

Feds claim funds have doubled for CQ Legal Aid since 2010



Amber Hooker | 2nd Mar 2017 7:32 PM



(Back L-R) Lauren Farrelly (Rees Jones & CQCLC), James Fisher (South Geldard), Charles Shepherd (South Geldard), Peter Duffield (Duffield & Assoc Solicitors), Paul Zapata (Maurice Blackburn), Josh Fox (FoxLaw), Brian McGowran (McGowran Lawyers), Anthony Marinac (barrister), Wayne Howard (KCH), Ross McLellan (Grant & Simpson) with (front row L-R) Carla Melbourne (Maurice Blackburn), Lauren Gabriel (Rees Jones), Flora Wellington (My Will Qld & CQCLC), Justice McMeekin (Supreme Court Judge), Fay Tzoutzias (CQCLC), Stephanie Nicholas (Legal Aid Qld), Emma Kime (Rees Jones), Melissa Meyers (Maurice Blackburn), Stephanie Mansell (Legal Aid Qld). Photo Amber Hooker / CQ News

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KEPPEL MP Brittany Lauga has accused the Federal Government of slashing funds to one of the most used services in Central Queensland.

Ms Lauga yesterday called on LNP Federal Member Michelle Landry and Federal LNP Minister Matt Canavan to stand up for the Central Queensland Community Legal Centre and stop Prime Minister Turnbull cutting funding.

"Staff in my office regularly direct people to this Legal Centre which offers a wide range of services free to those who are unable to afford legal counsel," Ms Lauga said.

"But all this is in jeopardy now thanks to the Turnbull Government cutting \$2 million from these vital community legal services which help vulnerable people across Keppel seek justice.

"These funding cuts could force the CQ Community Legal Centre to reduce its services, close branch offices and telephone advice lines, and sack staff," Mrs Lauga said.

A response to the matter from a spokesperson from Attorney General Senator George Brandis' office stated "even in a resource constrained environment, the Australian Government is providing over \$1.6 billion for legal aid, community legal centres and Indigenous legal assistance between 2015 and 2020."

"In addition, the Government has provided \$45 million for frontline legal assistance services as part of its \$200 million investment to provide services and reduce violence against women and children. \$16.5 million of this is going directly to community legal centres," the spokesperson said.

"This amount exceeds the savings measures that were applied in the 2013 MYEFO savings.

"Commonwealth funding for the Central Queensland Community Legal Centre has increased by almost 50 per cent since 2010."

"When in Government, the Labor Party through then Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus allocated an amount of funding but decided it would expire on 30 June 2017."

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