

Regional Immigration Legal Support Project

The project involves the South Brisbane Immigration and Community Legal Service (SBICLS) partnering with LAQ to provide key refugee and immigration education and advice to disadvantaged people in regional communities, while researching and developing an information technology model for self-help legal support to regional communities.

Utilizing community access networks, regional information sessions would be held through LAQ community access points and regional community access workers to:

- promote and develop the network,
- provide individual legal advice and support while mapping the needs of community and organizations,
- developing material and a best practice model for providing appropriate regional refugee and humanitarian immigration advice, including development and placement of self-help and referral material on SBICLS new website which is currently under development.

The project would link clients and workers into an accessible community-friendly website. The advice and information prepared and disseminated would be in core areas of concern for disadvantaged refugee and migrant communities. These would include:

- Refugee application processes
- Immigration Domestic violence cases
- Refugee immediate and close family reunion
- Information to Temporary Protection Visa holders, including about other permanent visas they are able to access after recent changes to immigration law. This includes a new Regional Sponsored permanent visa.
- General family migration issues.

The LAQ report 'People from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds' (December 2003) has confirmed there is a need for specialist immigration services in regional areas and recommended LAQ/SBICLS partnerships be developed.

Project Areas

The project would aim to hold information sessions at the areas of significant concentration of people from our target group – disadvantaged refugee and migrant people. The project would target major regional centres as well as some smaller LAQ Community Access Points using video conferencing facilities.

PROJECT PLAN

Stage 1: Month 1

- Advertise for worker position (Lawyer/Migration Agent/educator)
- Develop project protocol with LAQ including IT and evaluation protocols
- Prepare information for regional areas about SBICLS and the advice it provides
- Network with regional community access points – including LAQ, WQJN, Community Legal Centre's immigration network.

Stage 2: Month 2

- Develop project promotional strategy with the networks that have been established
- Develop promotional material
- Develop a draft legal information package to disseminate at access meetings

Stage 3: Months 2 – 4

- With community access workers, organize regional information sessions with community people and organizations.
- Hold the information sessions through video link to regional areas, and on-site sessions in close SEQ regions (Logan, Gold Coast). These would
 - Advertise the work of SBICLS and other pro bone immigration services
 - Train community information workers regarding recognition and referral of key refugee/immigration matters
 - Gain feedback about refugee/ humanitarian / immigration issues most in need.
 - Provide individual advice where required, experimenting through video, phone, email and web links as to best practice

Stage 4: Months 5 – 6

- Following the information and advice sessions, begin to develop a best practice model for providing appropriate regional material, particularly including placement of material on SBICLS new website
- Based on the feedback and individual advice practice developed, draft proforma advice material suitable for inclusion as ongoing referral and self - help web material. This material would need to be updated regularly.
- Analyze ways to link this material into wider web networks, including LAQ and CLC links as well as the existing national refugee and immigration legal centre and pro bono network. The Department of Immigration has extensive client information material which can also be linked to.
- Assess viability of supporting an ongoing refugee/humanitarian immigration regional legal information advice network.
- Provide a report and develop strategies for future development.

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