



Final grant report: Video on the Australian legal system

Project title	Video on the Australian legal system
Grant recipient	Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC), State Library of NSW
Project manager	Catherine Bryant
Position	Librarian, LIAC
Law and Justice Foundation awarded amount	\$49,998.18
Grant period	November 2012 – February 2014
Date of this report	January 2014

Description of the project

Describe the project in just enough detail so that anyone can understand it. What was the aim of the project, who was the intended audience and what strategies did you implement to achieve the aim?

The aim of the project was to update the Legal Information Access Centre (LIAC) training video on how laws are made.

The video is used as a component in the training workshops on legislation and case law that LIAC delivers to public library staff and other legal and non legal service providers across NSW.

The new video *How laws are made* has two parts. *Parliament* examines how parliaments make law, explaining the process of a Bill becoming an Act, how legislation changes over time, why the Commonwealth makes some laws and the states others, and delegated legislation such as regulations. *Courts* explains the court hierarchy, the jurisdiction of courts and tribunals, and how courts can make new law by interpreting legislation, filling gaps in legislation, and developing the common law where there is no legislation. Each part is approximately 10 minutes long.

The project – what happened?

How did the project come about?

In 1998, LIAC in collaboration with the Law Foundation of NSW developed and produced the original training video. Although the core structure remained useful, the video was in urgent need of updating. The presentation mode was dated and the examples used had become out-of-date. The length of the video (forty minutes in total) was too long. Over the years, as the content had been moved to other formats, the quality of the video deteriorated. (The video, first converted to DVD, was available on the LIAC website for use by public librarians, but the download process was cumbersome and time-consuming.)

Briefly set out the project stages and what happened in each stage.

In April 2012, LIAC applied to the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW for a grant of \$49, 998 (excl GST) to update the video using an external production company.

The grant was approved on 7 June 2012.

At all stages, LIAC worked in collaboration with the production company.

STAGE 1 CONCEPT AND SCRIPT DEVELOPMENT

- Concept developed and approved
- Scripts and graphics developed
- Script approved. Although the scripts were based on the original training video, they needed extensive re-working. A legal expert was consulted throughout this process, and numerous drafts were created before the final scripts were approved.

STAGE 2 PRE PRODUCTION

- Structure finalised
- Images sourced

STAGE 3 PRODUCTION

- Film shoot
- Graphics produced

STAGE 4 POST PRODUCTION

- Rough cut edit
- Law and Justice Foundation standard acknowledgment, disclaimer and logo forwarded to production company for inclusion in credits
- Contact details for LawAccess NSW, Legal Aid NSW, and CLC Directory forwarded to production company for inclusion in credits
- Rough cut screening to stakeholders for comment (Law Society of NSW, Legal Aid NSW, LawAccess NSW)
- Rough cut approval
- Final version approved by LIAC and the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW

STAGE 5 DISTRIBUTION AND PROMOTION

- Video launched on 28 November 2013 at The State Library of NSW
- One copy of the video distributed to each of the 89 LIAC libraries in NSW
- Links to the video placed on the Find Legal Answers website
- Slider about the video on the front page of the Find Legal Answers website
- Links to the video placed on the State Library of NSW website
- Video added to Vimeo and YouTube
- Video promoted via:
 - Video launch – 38 attendees from law libraries, government organisations, legal assistance and education sectors
 - Email lists

- Find Legal Answers in Brief e-newsletter for public libraries
- Find Legal Answers News e-newsletter, subscribed to by the community, education, and legal sector (180 subscribers)
- Legal Aid NSW Cooperative Legal Service Delivery (CLSD) newsletter
- Law and Justice Foundation website
- NSW Legal Assistance Forum (NLAF) website
- Law librarians
- Instagram
- Twitter
- Facebook
- Pinterest
- HSC Legal Studies News Watch Blog
- University libraries
- Legal Studies teachers

STAGE 6 EVALUATION

- The aim of the project was successfully achieved: the timely publication and distribution of a high quality training video *How laws are made: Parliament and Courts*
- Stakeholder comment was sought and very positive comments received from the Law Society of NSW, LawAccess NSW and Legal Aid NSW
 - *This is a well structured presentation with clearly explained concepts*
 - *It is one of the best explanations of the courts hierarchy I have seen*
 - *An excellent video for non lawyers*
- Ongoing evaluation of the videos will be achieved by the use of training evaluation forms to assess the usefulness of the video as part of the LIAC training program for public librarians and legal assistance providers

If grant materials were produced:

How were they distributed?

The video is freely available online via the Find Legal Answers website www.legalanswers.sl.nsw.gov.au, the State Library of NSW website www.sl.nsw.gov.au, Vimeo and YouTube.

One copy in DVD format was sent to each of the 89 LIAC libraries in NSW, for use by public library staff.

What was the extent of the distribution?

They are freely available to all via Find Legal Answers website, the State Library of NSW website, Vimeo and YouTube.

All LIAC libraries in NSW hold a copy in DVD format.

If applicable, at the time of this report, what has been the extent of online use of your publication?

The videos were uploaded on 28 November 2013

As at 7 January 2014 (41 days):

Vimeo

Parliament – 148 plays

Courts – 72 plays

YouTube

Parliament – 82 views

Courts – 55 views

Now that the project has concluded, how did the implementation and/or the outcome differ from what was originally intended? Did anything surprise you? Were there any unintended outcomes?

The outcome was as planned: the creation of a high quality video explaining the role of parliament and the courts in making new laws.

The difficulty of making complex concepts accessible and engaging while ensuring accuracy in a brief 10 minute video was the main challenge. For example, it took 12 drafts to finalise the *Courts* script.

Evaluation

What questions did you ask to evaluate whether you had achieved your aim?

1. Was the video completed on time and to the required standard?
2. Does the video meet the aim of explaining the role of parliament and the courts to non lawyers?
3. Is the video suitable for use as part of LIAC's training program?
4. Was there positive feedback received from stakeholders and the legal sector?

What data did you gather to answer your questions?

1. The initial timeline for the project was extended three times. The project was completed in November 2013, eleven months later than the initial completion date of December 2012. The additional time was required to ensure a high quality, accurate and engaging product. The video was completed in time to be used in LIAC's annual training program held at the State Library in October 2013.
2. Evaluation forms and comments. Library staff who used the video as part of the training program gave positive feedback that it made the complexity of parliament and the courts easy to understand, and that they gained a clearer understanding of how laws are made. They also stated that their clients would find it useful. Other agencies provided feedback, including that it would be useful for the general public.
3. The video was used successfully as part of LIAC's training program in October 2013 and is available for public libraries to use when doing the training in-house.
4. Positive feedback was received from stakeholders and the legal sector.

Did you achieve your aim? What did you find out?

We achieved our aim of providing a plain language video explaining the role of parliament and the courts in making new law.

Conclusion and recommendations

What is your conclusion?

Creating this video was worthwhile. Not only will it be useful for public library staff, it will also be useful for the broader legal sector, intermediaries and the education sector.

What are your recommendations for improvements both for the intended audience of your project, and for the strategy you used to achieve your aim? What would you do differently next time?

Videos are a great way of reaching a broad audience. Be aware that getting the script right is very important and can be very time consuming. We would set more achievable time frames if we were to do a similar project in the future.