

**Street Law in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century:**  
**Assessing the Impact of the 'Know the Law' Pilot Project**

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**ABSTRACT**

Street Law has long been identified as a means by which the community is empowered with relevant and topical information regarding their legal rights, remedies and responsibilities. However, in more recent times, traditional forms of delivery such as in-person legal education seminars may not adequately meet the desires and needs of people who are hoping to access legal information faster and more conveniently than ever before. This article examines a pilot project designed by the University of Newcastle Legal Centre to ensure outreach keeps pace with modern expectations of legal service delivery through the development of the 'Know the Law' mobile cache device ('the site'). Released in early 2016, the site is designed to provide international students with a single platform through which they can access information regarding legal issues considered most relevant to them, such as tenancy, driving and employment. Website analytics have been obtained regarding the number

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of 'hits' on the site, together with a survey of international students who have been exposed to the legal information therein. This article includes key findings in relation to the development, distribution and effectiveness of this pilot project.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The University of Newcastle Legal Centre (UNLC) is a Community Legal Centre (CLC) with a focus on equal access to justice, particularly servicing disadvantaged and marginalised persons. It is staffed by CLC lawyers together with a large number of volunteer law students. The UNLC has a long-standing commitment to its local community through the provision of free legal advice. It offers both drop-in legal advice clinics at the NeW Space building in the centre of Newcastle City<sup>2</sup> and outreach clinics. These include the flagship Law on the Beach advice clinics held over summer and legal information sessions delivered to community groups. Tailored seminars are conducted by the Centre to newly arrived international students together with health carer groups in order to front-end the provision of legal information to persons who may need legal assistance in the future. The Centre's forms of outreach may be viewed as 'street law' in the traditional sense, providing a 'vehicle through which the public can be made more aware of their rights and responsibilities.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Located in Hunter Street Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Grimes, David McQuoid-Mason, Ed O'Brien and Judy Zimmer, 'Street Law and Social Justice Education' in Frank Bloch (ed), *The Global Clinical Movement* (Oxford University Press, 2011) 225, 225.

Since 2010 penultimate and final year law students have been involved in delivering legal information seminars to international students, who often have little knowledge about the Australian legal system and their rights under domestic law. One of the main challenges faced by international students is that legal issues, particularly surrounding tenancy, can strike before they have commenced studying or know where to go for legal help. It was this experience at the Centre's advice clinics that led to the UNLC embracing modern technology and expanding its commitment to international students, assisting to make their transition to study as seamless as possible.

With the assistance of University of Newcastle Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) funding, the UNLC developed the pilot 'Know the Law' site to provide international students with a single electronic platform through which they are able to reference legal information and find contact details for relevant referral agencies. This pilot project has allowed the UNLC to interact with, and better provide assistance to, international students before they arrive on campus, helping to circumvent any legal troubles before they arise. The site allows students to conveniently access the link at any time and immediately find information relating to issues that have been tracked by the UNLC at its free legal advice clinics as those most likely to affect international students: Managing Credit & Debt; Driving in NSW; Working in NSW; Moving to NSW; Police Powers & Fines; and Tenancy. The link to the site is available at the University of Newcastle website: <http://knowthelaw.newcastle.edu.au>.

Part II of the paper provides an outline of the concept of Street Law while Part III will discuss various Street Law programs throughout the world. Part IV then considers how electronic forms of outreach have been increasingly used to provide legal assistance and information to target populations. Part V examines the development of the pilot project in detail. Part VI addresses the effectiveness of the site through an analysis of website analytics and qualitative survey responses provided by international students. Finally, Part VII details the conclusions formed as a result of the pilot project.

## II. STREET LAW – WHAT IS IT?

Street Law has been described as ‘a legal literacy program designed to enable law students and others to make people aware of their legal rights and where to obtain assistance . . . Street law helps people to understand how the law works and how it can protect them.’<sup>4</sup> McQuoid-Mason has defined it as ‘a clinical law program which trains law students to provide lay people with information about the law and how it can be used in daily life.’<sup>5</sup> Further, Street Law aims to ‘focus on the specific and often unmet legal needs of the community and can support otherwise “hard-to-reach” groups’<sup>6</sup> on the presumption that ‘raising public awareness and understanding of the law and legal system should arm and empower people to tackle legal problems and

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<sup>4</sup> David McQuoid-Mason, ‘Street Law as a Clinical Program’ (2008) 17(1) *Griffith Law Review* 27, 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* 27.

<sup>6</sup> Grimes, above n 3, 229.

contribute to addressing existing inequalities.’<sup>7</sup> The provision of legal information not only promotes ‘a clearer understanding of rights and responsibilities,’<sup>8</sup> it also facilitates active citizenship due to the fact that ‘[i]f the public are better informed, they may more effectively access entitlements and comply with obligations.’<sup>9</sup> Grimes goes on to outline the extensive benefits of Street Law initiatives:

The Street Law approach to learning has several advantages. It gives students the opportunity to become actively involved in their learning. It supports study elsewhere in the law curriculum at the ‘academic’ and ‘vocational’ stages – reinforcing learning through application and reflection. It directly addresses lawyering and transferable skills, notably research, problem solving, communication, drafting and team work. It increases awareness of rights and responsibilities for both students and targeted community groups. It forges links between the law school and the wider community. It can provide an opportunity for academics, practitioners, students and members of the local community to work in partnership to increase the understanding of law and the legal process. It can generate wider community involvement through the identification of projects for further work – a practical manifestation of community empowerment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Rebecca Grimes, ‘Conference Report – The Ed O’Brien Street Law and Legal Literacy International Best Practices Conference, Durban, South Africa, April 2016’ (2016) 23 *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education* 137, 141.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Grimes, ‘Legal Literacy, Community Empowerment and Law Schools Some Lessons from a Working Model in the UK’ (2004) 12(3) *Legal Education Digest* 6, 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid* 7.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid* 6-7. See also Patricia Grande Montana, ‘Lessons from the Carnegie and Best Practice Reports: A Look at the Street Law Program as a Model for Teaching Professional Skills’ (2009) 17(3) *Legal Education Digest* 28, 31.

Several Street Law programs have been successfully developed in Australia. For example, Melbourne Law School has offered 'Street Law' as an elective subject to their Juris Doctor students since 2012.<sup>11</sup> As their website states, the course is a 'community legal education initiative that aims to provide legal education to a non-legal audience.'<sup>12</sup> Participating students 'visit partner high schools in and around Melbourne to deliver lessons on legal topics of interest and relevance to young people.'<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Griffith University also offers a course in 'Street Law', which takes the form of a community outreach clinic whereby students 'engage in the process of developing materials on law-related subjects which are tailored to meet the interests of a particular community audience, in this instance secondary school students.'<sup>14</sup>

Outside of the tertiary context, Canberra Community Law has enacted a 'Street Law' program that provides 'a free and confidential outreach legal service for people who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. Street Law provides legal advice and casework assistance and connects clients with other legal services.'<sup>15</sup> This initiative is also available in Western Australia through the Street Law Centre.<sup>16</sup> The Centre provides 'free, confidential legal information, advice and case work to the homeless

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<sup>11</sup> The University of Melbourne, *Street Law* <<http://law.unimelb.edu.au/students/jd/enrichment/pili/subjects/street-law>>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Griffith University, *Street Law: Community Legal Education Clinic* <<https://degrees.griffith.edu.au/Course/Overview?CourseCode=5176LAW>>.

<sup>15</sup> Canberra Community Law, *Street Law* (2017) <<http://www.canberracommunitylaw.org.au/street-law.html>>.

<sup>16</sup> Street Law Centre WA Inc, *Home* <<http://streetlawcentre.org.au/>>.

or those at risk of homelessness’, and ‘seeks to address systemic legal issues through its law reform and advocacy campaign.’<sup>17</sup>

### III. INTERNATIONAL STREET LAW

‘Street Law’ originated in the United States in 1972 at Georgetown University Law Centre in Washington DC.<sup>18</sup> The main aim of Street Law Inc. is not only to ‘educate students and communities about law, democracy and human rights’ but also to train others in the purpose and principles of Street Law.<sup>19</sup> The programs are designed to ‘teach young people in schools, communities, and corrections sites about the law, while providing law students with a unique, powerful professional development opportunity.’<sup>20</sup> Currently, the Georgetown Street Law Program includes three streams: ‘Street Law: Criminal Justice and Human Rights; Street Law: Mock Trial Advocacy; and Street Law: Corrections and Community.’<sup>21</sup> Stanford Law School has also adopted a Street Law program, where ‘participants volunteer their time to team-teach youth once a week for 10 weeks . . . Lessons cover such topics as search and seizure laws, Miranda rights, attorney-client relationship, sentencing hearings, racial profiling and violence prevention.’<sup>22</sup> This initiative clearly benefits the incarcerated and at-risk youth who are included in the program. However, it also offers law

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Street Law Inc., *About Us* <[http://streetlaw.org/en/about/who\\_we\\_are](http://streetlaw.org/en/about/who_we_are)>. See also McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Street Law Inc., *Law School Programs* <[http://streetlaw.org/en/programs/Program/2/Law\\_School\\_Programs](http://streetlaw.org/en/programs/Program/2/Law_School_Programs)>.

<sup>21</sup> Georgetown Law, *Georgetown Street Law Program* <<https://www.law.georgetown.edu/academics/academic-programs/clinical-programs/our-clinics/street-law-program/>>.

<sup>22</sup> Stanford Law School, *Street Law* <<https://law.stanford.edu/street-law/#slsnav-contact-information>>.

students 'an opportunity to put their legal knowledge to practical use' and 'have the chance to experience the rewards of teaching in an environment that allows them to gain a greater understanding of the legal needs and social concerns of youth.'<sup>23</sup>

South Africa is also widely recognised as a strong proponent of Street Law following its introduction of a pilot project at the University of Natal in Durban 1986, now known as the University of KwaZulu-Natal.<sup>24</sup> Their focus goes beyond mere provision of legal information and involves a distinct human rights aspect, as '[s]treet law workshops blend legal substance with innovative teaching strategies aimed at not only increasing understanding but also intending to develop the values and attitudes needed in citizens living in a democratic country.'<sup>25</sup> Students are responsible for designing lesson plans that are subsequently delivered to the target group, and are taught the importance of 'interactive teaching methods including mock trials that involve large numbers of participants.'<sup>26</sup> Care is taken to ensure participating law students are 'properly trained so that they can go out to schools and community groups, and teach effectively and confidently.'<sup>27</sup> The curriculum outcomes of the optional Street Law course run at the University highlight the extensive benefits that accompany participation within this form of community outreach. These include increased understanding of the law, improved writing and communication skills,

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 29.

<sup>25</sup> Street Law South Africa, *About Us* <<http://www.streetlaw.org.za/index.php/about-us/about-us>>.

<sup>26</sup> McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 27.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid 35.



experience with advocacy and significant opportunities for personal development.<sup>28</sup>

Three streams are offered within the clinical law program at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, providing students with a choice of: 'family law; HIV/AIDS and the law; or social justice.'<sup>29</sup>

The United Kingdom has also embraced the concept of Street Law, with Richard Grimes first introducing a pilot at the University of Derby in 1997.<sup>30</sup> More recently, the Law Society of Scotland was nominated for its program at the European Association Awards for Best Training Initiative.<sup>31</sup> This Street Law pilot project is relatively new, commencing in 2014/2015,<sup>32</sup> and 'provides highly-participatory, law-focused education to school pupils over a period of 6-8 weeks whilst also contributing to the professional development of Scots Law students.'<sup>33</sup> This development is extensive, as the 'law students themselves design and deliver classes about the law and legal process which also cover the knowledge and skills that school pupils can use to recognise, prevent and in some cases, resolve legal problems.'<sup>34</sup> Further initiatives are also undertaken by the University of Birmingham, where the Birmingham Pro Bono Group present Street Law sessions to secondary school students, local charities and unrepresented litigants through the Birmingham Employment Tribunal Streetlaw

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid 36.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 43.

<sup>30</sup> Grimes, above n 8, 8.

<sup>31</sup> The Journal of the Law Society of Scotland, '*Street Law*' in *Running for European Training Initiative Award* (11 January 2017) <<http://www.journalonline.co.uk/News/1022751.aspx#.WLDj8LFh3Jx>>.

<sup>32</sup> Law Society of Scotland, *Street Law* (2017) <<http://www.lawscot.org.uk/education-and-careers/schools/street-law/>>.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

project.<sup>35</sup> Finally, Kings College London have created KCL StreetLaw.<sup>36</sup> This pro bono society is populated by student volunteers who 'aim to educate members of the community, who would otherwise not have access to legal knowledge, with a basic overview of the law.'<sup>37</sup> As in the programs discussed above, the legal information is targeted to issues that are of particular relevance within a community group. Students are responsible for researching the selected legal information and then presenting 'the information to the community in a way that helps them better understand the law and how it affects them.'<sup>38</sup> The community cohorts are broad, with workshops being 'run for various focus groups throughout London, ranging from under-privileged schools to small businesses, from LGBT youth groups to ethnic minority centres.'<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, the Law Society of Ireland has developed a Street Law clinic in conjunction with Georgetown University Law Centre.<sup>40</sup> Volunteer trainee solicitors attend an intensive workshop to prepare them for their interactions with secondary school students, who in turn benefit from the program in that it allows them 'to see how the law affects their daily lives and promotes lifelong civic engagement.'<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> University of Birmingham, *Streetlaw* (2016) <<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/law/life/pro-bono/streetlaw.aspx>>.

<sup>36</sup> King's College London, *StreetLaw* (2018) <<https://www.kcl.ac.uk/law/professional-skills/kings-legal-clinic/StreetLaw.aspx>>.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Law Society of Ireland, *Street Law* (2017) <<https://www.lawsociety.ie/Public/Transition-year-programmes/Street-Law/>>.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

#### IV. THE RISE OF ELECTRONIC OUTREACH

Interestingly, with respect to Street Law in South Africa, McQuoid-Mason has identified that 'lectures are the least effective means of teaching people.'<sup>42</sup> As such, interactivity is a vital consideration when designing a Street Law program, or any form of legal outreach for that matter. This has resulted in a variety of techniques being adopted to better convey legal information to the selected community groups. Community Legal Centres (CLCs) throughout Australia are increasingly utilising technology to connect with and help educate their client base.<sup>43</sup> As the National Association of Community Legal Centres explains:

CLCs have been swift in developing mobile and web based applications (or apps) to engage with the community, provide people with access to information to resolve their legal issues, and to tell prospective clients about the services the CLC offers. Apps are a particularly cost-effective way to directly access specific groups and communities who may otherwise not be aware of, or seek out, a CLC and its services. Mobile phones are the most common and accessible source of information and communication for many disadvantaged and hard to reach groups, such as young people. As an information source, they also have the great advantage of almost always being with the client!<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 27.

<sup>43</sup> National Association of Community Legal Centres, *Working Smarter: Community Legal Centres Using Innovation and Technology* (2015) <[http://www.naclc.org.au/resources/NACLC\\_TECH\\_WEB2.pdf](http://www.naclc.org.au/resources/NACLC_TECH_WEB2.pdf)>.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid* 2. See also Anusha Goonetilleke and Alexandra Wolhuter, 'Law within Reach: QPLICH Takes Rural, Regional and Remote Initiative' (2013) 33(7) *The Proctor* 22 for a brief discussion regarding how technology is being used to provide legal assistance to rural, regional and remote communities.

Colleagues from the University of Newcastle Law School and Australian National University have created 'Bernie', an App that is designed to help prevent domestic violence reoffending by individuals who are subject to Apprehended Domestic Violence Orders (ADVOs).<sup>45</sup> This significant form of electronic outreach plays a vital role in supporting defendants' understanding of information relating to the orders, and reinforcing behavioural expectations that accompany ADVOs.<sup>46</sup> Similar to the 'Know the Law' site, Bernie provides 'legal and psycho-educational resources' as well as 'contact numbers for counselling, legal advice, and financial and housing assistance.'<sup>47</sup>

On an international level, there has been a marked rise in the use of technology, and mobile applications in particular, when providing legal information to a client base or facilitating easier exchanges between law firms and clients. In the United States and Canada, this is especially evident in the field of Personal Injury law, where 'Apps Legal' has created mobile applications for over 400 law firms.<sup>48</sup> A quick online search reveals entire articles dedicated to the best apps for legal help,<sup>49</sup> that range from

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<sup>45</sup> The University of Newcastle, *AVO App 'Bernie' to Help Address Domestic Violence Reoffending* (28 November 2017) <<https://www.newcastle.edu.au/newsroom/featured-news/avo-app-bernie-to-help-address-domestic-violence-reoffending>>. See also Hunter Research Foundation Centre, *App to Reduce Domestic Violence Order Breaches* (9 October 2017) <<http://www.hrf.com.au/news-events/latest-news/app-to-reduce-domestic-violence-order-breaches>>; Lisa Allan, 'Hunter to Trial New App to Help Protect Domestic Violence Victims', *Newcastle Herald* (online), 28 November 2017 <<http://www.theherald.com.au/story/5085433/hunter-to-trial-new-app-to-protect-domestic-violence-victims/>>.

<sup>46</sup> Allan, above n 45.

<sup>47</sup> The University of Newcastle, above n 45.

<sup>48</sup> Apps Legal, *Our Clients* <<http://www.appslegal.com/>>.

<sup>49</sup> Joe Dysart, *20 Apps to Help Provide Easier Access to Legal Help* (April 2015) ABA Journal <[http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/20\\_apps\\_providing\\_easier\\_access\\_to\\_legal\\_help](http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/20_apps_providing_easier_access_to_legal_help)>.

general legal questions,<sup>50</sup> road accidents,<sup>51</sup> immigration,<sup>52</sup> employment,<sup>53</sup> contracts<sup>54</sup> and police powers.<sup>55</sup>

## V. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PILOT PROJECT

This pilot project aimed to achieve the goals of providing international students with relevant information and directing them to other resources for further guidance. It has been designed to be accessible either by computer or via mobile phone. The site is now available in both English and Mandarin, allowing it to reach an even wider pool of international students.

The concept of Street Law underpins the UNLC's decision to deliver detailed and relevant legal information to international students and satisfy their potentially unmet legal needs through the provision of the mobile site. While the site is not Street Law in the traditional sense, it draws on the same principles.

Since 2010 penultimate and final year students, under the supervision of UNLC staff, have delivered legal information seminars to international students. The involvement of law students in this process is a key principle of Street Law<sup>56</sup> but is not within the

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<sup>50</sup> Google Play, *Ask a Lawyer: Legal Help* <<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.absmallbusinessmarketing.askalawyer&hl=en>>; Bernie Sez <<https://www.berniesez.com/>>.

<sup>51</sup> The Stellute Law Firm, *Smart Driver App* <<http://www.stellutelaw.com/stelluteapp/app/index.html>>.

<sup>52</sup> CitizenshipWorks, *About Us* <<https://www.citizenshipworks.org/>>.

<sup>53</sup> United States Department of Labor, *DOL-Timesheet* <<https://www.dol.gov/general/apps/timesheet>>.

<sup>54</sup> Shake by Legal Shield, *Product* <<http://www.shakelaw.com/product/>>.

<sup>55</sup> New York Civil Liberties Union, *Stop and Frisk Watch App* <<https://www.nyclu.org/en/stop-and-frisk-watch-app>>.

<sup>56</sup> Grimes, above n 7, 146: 'As well as the public benefit, it was also clearly shown that law students can be closely involved in preparing and delivering presentations / workshops and in doing so can gain considerably in terms of their own education, appreciating both substance and context. Knowledge, skills and wider ethical considerations can all be effectively studied through involvement in PLE [public legal education] in general and Street Law in particular. For all (the law student and the wider public) to realise that law involves not just individual rights and responsibilities but choices and values is, it is

direct scope of this paper. The content provided for the site is tailored to meet the particular issues that international students most frequently seek to discuss at the free legal advice clinics run by the UNLC being tenancy, employment and driving. Seminars can then be structured accordingly to contain the most relevant legal information for international students, empowering this particular demographic within the community. The pilot project has subsequently drawn on these experiences of international students who are being exposed to the Australian legal system for the first time.

As with any form of legal outreach, Street Law is not without difficulty. This is mainly due to the fact that '[d]iscussions with the community do not just happen.'<sup>57</sup> With regard to international students, there is a need to act with both 'sensitivity and . . . genuine respect for cultural and social diversity.'<sup>58</sup> Initially the Newcastle Street Law model involved legal information being delivered during in-person seminars, providing content that is considered to be most relevant for this particular cohort. It can be very difficult for international students to anticipate the significant legal issues which may arise until they have already faced them. Thus, while the in-person legal seminars play a vital role in increasing student knowledge and confidence, the sessions were often criticised by international students as being delivered too late. As some students had already settled in New South Wales, they reported having

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suggested, an important lesson.' See also Asnida Mohd Suhaimi and Nur Farzana Mohd Zulkifli, 'Street Law Based CLE: A Student-Impact-Assessment' (2012) 18 *International Journal of Clinical Legal Education* 218, 221.

<sup>57</sup> Grimes, above n 3, 227.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid* 227.

previously experienced some of the legal issues discussed at seminars, particularly surrounding tenancy and employment.

The pilot project is designed to combat the concerns raised about early access to legal information, as the site now enables international students to access relevant legal sources online well before they arrive in Australia. The site aims to prevent legal problems arising before they affect international students. Further, it provides information regarding what students should do in certain situations, for example when interacting with police, and directs them where to go if they require additional information or personalised legal advice. This is in line with traditional principles of Street Law, as the site does 'not solve legal problems for their target communities.'<sup>59</sup> Rather, it provides relevant information and links to further sources, including the names and contact details of helpful organisations. 'Know the Law' is not a substitute for seeking legal advice, and a disclaimer to this effect features prominently on the site.

Interactivity is another key component in the success of Street Law programs.<sup>60</sup> As Grimes et al state, '[t]he more you engage the audience the more likely they are to take on board what it is you are trying to get across.'<sup>61</sup> The site is interactive and user-friendly, providing 'a flexible and appropriate tool through which wider social justice issues can be addressed.'<sup>62</sup> Its flexibility, portability and convenience ensures

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<sup>59</sup> McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 44.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid 31.

<sup>61</sup> Grimes, above n 3, 232.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid 238.

international students are able to easily access useful information from their devices anywhere, anytime. This provides a clear advantage over more traditional forms of Street Law, as students can use the site whenever and wherever it suits them.

## **VI. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SITE**

### **A. Marketing**

The site is promoted through several means. These include: an announcement circulated to all University staff; an email to incoming international students and a subsequent email to all international students at the University of Newcastle; the publication of Facebook messages; the circulation of marketing postcards to Student Hubs on campus, the UNLC and offices across campus; information on the Faculty of Business and Law webpage, the Newcastle Law School webpage and the UNLC webpage; the provision of information to student associations; and a presentation during orientation to newly arrived international students.

The effectiveness of the pilot project has been measured by two main sources: analytics relating to the site; and qualitative survey responses provided by international students after being shown the pilot project.

### **B. Website Analytics**

The UNLC used Google Analytics to track the use of the site. Data obtained covered the period from when the site was launched in early 2016 through to 30 June 2018.



The following terminology is used by Google Analytics<sup>63</sup> to explain the relevant data:

*Sessions: A session is the period of time a user is actively engaged with your website, app, etc. All usage data (Screen Views, Events, Ecommerce, etc) is associated with a session.*

*Users: Users that have had at least one session within the selected date range. Includes both new and returning users.*

*Pageviews: Pageviews is the total number of pages viewed. Repeated views of a single page are counted.*

*Pages / Session: Pages / Session (Average Page Depth) is the average number of pages viewed during a session. Repeated views of a single page are counted.*

*Avg. Session Duration: The average length of a Session.*

*Bounce Rate: Bounce Rate is the percentage of single-page visits (ie visits in which the person left your site from the entrance page without interacting with the page).*

*% New Sessions: An estimate of the percentage of first time visits.*

In the relevant period, there were a total of 1643 sessions, which peaked in January 2016 (376 sessions). A higher number of sessions was also evident in June 2016 (119 sessions) and November 2016 (169 sessions), most likely preceding the start of semester 2 in July 2016 and the arrival of new students ready to study in 2017 respectively. There was also high traffic on the site in October 2017, with 111 sessions recorded. There were 1004 total users, 1643 sessions and 5019 page views. The pages

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<sup>63</sup> For more information, see Google Analytics Solutions, *Analytics* <<https://www.google.com/analytics/analytics/features/>>.

per session were calculated at 3.05 with an average session duration of 3 minutes and 57 seconds. 91.3% of the audience were estimated to be new visitors, with 8.7% thought to be returning. The bounce rate was recorded as 54.60%. The site was only available in English for the majority of this time, as the Mandarin translation had not yet been activated. It is hoped that this new translated version of the site will have a two-fold effect: increase the number of users, sessions and average session durations; and decrease the current bounce rate.

### C. Survey Responses

As highlighted by McQuoid-Mason, '[s]treet law programs should be continually evaluated regarding their impact on the target communities and the students in order to improve them,' and questionnaires following the initiative 'can give an indication of how successful they were at transferring knowledge and skills.'<sup>64</sup> At the conclusion of the 2017 in-person legal information seminar to newly arrived international students, attendees were shown the site and then asked to complete a short anonymous survey.<sup>65</sup> A small sample of students in attendance completed the survey and the results were as follows:

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<sup>64</sup> McQuoid-Mason, above n 4, 46-47.

<sup>65</sup> University of Newcastle Human Research Ethics Committee Approval H-2017-0048.

*Question 1 – Before being shown the ‘Know the Law’ site, my knowledge of the laws in New South*

*Wales was:*

Very Good	Good	Average	Little Knowledge	No Knowledge
		<b>22%</b>	<b>78%</b>	

*Question 2 – After being shown the ‘Know the Law’ site, my knowledge of the laws in New South*

*Wales has:*

Increased Significantly	Increased	Stayed the Same	Decreased	No Opinion
	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>		

*Question 3 – I think the content included in the ‘Know the Law’ site is:*

Very Useful	Useful	Some Useful Content	Little Useful Content	No Useful Content
<b>67%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>11%</b>		

*Question 4 – I think the ‘Know the Law’ site is:*

Very Easy to Use	Easy to Use	Fairly Easy to Use	A Little Hard to Use	Very Hard to Use
11%	89%			

Two further questions were asked of the students who completed the survey, and the following qualitative comments were offered in response:

*Question 5 – What did you like most about the ‘Know the Law’ site?*

‘Easy to access, the laws that are very practical to us – rent, online shopping, work, driving.’

‘It will raise awareness to us, international students, regarding the laws that are in power, it will be helpful to us.’

‘Being able to provide information comprehensively.’

*Question 6 – Are there areas in which the ‘Know the Law’ site could be improved?*

‘It will be helpful if information about accommodation be given early to international students.’

‘Sample incidents will help understand the points raised.’

#### **D. Further Development of the Site**

Throughout 2017, the legal content for the site was periodically updated to reflect changes in the law. Recently, a major development within the site has been undertaken by Information Technology (IT) Services in the Resource Division of the University of Newcastle. IT Services has implemented an Artificial Intelligence (AI) chatbot aspect within the 'Know the Law' site, which enables users to ask questions about legal matters. Users are greeted with the following introduction when first arriving at the site: 'Hi! I am The Know The Law chatbot. I can talk about any of the following topics: managing credit and debt, driving in NSW, working in NSW, moving to NSW, police powers and fines in NSW, tenancy in NSW. Would you like to talk about any of these?' The user is then able to type in their specific question or topic of choice and subsequently directed to relevant content within the site. There is an option to turn off the chatbot function if visitors would prefer to browse the content for themselves. IT Services are hoping to further refine this feature to enhance the AI capabilities of the site, making it even more user-friendly and accurate in the content provided.

The chatbot has proved popular with users. From 1 July 2017 to 1 June 2018, the chatbot has been asked questions relating to each of the six topic areas within the site. From the data gathered, it appears that visitors to the site had the most questions regarding Police Powers & Fines in NSW, with 19 separate entries to the chatbot. These were mainly related to being arrested and the search powers of police officers.

Traffic fines were also a key area of concern. Users were also seeking information about Working in NSW, with 18 questions being entered. They covered issues such as pay, giving notice, tax, workplace harassment or discrimination, entitlements and superannuation. Driving in NSW was the third most popular topic, with the questions relating to licence requirements, drink driving, and what to do if you have been involved in a car accident. Users were also seeking information regarding Tenancy in NSW, and were mostly concerned with rent, how to terminate a lease, and the conditions that come with leasing a property. Finally, the chatbot was asked questions about Moving to NSW, including student insurance and visa conditions, and Managing Credit & Debt, which related to either loans or what to do if they were in debt.

In 2018, law students are working on adding additional legal content to the site. Further topics include family law and consumer claims, covering issues such as scams and seeking redress for defective products. In light of the qualitative response above, examples of typical legal scenarios will also be provided to assist users. Other content areas that are being considered for inclusion on the site include: domestic violence; sexual harassment; car accidents, with respect to both property damage and personal injury; and financial literacy.

## VII. CONCLUSIONS

The traditional principles of Street Law provided the impetus for the development of the 'Know the Law' site, which has enabled the expansion of the provision of legal

information and outreach to cohorts of international students. The site intends to assist these students with any transitions they may face when coming to study and live in New South Wales. They are able to access legal information in a convenient and efficient way, anywhere and anytime from their computer or mobile device. International students speak positively of the site, as observed in their quantitative and qualitative responses above. The intent of the site – to provide information about typical legal matters that international students may encounter following their arrival in Australia – has clearly been achieved through this pilot project.