

## Submission to the Access to Justice Taskforce 2009

In 2009 the Commonwealth Attorney General established a Taskforce to investigate access to justice issues in Australia. The Taskforce produced a report and requested submissions from interested parties.

The Illawarra Legal Centre prepared a detailed submission which addressed a number of issues raised in the report.

In particular, the submission concentrated on:

- The problems experienced by our clients in gaining access to justice.
- The insight of lawyers at the Illawarra Legal Centre when accessing the justice system on behalf of our clients.
- The use and role of Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) and External Dispute Resolution (EDR). We wrote extensively on the positives and negatives of ADR and EDR based on our experience. The submission strongly expressed the view that ADR and EDR should not circumvent or replace access to the courts by all. We expressed our particular concern that ADR and EDR should not lead to a two tiered justice system, where wealthy resourced litigants have access to the proper courts and those without resources are relegated to ADR and EDR. There is a need for specific programs and assistance that allow access to the courts at all levels.
- The important role that Community Legal Centres can play in facilitating access to justice, and the need for more resources in that sector so the work of legal centres can be enhanced and expanded.