

Community Legal Centres helping themselves to help others

Recently published results from the National Association of Community Legal Centres census showed an increase effort by Queensland community legal centres to self-generate funds in 2015/16.

The report showed that nineteen per cent of Queensland based community legal centres were receiving funding from philanthropic sources and thirty-one per cent were fundraising or receiving sponsorship to provide their services. Three of the twenty-eight centres surveyed had employed specialist fundraising staff and two had recruited volunteers to undertake this work.

The census revealed the extraordinary number of hours spent by Queensland Community Legal Centres on seeking funding. In total, twenty-eight community legal centres spent 453 hours every week on unrelated legal activities, including grant applications and fundraising.

James Farrell, Director of Community Legal Centres commented, '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.'

"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. '

'Ideally we would like the government to deliver on the Productivity Commission recommendation of an additional \$200 million. 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," said Mr Farrell.

"The amount of time Queensland centres are spending on funding-related activities means they have less time available to provide legal assistance to clients" concluded Mr Farrell.

Ends

NOTES:

1. **Community Legal Centres Queensland Inc** (formerly QAILS) is the state-wide peak body representing community legal centres in Queensland. Queensland community legal centres have 40 years of service delivery experience providing free information, advice and referral, casework and representation to the community. www.communitylegalqld.org.au
2. The full census report is available on NACLC's website [here](#).

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