

Court Network Newsletter

December 2007

Executive Director's Report

Congratulations to Beth and the team organising this year's conference. To those who were able to attend, the quality of speakers, the venue and the opportunity to meet up with colleagues made the day time well spent. Several points of issue regarding the Annual Report were raised at the AGM. In the November 15th edition BRW magazine, Gina Anderson, CEO of Philanthropy Australia is quoted saying many not for profit groups have not been set up to manage the reporting and governance levels expected by the community. With assistance provided to almost 100,000 people last year, this criticism should not be applied to Network.

The Annual Report is circulated and read by many people outside Network including members of the judiciary, government department representatives and potential staff, new volunteers and donors. This year in particular, the report is focused on highlighting the work of Network to those who have not heard of it or do not understand it. Some members have lamented that not enough of the report spoke directly to them which is helpful feedback that we'll use in planning next year's report. Several members have also requested the Annual Report be provided before the AGM and we will endeavour to make this happen next year.

And so it is Christmas time again. Thank you for your contribution to Network and the courts. I wish you and yours a fabulous break over the festive season and look forward to seeing you about the courts or in the office in 2008.

Nic Bolto
Executive Director



Networkers (above) at the 2007 State Conference blow out the candles celebrating the NAB National Volunteer Organisation of the Year Award.



Brisbane Update

Brisbane Progressing Well

The higher courts in Brisbane will shortly have Network assistance. 17 new volunteers completed their initial training and they will start in the Supreme and District Courts in early December.

On December 4, Court Network marks its first year of service in Brisbane. This milestone will be celebrated at the first annual State Conference for Queensland.

Again a warm thank you goes out to Melbourne Networkers availing their time to the Brisbane team in its early stages.

Nicole Little
Brisbane State Manager

Melbourne Metros Graduate....

On Wednesday 24 October over 20 Melbourne Metropolitan trainees graduated.

After more than six weeks of intensive training, the graduates and their guests were invited to celebrate their achievement at a ceremony in Head office. More than 30 people attended the function.



Chief Justice Diana Bryant, of the Family Court of Australia, presented Networkers with a certificate of graduation.

All of the new volunteers (pictured above with Chief Justice Bryant) will work in the Melbourne metropolitan courts, with courts such as Ringwood, Broadmeadows and Sunshine being covered by the new graduates.

President Gillian Harris, Executive Director Nic Bolto, Training Manager Judy Frazer and Court Network staff were also on hand to assist with the event.

National Winners celebrate...



As many of you would be aware, Court Network won the National Australia Bank Volunteer Organisation of the Year award for both Victoria and Australia. More than 900 organisations entered the awards.

The judges particularly liked Court Network's innovative projects such as the Blue Jacket program and an increase in the number of people we assist (24% more court users were assisted this year compared to last year). We are extremely proud to receive the award which has been achieved through the commitment, dedication and hard work of our volunteers, management and staff.

Congratulations to everyone involved. We look forward to building on our success in the year ahead!

Thank You Dorothy and Goodbye



After almost seven years with Court Network, Dorothy has decided it is time hang up the boots and explore new horizons and other landscapes.

Time to say goodbye.. Dorothy Hood (pictured above)

Her wisdom and her humour will be sadly missed and we wish her well with life beyond Network.

We encourage you to attend the End of Year Party held at the office on December 13th at 3pm where we'll raise a toast to Dorothy and all she has contributed to your work as Networkers.

Court User Surveys

If a young, dark haired woman calling herself 'Vicki' introduces herself to you as our Victoria Law Foundation student intern, you have just met her! Vicki is doing a 4 week placement with us. In that time, she is hoping to collect up to 100 surveys of court users experience of Court Network. Vicki will be attending 12 courts around the state including regional courts.

Thanks to the Mentors

Several County Court Networkers are on their way to Queensland in early December to mentor the new team starting at the new Brisbane higher courts. Many thanks to Barb, Pamela, Esther and friends. The new Networkers have been trained by a range experts, including our own Molly, and have received two weeks orientation from the court. We wish them, and their mentors, the best of luck as the program begins.

Foundations of Court Network

The Board recently formalised recognition of Carmel Benjamin's role as founder of Court Network. You can expect to see more of Carmel at key functions and events.

Volunteers needed for the office

We are on the look out for more Phone Volunteers to assist with taking calls in the office. We will provide training and a great work environment. If you are interested in being part of a bright and energetic team, call Pam on 9603 7433.

Continuing Education update

A total of 265 Networkers attended nine Continuing Education sessions held in 2007, and feedback was generally positive. The availability of the Family Court Information Room from July, able to accommodate up to 50 participants, enabled larger groups to participate in the program.

The 2008 program will consist of 10 sessions from February to November. Some of the following topics have been suggested:

Dealing with Distressed Court Users, Looking After You, Basic Skills & Court Processes, Victim Impact, Dealing with Angry Clients, Victims Charter, Koori Issues, CISP (Court Integrated Support Program), Runaway Kids, What is Islam?, DiDS (Dads in Distress).....

Networkers are invited to suggest additional topics and/or speakers for the 2008 program.

Phone Denise on 9603 7416 or email denise@courtnetwork.com.au
Suggestions due before 21st December 2007.

