

NEWS



Cassandra Goldie will speak in Newcastle on Thursday. Picture supplied

Leader delivers Henry lecture

THE Hunter will hear from head of the nation's peak social services body this week, amid rising cost of living and record-breaking rates of homelessness in the area.

Cassandra Goldie, chief executive of the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS) will speak about progressive social and economic change in the Hunter during the annual Margaret Henry Memorial Lecture.

Dr Goldie told the *Newcastle Herald* she believed the Hunter was educated and adaptable to serious measures to reduce poverty, including increased social housing, changes to tax laws and green energy transition.

On the latter, Dr Goldie said "the writing has been on the wall" for more than a decade and ACOSS hoped to support a transition in job opportunities.

Margaret Henry Memorial Lecture committee spokesperson Catherine Henry said Dr Goldie's speech would help consolidate levels of governance in the Hunter. Dr Goldie will speak at Newcastle City Hall on Thursday, June 8 from 6.30pm.

— LUCINDA GARBUTT-YOUNG



Shaun McCarthy worked on the original submission for a judicial review of Kathleen Folbigg's convictions.

Relief after long road

BY GABRIEL FOWLER

THE relief Kathleen Folbigg felt when she was released from prison on Monday was shared not only by her close friends and legal team, but by the many other legal and academic minds involved along the way.

University of Newcastle Legal Centre director Shaun McCarthy, who has formerly acted as Ms Folbigg's instructing solicitor, said he had heard from many of the students who helped him work on her case between 2013 and 2017.

Mr McCarthy said he felt a sense of relief that all of the medical and scientific evidence was now being looked at more closely.

"The wheels of justice can turn slowly," he said. "Concerns about the convictions gained significant support after the publication of a the-



Kathleen Folbigg, at the home of her friend Tracy Chapman, after she was released from prison earlier this week. Picture supplied

sis and booked titled *Murder, Medicine and Motherhood* by academic Emma Cuncliffe in 2011, and the legal centre took up the case with three Newcastle barristers in 2013."

Mr McCarthy met with Ms Folbigg in jail to speak to her at length, as well as commu-

nicating by letter. He saw the case as having parallels with the Lindy Chamberlain case, saying it went to "the heart of the rule of law".

Under his supervision, fourth-year students went through the transcripts of Ms Folbigg's trial and researched "similar wrongful conviction

cases" in England, as well as exploring the advances in medicine and science since the 2003 trial, he said.

"That was significant, even at that time," Mr McCarthy said. "There were a series of similar cases where convictions had been overturned so it was quite pivotal in terms

of the research being undertaken."

The team put together a case for a judicial review, which was successful, and while the first inquiry did not go Ms Folbigg's way, it was an important first step, Mr McCarthy said.

"The fact that we were able to get the first inquiry was very important," he said. "Many students have written to me over the past couple of days recalling their time at the centre and their work on the case and the impact the case has had on their legal career ... reflecting on the importance of public interest advocacy, and social justice."

"This pardon has certainly made them reflect on the contribution they made during their time at the centre."

The legal centre continues to work on cases, with requests from people seeking their support.

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