



Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre Inc

Information Sheet for Clients Access and Equity

Shoalcoast Community Legal Centre (Shoalcoast) believes that accessibility is a central concept behind the work of Centre and a commitment to access and equity (A&E) will underpin all operations of the Centre.

To demonstrate this commitment, the Centre will ensure:

The Centre Manager and Principal Solicitor will have joint primary responsibility for:-

- for regularly reviewing our Access & Equity policy,
- monitoring Centre adherence to A&E objectives and
- raising A&E issues at staff meetings.

Implementation plans for access and equity will be an agenda item at all staff and planning sessions.

Centre progress and achievements in facilitating access to justice and legal services for disadvantaged groups will be included in the Shoalcoast Annual Report

Target groups of Shoalcoast:

Access & equity is important for all groups that are socially and/or financially disadvantaged. The following client groups who live in our region have been identified for particular attention by Shoalcoast:

- women (especially where they also fall into one or more of the other groups),
- Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander(ATSI) people,
- people with physical disabilities,
- people with mental health issues,
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community members,
- young people,
- people from culturally and linguistically
- diverse backgrounds (CALD)
- older members of the community
- people living in poverty.

To be able to demonstrate the Centre's ability to work with these target groups relevant demographic and social data will be obtained when becoming a client of the Centre and maintained through the CLASS (Community Legal Assistance Services System) database.

Shoalcoast Strategies:

Advocates for target groups will be encouraged to nominate for the Management Committee and Management will ensure that the interests of target groups are taken into account when making decisions that affect them.

Shoalcoast is also committed to exploring alternative management or consultation systems that enable us to be aware of the needs of identified target groups.

Shoalcoast Service Delivery Strategies:

Shoalcoast recognises that there will be circumstances where service delivery to certain individuals or groups will be limited by policy guidelines, scarce resources or conflicts of interest. In all other areas Shoalcoast undertakes to identify and take action to eliminate or minimize barriers to service access by any disadvantaged group in the community.

All clients will be informed about and have access to an effective complaints policy and the Shoalcoast complaints brochure is prominently displayed in the Centre's public area and on our website.

Wherever possible, members of target groups will be consulted about and involved in provision of services. Methods of doing this will be discussed at all staff and staff/management planning sessions.

Shoalcoast Service Delivery Strategies:

Shoalcoast services are provided in a variety of formats to cater for client diversity and maximise access. Methods of delivery include face to face appointments at the outreach locations, telephone advice, email advice, various Community Legal Education formats, outreach to venues outside the office to minimise geographical isolation and to target service delivery to identified groups.

Shoalcoast will maintain and regularly update referral directories, with particular attention to those which provide services to target groups. Shoalcoast will regularly research availability of relevant pamphlets and information in local community languages and Plain English and will stock and distribute these where available.

Shoalcoast publicity will be in plain English and in a variety of formats. Where included, images, stories etc will be culturally sensitive and appropriate.

All staff will be made aware of the availability of resources such as telephone interpreters and relay service for hearing impaired, be encouraged to utilise them and be trained in their use.

The 1800 number will be maintained and promoted and its use monitored to reduce the financial impact of isolation.

Pamphlets, posters etc displayed at the Centre will reflect the cultural diversity of the community and be 'friendly' to identified groups.

Physical Environment Strategies:

Shoalcoast will make every effort to ensure that permanent premises and outreach locations are accessible to target groups. Items for consideration are ground floor locations or access to a lift, wheelchair accessibility, off-street parking, signage for people with disabilities, and accessibility to public transport