

Impact of \$50,000 funding cut in both 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 Women's Legal Centre (ACT & Region)

The Centre will lose \$50,000 in Federal Government funding in 2015-16 and again in 2016-17. See [here](#) and [here](#) for examples of media coverage containing further information about the cuts. It is vital to consider the impact this cut will have on the Centre's front-line legal services. The Centre currently employs a part-time Solicitor who costs the Centre \$ 50,000 p/a in wages (+\$7,000 in on-costs). This Solicitor works 45 hours per fortnight, or 1,170 hours per annum. She also supervises a significant amount of work by pro bono lawyers.

In 2013-14, this solicitor undertook:

- **535 Advice Activities**
- **30 Cases** (at approx 20 hours per case = 600 hours of casework/representation)

In addition, this solicitor supervised approximately **600 hours** of advice and case work undertaken by pro bono lawyers who volunteer their services to the Centre.

Firm 1: Bradley Allen Love: (4 hours of interview time x 50 weeks) + (200 hours casework and appearance work for WLC outside of client interview) = 400 hours.

Firm 2: Clayton Utz: 13 cases x 15 hours per case = 195 hours.

We are also in negotiations with a third employment and discrimination firm about a regular commitment of pro bono time.

If we are unable to find an alternate source of funding to meet the \$100,000 gap over two years (2015-2017), the Centre's front line services will be impacted by the loss of approximately:

2340 hours of in-house solicitor time

+ 1200 hours of pro bono legal advice and case work

3540 hours of legal work

Comparative costing of this work being done in the private sector

In the private sector, the charge-out rate of our Women's Legal Centre solicitor, who has more than 20 years experience, would be approximately \$500 per hour. The loss of 2340 hours of in-house solicitor time over the two year period would be: 2340hrs x \$500 = \$1,170,000. This could be discounted by the assumption that in private practice, only approximately two-thirds of her hours would be 'billable' hours. This would bring the value of her work down to: 1560 hours x \$500 = **\$780,000**.

Assuming that our pro bono solicitors vary in their years of practice experience, an average charge-out rate may be \$350 per hour. The loss of 1200 hours of pro-bono solicitor time: 1200 x \$350 = **\$420,000**.

This means that the total 'cost' of lost front-line services over two years, if these services were being delivered by the private profession, is: **\$780,000 + \$420,000 = \$1,200,000**.