

# Darwin Legal Services Celebrating World Refugee Day 2013

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On a warm dry season day, the Northern Territory Legal Aid Commission (NTLAC), Top End Women's Legal Service (TEWLS) and Darwin Community Legal Service (DCLS) got together to celebrate World Refugee Day with the Top End's refugee communities.

Organised by Melaleuca Refugee Centre, the World Refugee Day Festival was held on 16 June 2013 and the theme was 'Restoring Hope'. It represents an important opportunity to celebrate the invaluable contributions made by refugees to Australian society. It is also a time to reflect on our shared humanity with those who have sought asylum in Australia, a fact frequently overlooked in politicised debates about asylum seekers.

Each year, community organisations are challenged to provide an interactive and fun stall for the festival. Standing by idly

and handing out brochures does not fit the theme and mood of the day. DCLS, NTLAC and TEWLS have put together an interactive stall for the last three years.

This year we set up two separate yet complementary activities. For those more active, there was a basketball legal quiz, in which participants could demonstrate their goal-shooting abilities and legal knowledge, answering questions like "what age can I drive" and "what age can I vote". For the more creative, "I hope..." cards were provided, on which participants were encouraged to write or illustrate their hopes for the future. A Polaroid photo of each participant with their "I hope card" was given and the card added to the exhibition board.

Key outcomes sought to be achieved through community legal education are that community members can identify when a

problem is a legal problem; that they know where to get help when they have a legal problem; and that they have the confidence to seek out that legal help. With this in mind, our aim was to show that lawyers and legal services are friendly and approachable and collaborate together to give the best services to community members.

The experience of testing this public forum for community legal education and outreach has been exciting for TEWLS, DCLS and NTLAC. We have learnt a number of lessons about working well together, tailoring information and activities to a diverse target audience and positive ways to engage the community with the law. Many community members said they really enjoyed the activities, learnt some new things and most importantly now know where to go for help. ●