

Aaron Harper MP to meet law students providing free legal advice

Member for Thuringowa Aaron Harper MP will this Thursday visit final year law students who will provide free legal advice to members of the public in James Cook University's new City Campus.

Townsville Community Legal Service has provided a Clinical Legal Studies experience for final year law students since 1995. Now in its 20th year, Clinical Legal Studies provides law students with supervised practical experience in interviewing and advising clients, and provides members of the public with free legal advice.

Principal Solicitor Bill Mitchell said, "Once they become lawyers, many clinical legal students go on to volunteer for our evening legal advice service. This helps to provide even more free legal advice to Townsville residents."

Residents of surrounding communities including Charters Towers, Ayr, Home Hill, Ingham and surrounding areas are also encouraged to seek legal advice from the service.

"Thanks to additional funding from the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, we hope to provide more Skype and telephone advice appointments to residents in surrounding communities, particularly in family law, employment law and social security matters. Just give us a call on 4721 5511 to inquire about an appointment", Mr Mitchell said.

Mr Harper will see the ten law students practising interviewing and preparing for their first client experience. Clinical legal students will for the first time be based in JCU's new City Campus, which boasts state-of-the-art teaching spaces including a one-way mirror interviewing room.

Aaron Harper MP, who will meet with Townsville Community Legal Service staff and students, commented, 'It's great to see law students helping out residents with their legal issues'.

Over the last twenty years, 250 JCU law students have completed the clinical legal studies subject, providing advice to over 3,000 clients. Mr Mitchell said that the experience goes beyond providing free and accessible legal advice, and also helps improve recruitment and retention of lawyers in regional, rural and remote areas.

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