



STATEMENT

2 August 2018

Peak Body Welcomes NSW Government Support for Community Legal Sector

The National Association of Community Legal Centres (NACLC), the peak body for Community Legal Centres across Australia, has welcomed the announcements made by the NSW Government yesterday in response to the Final Report of the Cameron Review of NSW Community Legal Centre Services.

The announcements acknowledge the vital and unique work of the community legal sector in NSW and include increased funding and support for the sector.

“Community legal centres are independent community-based organisations that provide free legal and related help to people when they need it most. They are a central part of communities across NSW and Australia” said Nassim Arrage, Chief Executive Officer of NACLC.

“Yesterday the NSW Government clearly acknowledged the vital role of community legal centres in providing essential services to thousands of people every year and committed to supporting the sector”.

“The recommendations made in the Report, and the Government’s acceptance of those recommendations, set a high bar for the Commonwealth and other State and Territory Governments to follow”.

“This Report is a timely one given the current review of the National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, the main mechanism for Commonwealth funding of community legal centres. The NSW Government’s recognition of the work and value of community legal centres; the need for increased funding and funding certainty; and the broader benefits of legal assistance services are all instructive”.

“Community legal centres across Australia undertake vital systemic law reform and advocacy. Our centres can identify trends and the systemic impact of unfair laws through our work with everyday people across Australia and translate that into advocacy for fairer laws and systems”

“Given the current restriction under the NPA on the use of Commonwealth funding to undertake this vital systemic law reform and advocacy, we also hope that this Report and the NSW Government’s support, as well as strong statements from bodies like the Productivity Commission, will encourage re-evaluation on this restriction moving forward” Mr Arrage concluded.

NACLC welcomes in particular:

- A general expansion of existing NSW state funding for community legal centres to almost \$12 million per year
- Additional funding of \$15.6 million over four years to implement the recommendations of the Review, including funding to Community Legal Centres NSW to support the sector, and developing an evidence base for future funding allocations with the Law & Justice Foundation of NSW

- Provision of funding certainty, through introduction of a minimum three-year funding cycle for community legal centres
- Support for community legal centres to provide their current broad range of legal assistance services, including direct service delivery and strategic law reform and advocacy, and
- Government investment in the development of an outcomes measurement framework and the removal of unnecessary duplication in reporting.

The Final Report is available here:

https://www.justice.nsw.gov.au/justicepolicy/Pages/lpclrd/lpclrd_consultation/community-legal-centre-services-review.aspx

The Media Release issued by Community Legal Centres NSW (a member of NACLC), is available here:

http://www.clcnsw.org.au/cb_pages/news/NSWgovernmentsupportscommunityjustice.php

For more information please contact:

Nassim Arrage, CEO, NACLC, 0408 092 256

Amanda Alford, Director Policy and Advocacy, NACLC, 0421 028 645

Mark Riboldi, Advocacy and Communications Manager, Community Legal Centres NSW, 0433 753 376