

Court Network Newsletter

February 2008

Executive Director's Report

Welcome back to work... it would have been nice if there was not so much of it to return to perhaps! The courts seem busier than ever and here in the office, the helpline phone is certainly busier than it was before Christmas. I hope you all enjoyed a break and some quality and quantity time with family and friends over the new year.

Monash Uni Training Pilot

Training for new Networkers will be conducted through a partnership with Monash University starting in February. The training will be run at the Monash Bourke St campus and will include an intake of 25 new Networkers who will receive expert advice on courts and the legal system from The Hon George Hampel and the usual arrangement guest speakers and training content from Court Network. Following the training pilot, a full evaluation of the project will be undertaken.

Thanks Judy!

Judy Frazer, immediate past Training Manager, completed a final run of training with 22 new Melbourne Networkers late last year. The graduates will begin their new duties at court in January. Judy earned respect and appreciation from her trainees and will be missed.

Nic Bolto Executive Director



Judy Frazer (pictured above, fourth from right) with Brisbane Trainees after their training session in late 2007.



Brisbane Update

Queensland's first State Conference was held at the Mercure Hotel in Brisbane last month. An interesting array of speakers included Julie Steel Director of Courts (District & Supreme), The Honourable Justice Barry (Family Court of Australia) and Senior Sargeant Rasmussen and Sargeant Aquilina from the Queensland Police Service.

Melbourne Networkers Terry and Margery (pictured below with Nicole Little) also attended the Conference. Overall, our Brisbane volunteers were proud and elated to celebrate the First Anniversary of the service in Queensland. Court Network's expansion into Queensland reflects the strength, professionalism and status of this newly founded and very necessary service.

Nicole Little Brisbane State Manager



Geelong and Warnie Graduate

More than 100 people attended the Geelong/Warrnambool Graduation last year. Nic Bolto spoke of the services of Court Network, followed by a brief presentation by Court Network founder Carmel Benjamin.

His Honour, Mr Ian Von Einem spoke of the benefits of Court Network's presence in the courts to not only court users, but to the Magistrates and legal profession as well. Certificates and Lanyards were distributed to the new Court Network volunteers.

While the majority of these volunteers will work at the Geelong court, a couple will work at Colac and Bill will be undertaking his duties at Warrnambool.

Pauline Stewart Program Manager

A note from Dorothy...

As I look back over the last seven years at Court Network I am filled with an enormous feeling of gratitude to you the Networkers for all that you have shared and given to me. I feel very privileged to have helped train and work with so many wonderful people who give a part of their life in supporting those who enter the courts.

The commitment you have to your daily Networking and to your day team members has filled me with awe, I know that many of you get a great sense of achievement from knowing that you have provided a service that is invaluable not only to Court users but to the courts. The expressions of appreciation for your work that I have received from heads of Courts has proved to me that you are truly valued and accepted as part of the court and integral in providing emotional support that is not available from any other service.

So I leave you with my profound thanks, you have made my time such a pleasurable, fulfilling experience. I thank also my colleagues here in head office and the regional Program Managers for their support, shared wisdom and collaboration. I wish the Executive Director and the Board good luck for the future. I have met many great people and had some amazing experiences. To you Networkers you are the stars that shine, keep shining, I wish you all good health, good luck in the future.

Dorothy Hood
Program Manager

New Year, New Job...

Are you looking for a new challenge? Do you feel like shaking up your Networking week with something a little different?

We are always 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.

Noticed the difference?



For those Networkers who returned the Email Communication Form, future Court Network information via email will begin shortly.

If you'd still like to be on our email list, simply email beth@courtnetwork.com.au

Welcome Pauline

A warm welcome is extended to Pauline McNeill who commenced at Court Network last month.

Pauline previously worked in the role of Community Services Manager at Prahran Mission. Pauline will assume the role of Senior Program Manager at Court Network and oversee the management of programs and courts.

She is enthusiastic about her appointment and looks forward to joining the team and contributing to Court Network's mission.

Goodbye from Denise...

It with some sadness that I bid you farewell – I am finishing at Court Network on Friday 15th February. I have learnt so much from you in the last three years – of commitment, of generosity, of humility, of acceptance...the list goes on. I intend to go back to a 'hands-on' role in an education or welfare setting, but the lessons you have taught will enrich whatever I do. Thank you for the role you play with court users, and the role you have played in my professional (and personal!) development. Thanks again!

Denise Keighery
Program Manager

Intensive Referral Pilot

A project to better understand and address the referral needs of court users will be undertaken later this year at one or two metropolitan courts.

The new Senior Program Manager Pauline McNeill will be chairing a working group with the founder Carmel Benjamin, the Executive Director and other interested parties. The contribution of the views and insights of Networkers would be highly valued in the brainstorming and conception work of this pilot. If you would like to be part of the working group, please call Pauline on 9603 7433.

Court User Survey 2008

A law intern working with Court Network over the summer has just completed a review of court user feedback. Notably this study revealed that: 45.2% of survey respondents were attending court alone, without the support of a friend or family member; 100% of respondents found the Court Network support service useful and 96.8% of those surveyed would use the service again.

This study also resulted in the compilation of a substantive list of recommendations for service enhancement that will form part of the 2008 Business Plan. A copy of the survey is being distributed to all courts in the coming week.