



UNSW
SYDNEY



31 October 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: PIAC application to Ross Trust for funding to support Asylum Seeker Health Rights Project

I write to strongly support the application by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) for funding to support their Asylum Seeker Health Rights Project.

Over the last two years I have had the pleasure to work with Jane Leibowitz, Mary Flanagan, and Jonathon Hunyor from PIAC on access to hepatitis C therapy for asylum seekers. I provided medical expertise to support the cases they developed in relation to damages due to a lack of community-standard healthcare. I had extensive interactions with PIAC through this period, finding them to be highly professional and incredibly committed to their work. My clinical and research work has been with affected hepatitis C populations, predominantly people who inject drugs and people who are incarcerated, both highly marginalised and vulnerable populations in society. Given PIAC's commitment to improving the lives of and protecting the rights of vulnerable populations through legal avenues, there was a natural affinity between the Kirby Institute and PIAC.

The relationship I developed with PIAC also led to Kirby Institute and PIAC co-sponsoring a symposium on "Human Rights and Drug Use" as a World Hepatitis Day event. This event brought together representatives from community, clinical, government, and both medicine and law academia, including our patron the honourable The Hon. Michael Kirby AC CMG.

The demonstration of PIAC's capacity to deliver outcomes was clearly demonstrated through the change in relation to hepatitis C treatment access for people in onshore detention that was announced earlier this year. This change in policy reflected the concerted advocacy that PIAC brought to this important issue.

I am delighted to support their application.

Yours sincerely,

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Head, Viral Hepatitis Clinical Research Program

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