

Court Network Newsletter

September 2007

Executive Director's Report

Nice to be recognised isn't it? Court Network wins the NAB volunteer organisation of the year award, large organisation category, Victoria. A testament to the thousands of hours you have contributed as Networkers, recognition of the importance of the service delivered. Congratulations to you all.

Getting similar recognition from our key funder, the Department of Justice, is proving more difficult than bringing home this award from a field of roughly 300 entrants. This year, assistance provided to court users will increase to over 100,000 people and I am deeply challenged in finding the resources to sustain our work, particularly new regional courts that have been set up with philanthropic and community support. Our Vice President, Barbara Rozenes has secured a one off grant of \$66,000 from a private philanthropist which is an astonishing achievement and goes some way to keeping our books balanced in the short term.

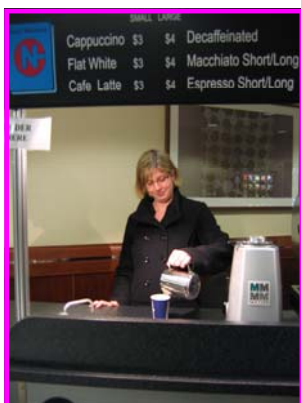
In October, a meeting of eminent advisors has been arranged to consider the question of Court Network's sustainability in greater detail and to put the question of who, if the Department of Justice will not, should take responsibility for the growing number of people we work with. We look to this event, attended by 20 heads of court jurisdictions, community and business leaders, for a signal of how we better meet the demands we face.

Nic Bolto
Executive Director

Court Network's Coffee Cart

A Coffee Cart is now operating in the Melbourne Magistrates' court.

Barista Leonie Patti (pictured left), operates the cart and supervises a group of Hospitality volunteers who assist with making coffees and serving customers. The cart sells hot beverages, bottled water, and pastries. There are plans to introduce the cart into other courts in the future.



State Manager Update

Congratulations again to all Networker's on your achievement in being awarded the NAB Volunteer Organisation of the Year. This is deserved recognition of the hard work that is undertaken by you all on a daily basis.

I encourage Networkers to think about their own checklist for looking after themselves. It is so easy to forget yourself and your needs when you spend the day focusing on the needs of others. What is important to remember, however, is that in order to best be able to care for others, we must firstly be well-cared for ourselves. I've noted some suggestions just to help you along the way: do something nice for yourself, eat and sleep well, speak to loved ones, listen to music or go to a movie, go for a walk, share your thoughts and feelings in a journal or with peers, and above all else, don't forget to laugh (often).

The success of the Blue Jacket program in the Melbourne Magistrates' Court has led to other courts seeking the same service. We anticipate setting up services in VCAT, Supreme and Moorabbin Courts in the near future.

Over the next few months graduation ceremonies for Melbourne, Geelong and Mildura trainees will occur. The trainees have been a wonderful addition to their respective teams and are making a significant contribution. Welcome to all new recruits.

I look forward to catching up with everyone at the Conference.

Sue Wilson
Victorian State Manager

Court Whip-Around....

Blue Jacket: The Blue Jacket project is a valuable new resource for the Melbourne Magistrates' Court with approximately 70 court users per day utilising the service for assistance and guidance. The Chief Magistrate recently congratulated the Blue Jacket workers on providing such an excellent program.

Collingwood Neighbourhood Justice Centre (CNJC): The Centre has recently completed 60 tours for interested community groups, the majority facilitated by the Networkers.

Melbourne Magistrates' Court: It's wonderful to think that Court Network now provides a suite of services at the Melbourne Magistrates' court from coffee, to information via the Blue Jacket workers through to the traditional support provided by the Networkers.

Teddies at the Children's court

The experience of Children's Court is no teddy bear's picnic but, thanks to Beaumaris Lions Club, Networkers can offer children a cuddly friend to make their day less traumatic.

The gift of a teddy, warmly enclosed in its new wrapping, is offered to young children attending Family Division while decisions are made about their custody or welfare.

Networkers report that this 'gesture' often provides a welcome distraction to child and parent, and delight is expressed when the child realises teddy is now a permanent companion.

Court Network at the Children's court would like to thank to the Beaumaris Lion's Club, who kindly donated the much appreciated toys.

Denise Keighery
Program Manager



A child at the Children's court receives a teddy bear from Program Manager Dorothy Hood (above).

Upcoming Event: Conference/ AGM

A reminder that the Court Network Conference for 2007 will take place on Thursday 1 November from 9.30am—2.15pm, to be followed by the AGM from 2.25pm-3.20pm. Networkers are encouraged to stay after the Conference and attend the AGM.



The venue for both these functions will be the William Angliss Conference Centre at 555 La Trobe Street, Melbourne. Invitations will be posted out in early October.

The Training Update

Training for work in Victorian courts continues in 2007.

Geelong: Nine new networkers completed their training in the Geelong Court on 29th June, and then undertook a final Court-specific training day with Pauline Stewart, Program Manager for Geelong and Colac. It is rewarding to see enthusiastic and willing volunteers increase the total numbers for Geelong and Colac courts.

Thanks to Pauline for the support and local liaison she offered to make this a very successful contextualised training program. Current Networkers also made an excellent contribution.

Mildura: Four of the original seven trainees completed their training on 5th September, with a court-specific training day to follow, conducted by Michael Jobe, Program Manager for Mildura and Robinvale. Three potential volunteers were unable to complete the training, owing to illness or injury, but the gender balance of two male and two female, with at least one additional person happy to accept referrals for Robinvale, was a very good outcome.

Again, my thanks to Michael, who actively supported and assisted the training program and to the local networkers at Mildura for their excellent contribution.

Metropolitan: New Training Programs (Blue Jacket and Networker training) will commence from mid September, to augment existing numbers.

The Blue Jacket volunteers will now offer their information services not only at the Melbourne Magistrates court, but also at VCAT, Moorabbin and the Supreme Court.

Networker training commences on 3rd October. As always, there is no shortage of interested people on our register wanting to train.

In the June newsletter we anticipated another Regional training run at Benalla, but this has been postponed for the moment.

Victorian trainees now need to obtain a Working with Children Check (as well as the usual Police Check), to be permitted to work in our courts. Both application forms can be supplied by Court Network and there is no cost involved for trainees.

Judy Frazer
Training Manager