



Monday 8 November 2021

Joint Media Release

PRIVATE, COMMUNITY AND PUBLIC SECTORS JOIN FORCES TO DELIVER FREE WILLS IN THE WEST KIMBERLEY

150 people from the West Kimberley communities of Beagle Bay and Djarindjin have registered with Broome CIRCLE, a locally based community organisation, for free Wills clinics to be held from 8 November to 12 November 2021.

The free clinics are part of a collaborative access to justice project developed by Law Access and Aboriginal Family Legal Services. The clinics will be delivered by a team of five lawyers who will be supported by Broome Circle and Aboriginal Interpreting WA.

Three private lawyers are taking part on a pro bono (no fee) basis: Sally Bruce and Jim O'Donnell, Partners with law firm Jackson McDonald and Janene Bon, Wills and Estate Planning Counsel with law firm HHG Legal.

They are joined by Daniel Gibbard, Principal Lawyer with Aboriginal Family Legal Services and Arna Plaisted, lawyer with Legal Aid Western Australia.

Broome CIRCLE's financial counsellor Veronica Johnson, who was instrumental in ensuring this project got off the ground and liaising with communities across the Dampier Peninsula in the lead up to the clinic, will provide on the ground support to the lawyers throughout the week. An interpreter from Aboriginal Interpreting WA will also join the team, to ensure there are no language barriers to participation.

Law Access CEO Dominique Hansen said: "Law Access identified this project as a priority under the new WA Pro Bono Model and approached law firm Jackson McDonald for assistance. The firm has worked closely with the AFLS and Law Access, providing advice on project design as well as developing new templates and resources and recruiting their colleague Janene Bon from HHG Legal to assist."

Aboriginal Family Legal Services CEO Corina Martin said: "There is a high unmet legal need for Wills and related legal advice in Western Australia, especially in regional and remote Aboriginal Communities. AFLS has been pushing for a project like this since 2019 and carried out community consultation on the demand for Wills in the Kimberley in late 2020. This clinic is now a critical part of empowering Aboriginal people to be self-determining with their possessions, to ensuring Aboriginal families are looked after in culturally appropriate ways, and to creating positive outcomes for Aboriginal communities. We hope to apply the learnings from this pilot clinic in order to deliver many more like it."

Broome CIRCLE Executive Officer Denisa Konecny said: "Broome CIRCLE is very happy to be a part of this collaborative program. The promotion of the Wills clinic has been a key focus during our outreach visits and the demand for the service is clear by the many registrations received. We expect the program to have very positive outcomes and we thank everyone for their contribution."

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For comment please contact:

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