries has been characterised by growing mutual trade in addition to close links in government, education, and defense. Both nations are members of the G20, ASEAN Regional Forum, and the Australia-New Zealand-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement. However; the links between Australia and Indonesia were established even before the European settlement. Fishermen from Makasar used to come to trade with Indigenous communities in northern Australia. I

hope the bilateral relations between our nations continue. Understanding and connecting with our nearest neighbour is critical for countless economic, political, social and cultural reasons.

