



### Best Practice Case Study Ask LOIS

Ask LOIS (Legal Online Information Service) is a website at [www.asklois.org.au](http://www.asklois.org.au), run by Women's Legal Services NSW (WLS NSW).

Ask LOIS provides free legal training, resources, information and advice for community workers across NSW who are assisting women experiencing or escaping domestic violence. At present, it has over **1,500** members.

Ask LOIS was created in September 2012 to overcome the challenges involved in being a community legal service with limited resources that services a large state-wide region. Through this website, WLS has been able to assist a wider number of community workers and clients, including those in more remote locations.

To ensure we properly addressed the needs of users in regional and remote areas, WLS partnered with five community organisations in Armidale to ensure the website was responsive to worker needs.

Through Ask LOIS, WLS is able to deliver community legal education online to a large audience. The most popular feature of Ask LOIS is its free and interactive fortnightly webinars.

The webinars are on a variety of topics such as family law, domestic violence, sexual assault, child support, care and protection, victims support, discrimination, worker skill development and working with diverse clients.

Webinar topics are directed by member feedback and are also informed by law reform and trends identified through casework. Webinars are presented by a WLS Solicitor or other experts.

As at mid-June 2015, Ask LOIS has delivered **over 60** live webinars with more than **2300** live webinar participants. Each webinar is then uploaded to the Ask LOIS website along with a summary factsheet so it can be viewed by workers anytime, anywhere. We have received anecdotal reports from organisations that have used Ask LOIS to provide training to staff by viewing a selection of related webinars in a group setting.

To date, the archived webinars have been viewed in full over **2800** times and their accompanying factsheets downloaded over **4300** times. The factsheets have proven to be an invaluable resource, both for community workers and their clients.

The website also features interactive training case studies, a one-stop-shop of resources on domestic violence and sexual assault and a national service directory.

Ask LOIS is also used to provide direct legal advice to vulnerable women in regional and remote areas who have limited access to other legal services due to geographic

isolation. Advice is either provided through call backs or videoconferencing. Community workers can refer urgent matters through Ask LOIS to be dealt with by one of our solicitors. This enables WLS to receive appropriate warm referrals for vulnerable clients. To date, there have been over **250** direct legal information/advices through the service.

The project has been successful in increasing access to legal assistance and in providing support and training for community workers across NSW assisting clients experiencing domestic violence and sexual assault.