



Media Release

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Innovative new project to provide legal assistance to international students in regional NSW launched

Redfern Legal Centre and the University of New England have formed a unique partnership to deliver free legal advice to the University's international students via the National Broadband Network. International students now have access to specialist solicitors who volunteer at Redfern Legal Centre after the official launch of the service today. The launch follows a successful test pilot of the service last year.

International students have been identified as a highly vulnerable group in research done by Redfern Legal Centre. "International students are vulnerable to exploitation by employers and landlords, can experience racist violence and abuse, and are unfamiliar with the Australian legal system – meaning minor issues can quickly become significant legal problems." says Jacqui Swinburne, Chief Operations Officer of Redfern Legal Centre.

UNE Pro Vice-Chancellor (Educational Innovation and International) Dr Michael Crock stated, "The service provides access to professional and targeted legal advice via the NBN in a confidential setting either at the University or in the student's own home both in and outside of core business hours. To date the pilot has been well received and utilised by students and UNE looks forward to partnering with RLC on this service."

The service is a part of the Attorney-General Department's regional legal assistance program, designed to promote greater access to legal services for regional Australia. When the funding for the project was announced, then Attorney-General Nicola Roxon noted that that it has been designed to create a "digital bridge", connecting regional residents with specialist legal services.

Redfern Legal Centre's Chief Executive Officer Joanna Shulman stated that the National Broadband Network has provided a unique opportunity to expand Redfern Legal Centre's current International Student Advice Service to one that offers face-to-face access for regional and remote clients to a range of specialist pro bono law firms. Redfern Legal Centre is keen to use the pilot to demonstrate the possibilities for increasing the accessibility of free legal advice to disadvantaged people across NSW and Australia.

Redfern Legal Centre has launched the project in partnership with Consult Point, C9 solutions and its pro bono partners including law firms Fragomen, Clayton Utz, Corrs Chambers Westgarth, Gilbert + Tobin and Watts McCray. Funding has been provided as part of the Attorney General's National Broadband Network Legal Assistance Program to boost access to legal services using the NBN.

To find out more contact Redfern Legal Centre on 02 9698 7645.