

Legal centre to open soon

by Jenny Hardy

The Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) will begin operating in the next couple of months.

While community legal centres have existed in almost every other jurisdiction in Australia for some time, the Northern Territory has never had such a service.

The Attorney-General has offered the DCLS premises in the Jury Muster Room of the existing Supreme Court building which will be available when the new Supreme Court is operational. The Attorney, on behalf of the Department of Law, has also offered to assist with the provision of office equipment and resources.

The DCLS has been seeking premises in the Casuarina area because research has indicated that Casuarina is the most accessible area for the greater Darwin community.

Unfortunately, affordable premises are not available at Casuarina.

Negotiations with a community organisation based at Casuarina are

underway for the temporary use of their premises one night per week in conjunction with operating the main service from the current Supreme Court.

That arrangement should provide a good assessment of the location which best serves the community.

The Law Society Public Purposes Trust has allocated \$20,000 for the purchase of capital equipment which includes provision for a small library, a word processing system and other basic office equipment.

The current proposal is that the DCLS will operate a free legal advice and referral service two nights per week and possibly on Saturday mornings. The operating times may vary according to community interest, availability of volunteers and so forth.

In the long term, the DCLS and the NT University Law School will operate a clinical legal education programme whereby senior law students become volunteers at the service sub-

ject to supervision.

Students participating in this programme will have their service credited towards their degree.

The DCLS became an incorporated association in 1990.

The objects of the association are: to facilitate the provision of legal advice and assistance to the community; to provide community legal education; to establish a resource centre for community legal projects, and; to consider the need for, and to lobby for, law reform.

The success of the DCLS will depend largely on the support of the Darwin legal profession, mainly in the form of practitioners offering their time and expertise to the service, either as volunteers or by participating in community education projects.

If practitioners are interested in being involved with this project or would like further information, they should contact Jenny Hardy on 897533 or Geoff Airo-Furilla on 466840.



44 McMinn St, Darwin NT 0800
Phone: 81 5850 Fax: 81 4308
ACN 009 633 818

THE WORLD OF STATIONERY

Proud to be associated with "THE LAW SOCIETY OF THE NT"

'Copymate'
carbonless book

CITIZEN™
calculators

Attaché
business forms

eldon
office products

maxell.
batteries

Nashua
computer disks

SHEAFFER
Penworld refills and diaries

Pentel
pens, markers etc

Scotch™
audio and video tapes

Member: National Office Products Association

BUSINESS ACCOUNTS AVAILABLE