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Qld legal centres increasingly self-generate funds

by [Sol Dolor](#) | 13 Sep 2017

Queensland's community legal centres have stepped up efforts to self-generate funds in light of budget constraints, a new report revealed.

According to the latest census of the National Association of Community Legal, 19% of the state's community legal centres were receiving funding from philanthropic sources, while 31% were fundraising or receiving sponsorship to provide services.

"The battle for funding which took place last year showed us we had to make increased efforts to attract funds through events, donation drives and partnerships with philanthropic organisations," said James Farrell, director of Queensland Community Legal Centres. "The census results also showed that each year, Queensland's community legal centres turned away over 55,000

people. Vulnerable Queenslanders are missing out on the legal help they needed and holding sausage sizzles isn't ever going to address this unmet need."

The rise in sourcing of funds has led three of 28 centres to employ specialist fundraising staff and two to recruit volunteer fundraising staff.

Queensland Community Legal Centres also spent an "extraordinary number of hours" to raise funds. The 28

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centres surveyed spend 453 hours every week on unrelated legal activities, which includes grant applications and fundraising, the census found.

Farrell said skimping on funding at the onset may be costing the government more.

"Ideally we would like the government to deliver on the Productivity Commission recommendation of an additional \$200m," he said. "When people are unable to access legal help, they end up costing taxpayers more as they tried to navigate the legal system alone or have problems that escalate, eventually needing more help from other government services. The amount of time Queensland centres are spending on funding-related activities means they have less time available to provide legal assistance to clients."

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