

## **Arts Law Centre of Australia**

The Arts Law Centre of Australia (“Arts Law”) is the national community legal centre for the arts. Arts Law is a not-for-profit company that provides creators with specialized free or low cost legal advice, referral services, professional development resources that include publications and training. Clients of Arts Law practice across the spectrum of art forms including literature, visual arts, craft, photography, film, music, multimedia, broadcasting and performing arts.

Arts Law’s core services are four key activities:

1. National Legal Advice Service
2. Publications Program
3. Seminar and Lecture Program
4. Advocacy

### **National Legal Advice Services**

The Legal Advice Service is the principle activity of Arts Law. The service is available to artists and creative workers, as well as non-profit organisations and commercial enterprises across a wide range of legal areas including contracts, business structures, defamation, copyright, employment and tax. Regional artists and arts organisations access our advice service via the toll free telephone number.

Arts Law provides a national legal advice service through:

- Free telephone legal advice service,
- Extended legal advice service,
- National face to face legal advice through Legal Advice Nights (LAN) to Arts Law subscribers and;
- Pro bono referrals and advice.

Telephone legal advice operates Tuesday to Friday with the waiting time for advice two to three days on average (depending on demand). Legal advice is given by Arts Law’s legal officers, each of whom is a qualified lawyer. Legal officers work with the artists or organisations to identify the legal, financial and practical issues to provide legal advice needed and jointly develop a strategy to tackle them. With the assistance of our sample contracts and precedents callers are able to draft contracts, letters or other documents that can then be reviewed by either in-house or volunteer lawyers and amendments suggested if necessary. This method provides a practical and inexpensive means of improving creator’s professional skills, experience and understanding of the legal aspects of their practice.

In addition to our telephone advice services Arts Law co-ordinates face-to-face or telephone Legal Advice Night (LAN) consultations between practitioner and volunteer lawyers in private practice. Our panel of pro bono lawyers donate considerable time and effort to ensure artists have access to legal expertise they would otherwise be unable to afford. Many of our panel lawyers are from the top legal and entertainment law firms. Arts Law matches the client’s legal issue with a lawyer with the relevant expertise and these occur in all states of Australia. It is estimated that our pro bono lawyers donate \$260,000 of legal advice to the subscribers of Arts

Law each year. This service is available to subscribers of Arts Law (\$99 per annum for individuals).

Arts Law provides a copy of written advice to subscribers the advice being transcribed by volunteer note takers at the time of the consultation. This forms part of the LAN service coordinated by Arts Law.

Arts Law also coordinates a mediation service available to individuals and organisations seeking dispute resolution.

### **Indigenous Legal Advice Project**

The project includes the recruitment of an Indigenous legal officer and Indigenous liaison officer to provide advice, support and other resources specifically to Indigenous artists nationally.

The program includes workshops with Indigenous artists and co-ops, the development of sample agreements and other publications prepared specifically for Indigenous artists and organisations. These will address the need for greater understanding and awareness of rights and responsibilities of Indigenous artists and will improve the recognition of Indigenous cultural and intellectual property issues.

### **Publication Program**

Arts Law's publications include information sheets, checklists and guides and sample agreements, which include explanatory notes. New publications are drafted where Arts Law sees a demand that needs to be addressed or that there is a lack of information in a particular area.

A copy of our current list of publications and pricing schedule is attached. The information sheets are provided free of charge and are also available on the website of Arts Law: [www.artslaw.com.au](http://www.artslaw.com.au).

Arts Law's website is a key tool for supplementing the telephone advice service and improves access to our resources. The website contains articles previously published in our quarterly newsletter *Art+Law*, information sheets and upcoming events including seminars and forums.

Our newsletter *Art+Law* provides subscribers with information on current arts law matters. The newsletter is also sent to key stakeholders, including arts organisations, funding bodies, lawyers on our advice panel and other government departments.

### **Education Program**

#### **Seminars and Lectures**

The seminars and lectures are part of the professional development services of Arts Law. Arts Law presents an annual music seminar in addition to our program to creators, students, tertiary institutions, professional associations and organisations throughout the year.

Arts Law's lectures cover issues such as copyright, contracts, moral rights, defamation, employment and business issues, royalties, tax and insurance. The professional development services are tailored to meet the needs of the audience.

Arts Law endeavours to present seminars and lectures that are accessible to young and emerging artists and other creators. The key objective of our education program is to better equip creators to deal with legal issues affecting their creative practices.

#### **Advocacy**

Arts Law devotes considerable resources to ensure a legislative and policy framework, which supports and enhances creative practice. This includes oral and written submissions and consultations with government bodies and the arts sector.

This advocacy role requires extensive research and Arts Law draws on the experience of its Legal Officers and resources such as volunteers and external legal advice.