

Submission No. 8

Date Received 10/11/06

NT This is an informal submission but I hope it will be examined carefully.

I think there are more aspects of life than just the law affecting, sometimes adversely, older people and I also think that older people could be involved in solving some of the problems.

I am 70 and shall complete a Bachelor of Laws (Graduate Course) next year and anticipate completing the process for admission by mid-2008. I am starting a new career in essentially voluntary work with an expectation of at least 30 years to go.

I am currently lobbying at all levels in Darwin in the NT for a Citizens Advice Bureau to be established. This could provide a one-stop shop for people – not only older people - to get help and advice on a range of areas including the law.

My model would be based on the CABs in the UK which have also provided a template to other countries, as can be seen from the following two internet sites.

<http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/mac/index>

<http://www.citizens-advice-international.org/index.html>

There are similar organisations scattered round Australia, as can be identified from the attachment.

The other arm of the proposal would be to recruit from among retired people, mainly but not exclusively with professional backgrounds, to volunteer in the Bureaux.

Clearly there are already both government and voluntary organisations already covering some of the relevant areas but having them coordinated and co-located would be advantageous, particularly for older people with limited transport options.

Along with other law students, I already volunteer to coordinate free legal advice sessions run by the Darwin Community Legal Service and similar organisations exist in other parts of Australia. The lawyers who provide the advice do so pro bono and I plan to join their ranks.

The voluntary advisors recruited by the UK CABs are offered training and refresher courses which could obviously be offered in Australia through universities and TAFE colleges.

I suspect that it will take me several years to obtain sufficient support from government at all levels to establish a Bureau in Darwin. We are limited in our options in relation to obtaining financial support from commerce and business which will be a further stumbling block.

If the Australian Government is genuinely concerned for people in general and older people in particular, I think it would be incredibly beneficial if support were to be given at federal level to establish more bureaux and offer to assist in coordinating the activities of existing bureaux so that it becomes not just a local issue but a national initiative.

There are businesses and wealthy people in Australia who would happily provide further financial and logistical support for such an initiative, as is the case in the UK, and I would recommend that it be seriously considered in your deliberations on this issue.

Sincerely

Rosemary Jacob

RECEIVED  
10 NOV 2006

BY: LACA