



Queensland Association of Independent Legal Services Inc

3 June 2015

Senator the Hon George Brandis QC
Attorney-General
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: senator.brandis@aph.gov.au

Dear Attorney-General,

Federal funding cuts to community legal centres

We write to express our concerns about the 2015 Budget announcement that Commonwealth funding to community legal centres will be cut by 23% from 1 July 2017.

Queensland's community and social services support vulnerable Queenslanders, including people with disability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with experiences of family and domestic violence, people experiencing homelessness, vulnerable young people, older Queenslanders, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, people with mental health issues, people with drug or alcohol problems and many other vulnerable groups. Evidence shows that these people are more likely to have legal problems that cause or contribute to other social issues, or that result from their vulnerability or disadvantage, and may not understand the legal dimensions of these problems.

We value the important role of legal assistance services, especially community legal centres.

Community legal centres provide vital legal services for women and children seeking protection from family violence, disadvantaged people with family law issues, housing problems, access to the right Centrelink payments, credit and debt issues, and workplace mistreatment. If it wasn't for these important government funded services, many of these people would be unable to access legal help.

Any cuts to federal funding for community legal centres could have a profound impact on the individuals that we work with, and their families and communities.

We call on the Federal Government to maintain sustainable funding for community legal centres, and for the important work of all of Queensland's community and social services.

Yours sincerely,

James Farrell OAM
QAILS Director

cc Hon. Yvette D'Ath MP, Queensland Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

CO-SIGNATORIES

Lindy Edwards – Coordinator, Sera's Women's Shelter Inc

Rowan Silva – Principal, Wettenhall Silva Solicitors

Daemon Singer - Secretary – Queensland Council for Civil Liberties and Treasurer,
Electronic Frontiers Australia

Ed Nixon – Training and Business Manager - Training and Quality Systems, Volunteering
Queensland Inc

Debra Cottrell - Chief Executive Officer, Carers Queensland

Sara Harrup - Chief Executive Officer - 139 Club Inc

Carol Ronken - Research Manager, Bravehearts

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt – Chair - Social Responsibilities Committee, Anglican Church
Southern Queensland

Anna Moynihan – Director – Strategy, UnitingCare Queensland

Siyavash Doostkhah - Director, Youth Affairs Network of Queensland

Carol Birrell – Manager – Homelessness Services – Women and Families, Anglicare South
Queensland

Raymond Ferguson - State Secretary and Shelly Stone - Editor & Research Officer,
Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League Qld Inc.

Sandy Paton – President, Capricorn Community Development Association

Simon Clowes - Head of Campus, Albert Park Flexible Learning Centre

Rebecca MacBean, CEO, Qld Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies

Amanda Tilse – Manager, Adolescent Drug & Alcohol Withdrawal Service (ADAWS) - Mater
Young Adult Health Centre

Pamela Doherty - Education and training coordinator, Children by Choice

Linda Cebulski – Stream 4 Program Manager, Sarina Russo Group

Emile McPhee - Executive Director, Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Intersex Legal Service Inc.