

To contact HPLS

Visit one of the HPLS Clinics.

Phone: (02) 8898 6545

E-mail: homelessproject@piac.asn.au

For an electronic copy of this newsletter send us an e-mail at the above address.

Acknowledgements

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**Contributors to this edition of
STREETRIGHTS NSW**

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THE HPLS CLINICS

Day (weekly)	Time	Location
Monday	10:00 am - 12:00 noon	The Station Ltd 82 Erskine Street, Sydney
Monday	10:00 am - 12:00 noon	Wayside Chapel 29 Hughes Street, Potts Point
Tuesday	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Matthew Talbot Hostel 22 Talbot Lane, Woolloomooloo
Tuesday	12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Norman Andrews House 77 Roscoe Street, Bondi
Wednesday	11:00 am - 1:00 pm	Parramatta Mission 119 Macquarie Street, Parramatta
Wednesday	12:30 pm - 2:00 pm	Salvation Army Streetlevel Derby Lane (off Albion St), Surry Hills
Thursday	12:00 pm - 2:00 pm	Vincentian House 361 Crown Street, Surry Hills
Thursday	1:00 pm - 3:00 pm	Edward Eagar Lodge 348a Bourke Street, Darlinghurst
Friday	12:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Women's & Girls' Emergency Centre 361 Riley Street, Surry Hills
Friday	1:30 pm - 2:30 pm	Newtown Mission 280a King Street, Newtown

StreetRights NSW in 2010!

Hello and welcome to the first edition of *StreetRights NSW* for 2010! We hope that you all had a safe Christmas and New Year!

In this edition of *StreetRights NSW* you will notice a few changes. As well as information on Homeless Persons' Legal Service (HPLS) happenings, every edition of *StreetRights NSW* will feature updates from the HPLS Legal Beagle and Policy Corner. The Legal Beagle will provide you with information about the law and your legal rights. HPLS Policy Corner will be letting you know about the latest work HPLS is doing to change the law and systems to make things better for people on the street.

We are also trying to make it easier for people to provide their ideas and suggestions to help us make *StreetRights NSW* even better!

We hope that you enjoy the changes!!

All the best,
Julie, Chris and Jeremy

**HPLS opens new clinic at Vincentian House!!**

On Thursday 14 January 2010, HPLS opened a new free legal clinic at Vincentian House. Vincentian House is a newly renovated St Vincent de Paul facility in Surry Hills that provides secure supported crisis accommodation and case-management services for families and women.

Priority groups that Vincentian House may be able to assist are:

- single fathers who have children with them;
- single mothers with a teenage son or any other children with them;
- couples who have children with them;

- single women on their own; and
- other family groups having difficulty getting help from other services.

HPLS is very excited about this new clinic because it means that we can provide legal help to even more people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

HPLS lawyers will attend Vincentian House every Thursday between 12:00 pm and 2:00 pm.

HPLS is looking forward to working with the staff at Vincentian House and solicitors from Thomson Playford Cutlers to make this clinic a success.

HPLS Legal Beagle



In each edition of *Street Rights NSW*, the Legal Beagle will keep you up to date on changes to the law and how these will affect your rights! In this edition, we look at draft changes to the area of tenancy law.

Tenancy law changes

When we talk about tenancy law we mean the law that applies when you privately rent a house or a unit. The NSW Government is planning to make a number of changes to tenancy law that may affect you.

Some of the important changes that have been included in the draft new law are:

Tenant blacklists

For the first time, there will be rules about residential tenant databases, more commonly known as 'tenant blacklists'. As you probably know, if a landlord puts your name on one of these lists it is pretty hard to get a place to rent in the future.

The new tenancy rules will set out how a person may be listed and the process for resolving disputes between tenants and landlords over wrong listings. The new tenancy rules will also make challenging an incorrect listing by a landlord much easier!

Co-tenants

There will be better arrangements for a co-tenant who wants to move out. If your name and the names of other tenants are all listed on the residential tenancy agreement, you are a co-tenant. This means you jointly share rights and responsibilities with the other people whose names are on the agreement. Under the proposed laws, if a co-tenant gives notice to the landlord and other tenants that they are moving out, they will not need to continue to pay rent and other costs after they have moved out.

Domestic violence

Victims of domestic violence will have more secure tenancy arrangements. If a final Apprehended Violence Order excludes a person from premises where they were a co-tenant, that person will automatically be removed from the tenancy agreement but the other tenants will be able to stay in the property.

Collecting your personal property

If a tenant is evicted, they will only have 14 days to remove their personal belongings from the premises before the landlord can dispose of them. A tenant will have 90 days to collect personal documents. The new tenancy laws will also mean that if the landlord destroys a tenant's personal property or documents too soon the tenant may be able to get compensation.

But the changes will not all be good!

Some of the things that HPLS thinks still need fixing are that:

1. boarders and lodgers still won't have any protection; and
2. landlords will still be able to terminate a tenancy for no reason.

All of these changes to the law will not start until some time in 2010 so HPLS will continue to tell the NSW Government that these things should be fixed to protect the rights of all tenants.

HPLS Policy Corner

Criminal record discrimination

HPLS has started a new project to find out about homeless people's experience of discrimination on the grounds of criminal record. HPLS often hears stories of people not being offered work because of a criminal record that is years' old and not relevant to work.

So that we can hear from as many homeless people as possible, HPLS is using the internet to collect your stories. We have designed a series of cartoons that tell a story about what types of questions and behaviour might be discrimination because of criminal record. You then get the chance to tell us your story and personal experience of discrimination because of your criminal record.

Once HPLS has had the chance to read all of the stories, we will be able to work out what laws or policies need to be changed to stop discrimination against people because of their criminal record. HPLS will then make recommendations to government on the changes that are needed.

If you want to take part in the consultation, you should ask a worker at a homelessness agency if you can use one of the computers available for public use. You can find the HPLS discrimination project on

the National Homelessness Clearinghouse website at: www.homelessnessinfo.net.au. The consultation will run until June 2010.



We can fix it!

What you can expect from Homeless Persons' Legal Service

- Legal help from HPLS is free.
- HPLS will respect your right to privacy: everything you talk about with the lawyer will be confidential unless you agree otherwise.
- HPLS will treat you with respect.
- HPLS will give you advice, but it is your decision how you use it.
- If HPLS can't help with your legal problem, we will tell you who can.

HPLS is very keen to get contributions from people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to *STREETRIGHTS NSW*. If you have a comment about anything that's covered in this newsletter please e-mail us at homelessproject@piac.asn.au

DROP US A LINE!