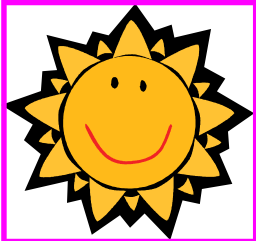


# Court Network Newsletter

October 2006

## Executive Director's Report

### Court Network Migrates North



Thank you for your continued support of the Network and for your care of court users each week you are at court. I look forward to seeing you at the conference and AGM in November.

As I write this column, I am finalising the arrangements for Court Network's first step interstate. In a letter written to our President Gillian Harris on September 8<sup>th</sup>, Federal Attorney General Phillip Ruddock confirmed that funding for a two year pilot in the Brisbane Commonwealth Law Court had been approved. So ends many years of speculation about the Network's prospects interstate. Yes, there is a need for our service. Yes, the service will be delivered effectively and with due regard for the many years of service Victorian Networkers have given. Thank you to Gillian Harris for seeing the Ruddock proposal through to its fulfillment.

Within two days of the first advertisement placed in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* advertising the launch of the service, 47 potential Networkers had expressed interest in joining a growing group of Australians committed to the support, information and welfare needs of people at court. Nancy Hanley, who led the opening of the service in new Regional Victorian courts earlier in the year will be responsible for the Brisbane expansion. So that's Brisbane. Back to things closer to home, we are preparing for the start of the service at VCAT's King St registry. Early negotiations with President Stuart Morris and CEO John Ardlie have proceeded very well. Thanks to Barb Rozenes for her assistance in facilitating this.



Court Network's VCAT Team Leader, Harvey Reese (pictured left).



A new Networker team will be recruited to cover VCAT, a team that will be supported by a Team Leader, existing Networker Harvey Reese who is presently Networking at the Coroner's Court.

Another new team is being brought together to start at the Collingwood Neighborhood Justice Centre which will commence in January 2007. When these three new initiatives are bedded down, Networker numbers will be approaching 380 strong.

**Nic Bolto**  
Executive Director

### Brisbane Commonwealth Pilot

We have had a fabulous response from the Brisbane community who are interested in volunteering as part of our pilot service in the Brisbane Commonwealth law courts.

We will hold an 'Information Session' for potential volunteers in mid-October. Training will begin at the end of October and we will launch our service in the Brisbane court on December 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

Experienced Networkers from the Family & Federal Magistrates' court in Melbourne will spend time in Brisbane in the initial two weeks of service. These Networkers will assist the new trainees to find their feet and feel confident to lead this volunteer pilot. Court Network is very grateful to those who have volunteered to undertake this mentor role in Brisbane.

Court Network is working closely with the court to ensure Network has full support from court and judicial staff when we launch.

As well as this, it is important that Court Network work effectively with the community and legal sector throughout this pilot. To help build effective inter-organisational relationships, I have visited a number of community and legal services in Brisbane to let the sector know we are coming and to discuss inter-organisational referral processes. This has included specific referral liaison between Court Network and the Family Relationship Centre in Brisbane.

**Nancy Hanley**  
Project Manager

## VCAT in Melbourne

It is now confirmed that we will setup a Court Network service in VCAT by the end of this year.

The training and setup of this program is currently in its developmental stages.

**Nancy Hanley**  
Project Manager

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## Networker Policy Booklet update

I have sent the final draft of this booklet to Nic who will refer it to the Board, for their input and approval. Hopefully the booklet will be available for distribution at the AGM. This booklet includes policy and codes of ethics and conduct relating to networking; combined with the Practice Governance it will simplify and replace all existing policy documents.

**Kerry Bergin**  
Program Manager

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## In the Office...

Hi! My name is Raiyan Abdul and I'm in my final year of the Law degree at the University of Melbourne. I'm currently doing an internship with Court Network - and absolutely loving it!



For the next couple of months, I have a fair bit of research to get done. My work mainly consists of surveys and interviews, so as to document the efficiency, effectiveness and appreciation for Court Network services. Hopefully Court Network will be able to use the final report when applying for future funding, and perhaps even use it as a tool for

improving the service.

So far the support I've been getting from Court Network staff and the Networkers has been amazing, and I look forward to meeting many more of the Court Network team in the near future.

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## Women's Legal Service Event

2006 marks Women's Legal Service Victoria's 25th year. A celebratory networking event will be held on 1 November 2006 in the Federal Court of Australia, 305 William Street, Melbourne at 6 pm.



Magistrate Di Fingleton will speak about 'resilience'. Solicitor General of Victoria, Pamela Tate will propose the official toast.

Drinks and canapés will be provided. For a ticket please phone 9642 0877.

## 2006 Continuing Education Calendar Final Session

	<b>BASIC SKILLS:</b> 10.00-10.30am	<b>TOPIC</b> 11.00-1.00pm	<b>SPECIALIST COURT TRAINING</b> 2.00-3.00
Oct 8	Professional Developmnt 2007	Drug & Alcohol Issues	Carmel Benjamin

## Continuing Education...

'Continuing Education' is the new term for sessions previously known as 'On-going training'. 2006 has, to September, seen 260 Networkers attend 8 sessions to extend/update their knowledge and understanding of legislation and court-related services.

Evaluations completed at the end of each session have conveyed largely positive responses to presentations. Comments expressing concern about the venue and its acoustics resulted in negotiations to use the OPP 3<sup>rd</sup> floor training room. This room accommodates larger groups of people (up to 50 with ease), and has access to IT and microphone facilities. Security arrangements require some co-ordination – Networkers are required to meet at the room opposite Head Office at 10.15, 15 minutes prior to start – so groups can travel in the elevator using a security pass. However it seems that the later starting time, allowing regional participants to use public transport, suits the majority of those attending.

In addition to externally presented topics, 'Specialist court training' sessions, conducted from 2.00-3.00 on some of the Continuous Education dates, have been used to outline Court Network's role in specialist jurisdictions. This has included information on Coroner's Court, Children's Court, Info/Ed team, County/Supreme Courts and Family/Federal Magistrates' jurisdictions. Networkers interested in developing greater understanding of the legal system as a whole, or considering a transfer to one of these courts, have found this information valuable to extend their knowledge.

The Board's decision to detail accreditation requirements, attendance at 6 Continuous Education (or externally conducted sessions approved by the Program Manager) sessions and one State Conference over every 2 year period, will ensure Networkers have understanding of current legislation and court-related services relevant to their role. This is an essential element in developing and maintaining the credibility of Court Network.

**Denise Keighery**  
Program Manager