



EMBARGOED UNTIL SUNDAY 17 OCTOBER 2010

15 October 2010

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**STORIES OF PRO BONO ALLEVIATING POVERTY**

The National Pro Bono Resource Centre today released a set of 12 stories about how pro bono legal services have helped alleviate poverty as part of Anti-Poverty Week. These stories have come from law firms and pro bono clearing houses across Australia and illustrate how the legal profession makes a difference to the lives of the marginalised and disadvantaged.

“The public should be informed about the amazing pro bono work that the legal profession undertakes. These stories are being released to help promote discussion and action about poverty in Australia and its neighbouring countries”, said John Corker, Director of the Centre.

The stories concern:

- A disabled person and a mobile phone contract
- A homeless woman defending assault police charges
- A refugee negotiating a motor accident settlement
- Exploited international students obtaining fair wages and legal education
- A Somalian refugee facing eviction from public housing
- An Aboriginal Corporation in remote WA being helped with business and governance issues
- Impoverished retirees in Brisbane facing eviction from a retirement village
- Legal education for the long-term unemployed
- Assisting vulnerable tenants in a caravan park
- Helping Aboriginal artists in remote communities create and protect their intellectual property
- Helping victims of people trafficking in Vietnam
- Assisting Canberra’s homeless

The most recent ABS survey of the legal profession indicated that Australian lawyers did a remarkable 955,400 hours of pro bono work in 07/08. The Centre’s own research of law firms with more than 50 lawyers from July 2010 showed that even while firms had to tighten their belts considerably during the economic downturn, the amount of pro bono work performed by them continued to grow.

A copy of the stories can be downloaded from the Centres website at [www.nationalprobono.org.au](http://www.nationalprobono.org.au)

**About Anti-Poverty Week 2010**

The publication of the stories is one of the hundreds of events taking place across the country to mark Anti-Poverty Week 2010 now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year. More than ten thousand Australians will be involved.

The Week is concerned about poverty around the world, especially in the poorest countries but also in wealthier countries such as Australia. It aims to encourage as many people as possible to express publicly their interest and concern about poverty and hardship. Poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million Australians. Around the world more than a billion people are desperately poor.

For more information about Anti-Poverty Week, contact [coordinator@antipovertyweek.org.au](mailto:coordinator@antipovertyweek.org.au) or visit the website, [www.antipovertyweek.org.au](http://www.antipovertyweek.org.au)

*For further information please contact: John Corker 0420 474 628 or 02 9385 7381*