

Media Release

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‘MyLegal Mate’: Putting the law in students’ pockets

Redfern Legal Centre launches innovative new legal assistance app for international students

A groundbreaking new mobile app offering multilingual legal advice to international students studying in NSW was launched last night at the Lord Mayor’s Welcome for overseas students at Sydney Town Hall.

Created by the Redfern Legal Centre with funding from the City of Sydney, Study NSW and the Fair Work Ombudsman, and built using the technology of experiential learning company Practera, MyLegal Mate is a first of its kind in Australia.

The app uses interactive video to provide students with instant access to legal information, delivered in English and six community languages. The app will be offered to education providers on an annual subscription basis, allowing students to access the information free-of-charge.

MyLegal Mate was devised by solicitor Sean Stimson, the head of Redfern Legal Centre’s International Student Service NSW, who in February was awarded the NSW Human Rights Medal for his work with the state’s 260,000 international students.

“Redfern Legal Centre provides a free statewide legal advice service for international students funded by Study NSW but this app will offer further immediate support,” Mr Stimson said.

“This is an innovative way to ensure international students can get instant access to tailored legal information and be empowered to take greater control if problems occur. By downloading the app on enrolment, international students will be armed with information about their rights before they start their course, with the ultimate aim of preventing issues arising while they are in Australia.

“The app addresses four legal areas identified by students and service providers as having the most need – employment, housing, disputes with education providers and sexual assault. Best of all, the information is provided in multiple languages, delivered in a face-to-face format that is friendly and accessible.”

Speaking at Thursday’s annual reception for the city’s newest international students, Lord Mayor Clover Moore said the app would further support overseas students studying, living and working in Sydney.

“International students enhance our city by contributing to Sydney’s diversity and strengthening our global connections,” The Lord Mayor said.

“This wonderful new app puts an invaluable legal resource in the pockets of international students. This will help ensure they’re given every opportunity to have a safe, enjoyable and rewarding time living and studying in Sydney and across NSW.

“Being able to attract and nurture the best candidates from around the world is an investment in our city’s future. That’s why we’ve supported this innovative information resource, and look forward to it helping students from all backgrounds.”

Practera co-founder and co-CEO Beau Leese welcomed the announcement, saying international students in NSW were an invaluable source of talent, insight and diversity and needed more help and assurance when it came to legal assistance.

“We’re excited to be partnering with a forward-thinking service provider like Redfern Legal Centre on this initiative. International students not only support Australia’s largest services export industry, we have a duty of care to provide a positive experience for these young people during their study here and look out for their wellbeing.”

Redfern Legal Centre was among 25 community groups sharing information and services with Sydney’s latest international students from more than 60 nationals at the Town Hall reception.

Stallholders at the welcome included Study NSW, Surf Life Saving, NSW Police, ACON (the AIDS Council of NSW) and the Fair Work Ombudsman, along with a range of education, health and accommodation providers.

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