



MEDIA RELEASE

2 December 2014

Significant concern over Queensland Government's plans to stop Community Legal Centres undertaking law reform work

The National Association of Community Legal Centres Inc (NACLC) is extremely concerned about the Queensland Government's plans to amend section 289 of the *Legal Profession Act 2007* (Qld) to prevent Community Legal Centres using state government funding to undertake preventative law reform work. The proposed amendments are provided for under the *Justice and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2014* (Qld) introduced into Parliament last week.

"A move to stop Community Legal Centres (CLCs) from undertaking preventative law reform work is contrary to the findings of reviews such as the Draft Productivity Commission Report on Access to Justice Arrangements which recognised that advocacy and law reform are a vital component of the work of CLCs and an efficient way to use limited taxpayer dollars" said Michael Smith, NACLC National Convenor.

"At a time where budgets are tight and funding cuts are already starting to have an impact on the work CLCs are able to do, it is concerning that the Queensland Government would try and introduce changes that would stop centres from undertaking work that actually saves money in the long run," said Mr Smith.

"NACLC strongly urges the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee, to which the Bill has been referred for review, and the Queensland Parliament to reject the proposed amendments" concluded Mr Smith.

CLCs have a long and successful history of advocating for systemic improvements through policy and law reform in Queensland, including through:

- establishment of the Residential Tenancies Authority and *Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation Act 2008* (Qld)
- the introduction of the *Domestic Violence (Family Protection) Act 1989* (Qld)
- changes to the *Coroners Act 2003* (Qld), to allow Coroners to investigate systemic issues, including the requirement that any death in an institution be investigated, and
- ending mandatory use of long-term solitary confinement in prisons.

Ends

For further information or to arrange an interview contact National Convenor Michael Smith
0421 437 883

NACLC acknowledges 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.