

Speech for FineFixer Launch

Introduction

Welcome everybody. My name is Rob Hulls, and I am the Director of the Centre for Innovative Justice here at RMIT.

I want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations, and to pay my respects to their elders, past and present.

It is my great pleasure to be here this afternoon to the launch of FineFixer ... and to acknowledge our special guests including the Director of the Fastrack Innovation Program, Associate Professor David Gilbert, who along with Peter Williams from Deloitte started the Fastrack program a decade ago... Emma King from VCOSS; our partners in Fastrack, Victoria Legal Aid, represented by Dan Nicholson; the new Executive Director Lynne Hultain and her colleagues from the Victoria Law Foundation which provided development funding for FineFixer ... and of course, the students and their mentors involved Rebecca, Alexandra and Joshua, and of course Moonee Valley Legal Services' Brendan Lactoa.

I also have an apology from for Sandra Arico, the former associate director of the Fastrack Innovation Program. Unfortunately Sandra is ill and isn't able to be here.

It's very appropriate that we're here at RMIT because this is where the concept for FineFixer first started all the way back in 2015.

The idea for the service was developed by three talented RMIT students mentioned earlier as part of the Access to Justice Through Technology Challenge, or Social Justice stream of the Fastrack Innovation Program.

You will learn more about the journey of FineFixer from our next speakers, except to say that it won the Most Viable Solution Award in the 2015 program ... and is the first of the Access to Justice stream to get to 'market.'

It is a fantastic product and we'd love you to support us by getting the word out on social media with the hashtag #fixyourfine

David Gilbert ---

I'd now like to introduce the Director of Fastrack, David Gilbert.

(David Speaks)

Thank you, David.

Emma King ----

I'd now like to welcome Emma King, CEO of the Victorian Council of Social Service, who will formally launch FineFixer.

VCOSS is the peak body of the community sector in Victoria which raises awareness of the existence, causes and effects of poverty and disadvantage and in 2015 partnered with RMIT to fund researchers on innovative projects that broaden our understanding of critical social issues in Victoria.

Please welcome Emma.

(Emma speaks)

Thank you, Emma.

The Students---

I'd now like to welcome the RMIT students who first developed FineFixer concept in 2015. Rebecca Aiezza, Alexandra Laurence and Joshua Lee. They were a great team, they had a great idea, and we now have a great product which will make a real difference.

And those of you who were listening to ABC radio in the morning yesterday may have heard Alexandra being interviewed by Raf Epstein. She sounded as if she was born to do media!

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Thank you, Rebecca, Alexandra and Joshua.

Brendan Lacota

I'd now like to welcome Brendan Lacota, Principal Lawyer, Moonee Valley Legal Service. Brendan is a pioneer of the Access to Justice stream of Fastrack. And I can safely say, that without his willingness to believe in what we are doing, without his support and work to get the funding from the Victoria Law Foundation, we wouldn't be here today.

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Thank you, Brendan.

Dan Nicholson

Victoria Legal Aid, along with the Federation of Community Legal Centres, has been a critical partner in the Access to Justice stream. It was our combined interest in using design and technology to improve access to justice that brought us to the door of David Gilbert's office...

So please welcome Dan Nicholson, Executive Director, Civil Justice, Access and Equity, Victorian Legal Aid.

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Thank you, Dan.

Closing:

There aren't that many university programs that give students the opportunity to change peoples' lives for the better and make a lasting difference.

The Fastrack Innovation Program is definitely one of them.

The solutions students provide – provided they are desirable, feasible and implementable – go on improving access to justice well after they have finished the program.

The beauty of FineFixer is that it was developed by people outside the legal system in collaboration with people working inside the system.

The website was developed with users in mind not for those who run the system.

This is exactly the kind of legal reform which makes a tangible difference in people's lives.

Thanks for coming everyone. That brings us to the close of formalities tonight, and I invite you all to stay for some drinks and refreshments.

... and if you have parked illegally...and copped a fine, you now know wher to go for help!

Cheers!

Quick background

Fine Fixer is a web based app to help young people understand and pay their fines using a simple, quick and easy process.

If people are enabled to act earlier with their fines it can prevent the accumulation of costs and penalties while also freeing up valuable time for the Community Legal Centres and Victoria Legal Aid.

FineFixer provides a free and fast way for anyone with a fine to understand their options and take action.

The website works by asking a series of simple questions to help a user work out what to do about their fine and then provides them with the tools to take action.