

# The Pro Bono Clearing House Wants You. **Yes You!**



**Lily North**  
Pro Bono Coordinator  
Law Society Northern Territory

The Law Society Northern Territory runs a Pro Bono Clearing House (PBCH). Throughout the years the Society has run a fairly modest yet successful pro bono program. Pro bono work provides legal assistance for those who would otherwise be unable to obtain support.

The PBCH is made up of a pro bono panel and register. The panel consists of volunteers who assist in determining the eligibility of applicants.

In November clearing houses around Australia met in Adelaide for the National Pro Bono Conference. Of the many issues discussed, the capacity to assist people with immigration matters was prominent and at the forefront of discussion. The NT PBCH is particularly urging practitioners that may have experience within Migration Law to join the register.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Pro Bono may be the provision of legal services to those unable to afford it but there is something in it for you.

Pro bono is rewarding in so many ways, some of them unexpected. It reminds you of how lucky you are in these tough economic times. It gives you a sense of purpose to help those less fortunate than yourself and it helps you hone and develop your skills.

The PBCH is continuing to grow each year.

*In 2012 the PBCH had a total of 14 lawyers (2.5% of NT lawyers) on the register. Since then the PBCH register has increased to a total of 43 lawyers (7.8% of NT lawyers).*

It is a goal of the PBCH to increase the register to 10% of lawyers by June 2015. This is an achievable goal and I would encourage all practitioners to join this rewarding program.

**Career transition and on-the-job training**

The PBCH register comprises of volunteers who, if available, assist with cases that are eligible for pro bono. Lawyers on the register have no obligation to take on a matter.

The PBCH receives requests for assistance in all types of matters including Family, Immigration, Employment, Civil, Criminal etc. so it is vital to have Legal Practitioners with expertise in different areas of law.

**Networking and Business Development**

Great  
experience

“*In lieu of Christmas Cards last year, William Forster Chambers made a donation to the McGrath Foundation.*”

### WILLIAM FORSTER CHAMBERS ARE LEADING THE WAY

Recently William Forster Chambers (WFC) came on board and joined the Pro Bono Clearing House Register. The PBCH is grateful for the assistance.

*Of the 9 applications the PBCH has received since July 2014, WFC has assisted with 5 of these cases.*

Of the many cases WFC have assisted with throughout the year the following is an example of how much this work is appreciated by clients that receive pro bono assistance.

Mr Bruce Taylor of WFC received the following email from the NT Working Women's Centre who referred this case to the PBCH:

“Dear Bruce

I am emailing to thank you and your Chambers for the pro bono work you performed for our clients in the IFS Hearing at FWA. The NT Working Women's Centre relies on pro bono support for this type of legal representation, and we are very grateful that you stepped in at such short notice to provide this much needed and expert service.

On behalf of our clients, we appreciate the work you put into their representation. Regina noted your consideration of the clients - the way you treated them with respect and courtesy and patiently explained the process to them. One of the clients said afterwards: “the cosmos and all the stars and planets in the universe all aligned and brought us Bruce”.

Thank you again Bruce for your assistance. We look forward to the Commissioner's decision.

Kind regards

Anna Davis  
NT Working Women's Centre”

Empower and  
help people

Feels good:  
It's a Public  
Service

The PBCH would like to thank WFC for their continuing support and would invite other Chambers and practitioners to come on board.

If you would like to join the PBCH register, please email [lily.north@lawsocietynt.asn.au](mailto:lily.north@lawsocietynt.asn.au) or phone 08 8981 5104. ●