



## **Launch of MLRC's 2014 Annual Report**

On 7 May 2015, MLRC welcomed Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, Archbishop of Dublin, to launch MLRC's 2014 Annual Report.

Also speaking at the launch were Sr. Peggy Collins, Provincial Leader of the South Central Province of the Sisters of Mercy, and Brendan Murphy, Service Manager, Dublin Simon, read more [here](#).



## In this issue read about...

- MLRC successfully advocates for client who was refused access to housing list and homeless priority due to having “made herself homeless” and rent arrears. Local authority cannot impose such further criterion of manner in which became homeless into finding as to whether “homeless” or not, [read more...](#)
- MLRC Client granted Need for Assistance Letter – client had been suspended from social housing list as had been evicted from her local authority house due to rent arrears, [read more...](#)
- MLRC successfully legally advocated for family to be given priority on the transfer list due to family suffering severe anti-social behaviour, [read more...](#)
- MLRC assists client access medical priority on housing list, [read more...](#)

## MLRC Policy work

### Right to housing

#### ***Private Members Bill on incorporating Economic, Social and Cultural Rights into the Constitution***

As part of its policy work advocating for a constitutional right to housing, in April, MLRC presented to the Oireachtas Technical Group on the right to housing. This was part of a full presentation, arranged by the ESC Rights Initiative, on the value of incorporating ESC Rights into the Constitution. The Briefing was well received. Following on from it, Thomas Pringle TD launched a Private Members Bill on incorporating ESC rights into the Constitution. Aidan

Lloyd, Chair of the ESC Rights Initiative, Nick Henderson, Economic, Social and Cultural rights Programme coordinator with Amnesty International Ireland and MLRC presented at the briefing in support of the Bill.

The Bill is available here:

<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/bills/2014/11514/b11514d.pdf> The Dail debate on the Bill is available here: <http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/debates/20authoring/debateswebpack.nsf/takes/dail2015051900034#>

### ***Universal Periodic Review***

The UN Universal Periodic Review is taking place in 2016 in relation to Ireland. This is a UN review of countries' records of compliance with all human rights obligations. The Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) is preparing a comprehensive stakeholder report for submission for this review. MLRC has submitted to this report and is on the steering group for the ICCL report.

MLRC will also be making a direct individual submission, with greater detail, to the Review before the closing date in September 2015. Among the recommendations MLRC will be making are:

- The right to housing should be recognised in Irish law and assimilated into national and local government housing policy.
- The recommendation of the Constitutional Convention to incorporate the protection of ESC rights into the Constitution should be put to the people in a constitutional referendum.
- Equality legislation should be amended to include socio-economic status as a prohibited ground for discrimination.
- The State legal aid scheme should be expanded to include State legal aid in cases involving eviction from social housing.

### **Universal Periodic Review Consultations**

The ICCL and Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission are holding consultations around the country to inform the ICCL stakeholder report to the UN for the Universal Periodic Review. For more information on this work by ICCL and the process, please see:

<http://www.rightsnow.ie/>

This is an opportunity for people to have their voices heard and to provide the ICCL with information about human rights issues on the ground in Ireland:

#### **Galway**

16th July 2.30-4.30, NUIG Institute for Lifecourse and Society, Dangan, Co. Galway.

#### **Cork**

28th July, 2.30 -4.30, University College Cork, Aras na Laoi, Gaol Cross, Western Road.

#### **Dublin**

30th July, 11.00-1.00, Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, 16-22 Green Street, Dublin 7.

## **MLRC Training in Housing Law & Related Social Welfare Law**

As part of MLRC's work, we provide training in housing law and related social welfare law to organisations working in the field of homelessness. If you are interested in organising a training session by MLRC, please contact Shauna on 01 4537459 or at [shauna@mercylaw.ie](mailto:shauna@mercylaw.ie). We would be very happy to hear from you and discuss the training that would be most useful for you.

### ***MLRC Training in Social Welfare Law delivered by Prof. Gerry Whyte***

In April and May, MLRC held a series of six comprehensive training workshops in Social Welfare Law, delivered by Professor Gerry Whyte, Associate Professor, School of Law, Trinity College Dublin.

We would like to extend our great appreciation to Professor Whyte and thank him for sharing his expertise, time and energy. For more details on the training, please [read more...](#)

## **MLRC News**

**MLRC is delighted to welcome Sinead Kerin as our locum solicitor and colleague.**



Sinead is a Solicitor with extensive experience in Social Welfare and Housing Law having worked with Focus Ireland in Limerick for several years.

Sinead graduated from University College Cork and has a degree in Sociology and Geography and completed her Masters in International Studies from the University of Limerick. Sinead worked as a legal researcher for the Northern Ireland Assembly, the University of Ulster and for a Member of the European Union before qualifying as a solicitor in 2009 having completed her apprenticeship with Augustus Cullen Law in Wicklow.

Since qualification Sinead has worked as a legal researcher for the International Development Law Organisation, a Child Law Legal Researcher for McMahon Solicitors and as manager of Focus Ireland Advice & Advocacy Centre in Limerick where she her main work and advocacy was in social welfare and housing law.

Sinead is an active volunteer and member of the Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA), the Irish Society of Cruelty to Children, (ISPCC) and Amnesty International.

We look forward to working with Sinead over the coming months building on MLRC's work helping those who are on the margins of our society.

**MLRC was delighted to welcome Conor Casey, graduate Trinity College Dublin, who interned with us for the month of June.**



Conor is a recent graduate and Scholar of Trinity College Dublin. He has a keen interest in administrative, constitutional and public interest law.

Even in the short time Conor interned with us, he proved to be a great support in our work to help those who are on the margins of our society.

We are most grateful to Conor for his excellent work and contribution to MLRC.

### **Thank you to TCD Law Society**

Mercy Law Resource Centre would like to thank the TCD Law Society for choosing MLRC as their 2015 Charity for their Law Day earlier this year. In a combined effort the TCD Law Society Committee, the Society's members and all the volunteers and collectors generously gave of their time to fundraise on behalf of Mercy Law Resource Centre during the TCD Law Day, raising an amazing amount of €3,270.



This money will be used for the provision of free legal advice, representation and befriending services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This financial support will help us to continue and develop our work to assist the most vulnerable in our society to access their entitlements and flourish in their lives.

## Thank you to everyone who supported The April Fools Day Comedy Gala in aid of MLRC!

Thank you to everyone who came to the second annual April Fools Comedy Gala on 1 April in the Sugar Club! You raised almost €4,000 for MLRC! Thank you for your huge support which

helps ensure that MLRC can continue to provide and develop our services to support and help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.



A huge thank you from MLRC to Jarlath Regan whose idea this show is, for producing the show and for MC'ing, so generously and with such great energy and fun, and to the brilliant Ardal O'Hanlon, Barry Murphy, Colm O'Regan and David O'Doherty for their fantastic performances! All of the performers

immediately agreed to the invitation to perform for free at the Gala. They made this event possible. Thank you!

We look forward to seeing everyone at next year's Comedy Gala in aid of MLRC!

## About MLRC

Mercy Law Resource Centre is an Independent Law Centre and registered charity providing free legal advice, representation and befriending services to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the areas of social housing and social welfare law. For more information about our work please see our website at [www.mercylaw.ie](http://www.mercylaw.ie).

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