

Media Release

Tuesday 16 May 2017

Pro Bono support crucial for Community Legal Centres

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC) today acknowledged National Pro Bono Day and paid particular tribute to the pro bono law firms across Australia that provide significant contributions and support to Community Legal Centres (CLCs) every day.

The National CLC Census, conducted by NACLC annually, showed that in 2014-15, pro bono partners contributed over 51,896 hours of assistance to 69 CLCs across Australia.

“Pro bono partners provide vital assistance to CLCs and the people we help across a whole range of areas of law including employment, migration, discrimination and administrative law” said Nassim Arrage, Chief Executive Officer of NACLC

“There are amazing examples of pro bono partners working with CLCs to run advice clinics, provide advice and representation to clients, place secondee lawyers, provide training and develop law reform submissions” he added.

“In addition to this important work, we also welcome the support shown for the sector by pro bono firms and the legal profession in the face of a 30% funding cut, which was reversed in the recent Federal Budget. We have no doubt that the support of the profession, including two open letters, as well as ongoing advocacy contributed to the Government’s decision to reverse the funding cliff” he said.

“Importantly and as recognised by firms themselves, pro bono support cannot be a substitute for government-funded legal assistance services including CLCs” he added.

“We look forward to continuing to work with our pro bono partners across Australia to increase the capacity of CLCs and to ensure people get access to the legal help they need, even when they can’t afford it” he concluded.

To arrange an interview or for more information please contact:

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Background

For a snapshot of relationships between CLCs and pro bono firms, see for example: *‘Working Collaboratively: Community Legal Centres and Pro Bono Partnerships’*

http://www.nacлк.org.au/resources/NACLC_probono_WEB.pdf

For the open letters from pro bono firms in support of CLCs facing funding cuts, see:

http://www.nacлк.org.au/cb_pages/news/OpenletterfromProBonoPracticesinAustralianLawfirms.php

http://www.nacлк.org.au/cb_pages/news/MediaReleaseStronglegalprofessionsupportforCommunityLegalCentresinfaceoffundingcliff.php

NACLC and CLA acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands across Australia and particularly the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation, traditional owners of the land on which the NACLC office is situated. We pay deep respect to Elders past and present.