

Progress Report 3

May 2013

ILNP JURISDICTIONAL REPORTS

Release of the ILNP NT Report

The Indigenous Legal Needs Report was launched in Darwin on 6 November 2012 by the Hon Minister John Elferink MLA (Attorney General, Minister for Justice and Minister for Corrective Services), with the Hon Minister Alison Anderson MLA (Minister for Regional Development and Minister for Indigenous Advancement) also in attendance. The launch was attended by a range of service providers and community members.

At the launch, a formal response to the Report was provided by Ministers Anderson and Elferink and by our project partners - NAAJA (North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency), NAAFVLS (North Australian Aboriginal Family Violence Legal Service) and NTLAC (NT Legal Aid) – as well as Larrakia Nations and NTCOSS (NT Council of Social Services). Thank you to all who assisted with and presented at the launch, particularly our project partners.

The Report highlights the prevalence of civil and family law problems in the Indigenous communities visited by the ILNP, and reveals that issues may arise in many areas of Indigenous peoples' lives. As NAAJA suggested during their formal presentation on the day of the launch, not every Aboriginal person is brought before the criminal justice system, 'but every Aboriginal person has to live somewhere, they have to get an income ((relevant to) employment rights and rights to social security), they buy goods and services, live with the law and the legal system'.

help. In the areas of discrimination and social security only one in five and one in ten people (respectively) who identified problems sought assistance.



Detail is also provided in the report with respect to how legal needs may vary across different communities and between men and women. In terms of gender difference, women were more likely than men to have problems with social security and neighbourhood disputes, for example, but much less likely than men to seek legal assistance in relation to these issues. Men were less likely than women to seek legal assistance in relation to issues such as victim's compensation and credit and debt.

- In Qld, fieldwork has been conducted in **Cairns, Brisbane and Thursday Island**.

ILNP focus communities as at April 2013 are set out in the following Table.² There are **10 ILNP communities** where fieldwork has not yet commenced, set out in bold in the Table. We aim to complete all ILNP fieldwork by late 2013. Dates for upcoming visits to these communities will be posted on the ILNP Blog and website.

Focus group participant feedback also continues to be positive, overall, as participants generally are able to walk away with a little more information about their rights and about what services are available to assist them with civil and family law problems. Part of this information-sharing occurs when participants discuss issues and solutions with each other as a group. Participation in the groups also leads, we have been told, to ongoing discussion in the community of relevant issues after an ILNP visit.

As has occurred in previous ILNP communities, we are also still connecting focus group participants with legal and other services when issues arise during or after focus groups that require some assistance. One elderly lady with serious health issues participating in a WA focus group, for instance, was put in touch with a local government agency dealing with housing and

tenancy after reporting during the group that one side of her house had been gradually sinking into the ground. She indicated that no response to this significant problem had been provided over a considerable period of time by the relevant public housing authority.

VIC Fieldwork

As the Victorian fieldwork is very close to finalisation (other than a small number of interviews to be conducted in Melbourne), it is worth saying a little about fieldwork in this jurisdiction.

We now have a total of **161 questionnaires** from Victorian focus group participants and have also conducted interviews with **71 Victorian stakeholder organisations**. Although all the data from Victoria has yet to be analysed and will be discussed in more detail in the , a few observations about issues commonly arising can be made at this stage. These issues are likely to present themselves in the finalised report.

One issue discussed by a number of Victorian communities is the feeling of isolation they experience in terms of accessing services (including government services such as Centrelink and/or legal services), despite the fact that there is not the same degree of geographical remoteness in Victoria that arises in jurisdictions such as the NT.

Further, in terms of areas of priority areas of need in this jurisdiction, some of the problems that appear to be more prevalent in Victoria, or at least that may have been discussed more frequently than others during ILNP fieldwork, include discrimination, child protection, social security and housing. There are also issues that will be considered in the Report which are particular to Victoria, including the Victorian roll out of income management and compliance with the

