

Federal Budget 2019-2020
Brief Overview of Measures Relating to Community Legal Centres

- **Funding certainty** for community legal centres through the provision of funding over the forward estimates (through until 30 June 2022)
- **Increases to community legal centre funding** over the forward estimates of \$7.25 million on 19-20 figures:
 - (Existing NPA funding for 19-20 \$50.07 million including \$5.83 million SACS/ERO)
 - 20-21: \$51.89 million (extra \$1.82 million from 19-20 figure)
 - 21-22: \$52.7 million (extra \$2 mill from 19-20 figure)
 - 22-23: \$53.5 million (extra \$3.43 million from 19-20 figure)
 - No allocation to specific states and territories yet as the Government has indicated that the Funding Allocation Models will be updated after July 2019.
- **SACS/ERO** had been paid under the existing NPA as separate figure. In a welcome move the amount of SACS/ERO funding available from 21-22 will be incorporated into baseline funding.
- Creation of a **Single National Mechanism for Commonwealth Legal Assistance**, a unified administrative mechanism that provides guaranteed and quarantined funding to Legal Aid Commissions, Community Legal Centres and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services via State and Territory Governments.
- Funding under the National Mechanism will be \$1.2 billion over three years from 2020-21, however it is subject to negotiations with State and Territory Governments. It will be established under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Federal Financial Relations.
- The Single National Mechanism will roll in a range of funding from outside the existing NPA (including for example, funding for the Domestic Violence Units and Health Justice Partnerships, Expensive Criminal Cases Fund, Family Advocacy and Support Services) to streamline funding arrangements and reduce reporting burden on the sector.
- Increased funding for **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services** (reversal of their scheduled funding cuts and provision of SACS/ERO funding moving forward and **Legal Aid Commissions**)
- Welcome \$30.5 million (\$10 million per year for 3 years indexed) **additional funding for legal assistance services** broadly which has not yet been allocated and will be used to support the sector (for example around collaborative service planning).

Areas for concern:

- Proposal to end the stand-alone Indigenous Legal Assistance Programme and roll ATSILS into the Single National Mechanism.
- No additional funding for NACLC or peak bodies
- No additional core funding for FVPLS (which have funding under the IAS until 30 June next year).

Measures we are seeking clarity on that may impact the sector include:

- Funding for the provision of community legal services – legal advice service supporting the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.