

## The Miranda Program Steps Out

UNSW School of Law Professor Julie Stubbs hosted a workshop and then the launch of the Miranda Program at the School on 15 September. Baroness Corston, author of the landmark Review of Vulnerable Women in the Criminal Justice System in the UK, shared her knowledge and experience at the workshop which also included a lively question and answer session.

Immediately after the workshop, the Miranda Program was expertly set on its pathway to full implementation by Her Honour Judge Dina Yehia SC whose words of support and encouragement for this Project further inspired us to keep up the pace of change and to influence others to join us along the way.

Four sites have agreed to be part of the pilot which has now commenced. On referral, women can be directed to Leichhardt or Penrith Women's Health Centres, Central West Women's Health Centre in Bathurst and Lou's Place at Potts Point. An evaluation of the pilot will be led by Dr Ruth McCausland from UNSW and this will help guide the development and further expansion of the Program. In addition, consultation continues in relation to the Miranda Program, its cultural responsiveness and resources available for participants.

Program Director, Deirdre Hyslop, has met with Chief Magistrate Graeme Henson who has given his support for the initiative and is contacting local court magistrates to inform them of the alternative pathway for women. We have also consulted with Women's Legal Services and Shopfront Legal Services who have given advice and support.



Baroness Jean Corston, Her Honour Justice Elizabeth Evatt AC, Her Honour Justice Dina Yehia SC, The Hon Ann Symonds AM, Deirdre Hyslop, Project Director.  
***Clockwise from left.***



***From left*** Roxanne McMurray, Leichhardt Women's Health Centre, Erica Pitman, Central West Women's Health Centre, Jane Gold, Penrith Women's Health Centre and Melanie Joyce, Lou's Place.

Download the **Program Referral Form and Plan**

Download the **Project brochure**

## Baroness Corston- A Model to Emulate

An initiative of the Sydney Community Foundation, Baroness Jean Corston, author of the highly influential **Corston Report, a review of vulnerable women in the criminal justice system** in the UK, spent a week in Sydney and Melbourne in mid-September. During the four days the Baroness spent in Sydney she generously gave of her experience and advice across a number of events, lectures, workshops and private meetings and confirmed for us that her recommended model for reform is right for us here in NSW.

Importantly, the visit by Baroness Corston was the catalyst for the coming together of a number of service organisations working in the area of prison reform and support provision for women in the criminal justice system.

In addition to the Sydney Community Foundation, WIPAN, Shine for Kids, the Zonta Club of Sydney and the Miranda Project came together to issue a Position Statement, Keeping Women out of Prison. The statement aims to put women in the criminal justice system, and their families, on the public agenda and highlight the need for more government investment in diversionary programs and existing services that better support female offenders to get their lives back on track. This is in fact a community issue and we need all sectors of the community – individuals, legal professionals, philanthropists, businesses – engaged in a conversation to change the current situation for women in NSW prisons.

You can access the **Position Statement, Keeping Women out of Prison, here.** Please share with your friends and colleagues and get talking.

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## Miranda Program Coordinator on the job

Inga Lie, the Miranda Program Coordinator, commenced employment with us in early September. Inga will establish effective communication pathways with Program sites and current and potential referrers of clients to the Program. She will manage the referral process and ensure that client, referrer and Program site are working together whilst monitoring the process to ensure best practice. Inga will guide the development of the Program at its initial four sites and will develop and implement protocols to gradually expand the number of sites across NSW.

Inga has qualifications, skills and experience to really make the Miranda Program flourish. She qualified in a Bachelor of Social Work from UNSW in 1986, under the tutor ledge of Tony Vinson, former Commissioner of NSW Corrective Services.

Spanning a 30 year career, Inga has worked in child protection and out of home care, as a Social Worker in community health on the NSW North Coast, and as a Centrelink Social Worker across numerous Sydney sites, including managing the Social Work team in Mt Druitt CSC for 5 years. Inga established Centrelink NSW's Prison Servicing Unit, providing pre-release assessment and income support to people in custody, before linking them into job network.

Inga managed this Unit for 5 years and was the Centrelink NSW - Justice Liaison Contact also during that period.

Inga has also worked as a trauma specialist counsellor, supporting people impacted by domestic violence and /or sexual assault in childhood or adulthood. Inga worked closely with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to ensure those referred were assigned to a trauma specialist counsellor to help them manage the impacts of their experience.

Inga's son is a proud Barkindji man from north west NSW and her Skin Sister is a strong Gooniyandi woman from The Kimberley in WA. Inga maintains strong relationships with her Gooniyandi and Barkindji family and continues her longstanding activism, supporting Aboriginal peoples in their struggle for justice and equity and promoting equity and empowerment for all women in our society.

Inga is the go to person for the Miranda Program. Email her on **[inga.lie@crcnsw.org.au](mailto:inga.lie@crcnsw.org.au)**.

# Women in the criminal justice system are potential assets - Our Employment Strategy

Unemployment is widespread among women entering the criminal justice system, is a risk factor for re-offending and a criminal record is a further barrier to gaining employment. The Miranda Project recognises the critical importance of real employment pathways for people in the criminal justice system and has identified "Employment Options" as a crucial pillar of the Project.

In the words of the Human Rights Commission, Australians who have a criminal record often face significant barriers to full participation in the Australian community. Trying to find a job is one of the areas of greatest difficulty for former offenders.

Megan Etheridge, Miranda Project Manager, is about to commence work on developing a Project strategy which will scope out our approach to this complex issue as well as recommend a model which will deliver positive employment outcomes for women in the criminal justice system.

Megan is keen to consult widely and has already been in contact with research staff at several universities whose work has focussed in this area. She is keen, also, to meet with any similar services that may be operational and to hear from anyone who may have expertise to share or advice to offer.

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## How to Refer a Client

A client of the Miranda Program may be

- a. A woman on bail seeking a pre-sentence option
- b. A woman who is suitable for a community based sentencing option
- c. A woman who is offered participation in the Program as a post-release condition of parole
- d. A woman who would benefit from ongoing support following sentence completion.

If you have a client you believe would benefit from participation in the Program or you may consider would be suitable for the Program as a diversionary option, then please download the Referral Form from the web site, complete and fax/scan and email to Program Coordinator, Inga Lie who will arrange an appointment for your client.

[www.crcnsw.org.au](http://www.crcnsw.org.au)

Email: [inga.lie@crcnsw.org.au](mailto:inga.lie@crcnsw.org.au)

## Important Contact Details

Deirdre Hyslop is Project Director. She is responsible for the overall management of the Miranda Project. She is particularly involved in the establishment of the Miranda Program at this time.

Megan Etheridge is Project Manager and has responsibility for the development of the Employment pillar for the Project. She manages communication strategies with various groups, prepares Miranda Matters and is Secretariat to the Advisory Group.

Inga Lie is Program Coordinator and is responsible for ensuring the Miranda Program develops and spreads according to the needs of the client groups.

Miranda Project staff are happy to speak about the Project at network meetings and other events.

Please contact us if this is of interest.  
Email: [Miranda.project@crcnsw.org.au](mailto:Miranda.project@crcnsw.org.au)