

Palaszczuk Government allocates more funding for local community legal services

Local MPs have welcomed the allocation of an additional \$4.796 million in funding for Queensland Community Legal Centres, including Encircle Ltd in Lawnton.

Member for Kallangur, Shane King MP said Pine Rivers Community Legal Centre would receive an additional \$420,000 from 2017 to 2020.

"This funding will go towards supporting legal services that assist with family law and family violence."

"We know that these are two areas of law where demand for service is rapidly growing, especially in the community legal sector" he said.

Member for Pine Rivers, Nikki Boyd MP said the funding would provide greater services in the Moreton Bay region.

Ms Boyd said that she had fought for this funding to be reinstated, petitioning Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Federal Member for Dickson Peter Dutton calling on the Federal Government to reinstate the \$2 million in funding that had been cut to Queensland Community Legal Centres.

"The Pine Rivers Community Legal Centre provides an absolutely vital domestic violence duty lawyer service for aggrieved locals at the Pine Rivers Magistrates Court," Ms Boyd said.

"The whole team of paid and volunteer solicitors at the Pine Rivers service do a tremendous job, in often very difficult circumstances."

"This additional funding means that these services now have the certainty they need to plan for future service delivery and support."

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice Yvette D'Ath MP said the additional funding would support 10 organisations from 2017 to 2020.

"This funding will be directed to community legal services based across Queensland, including Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Mackay, Cairns and Townsville.

"I congratulate the successful applicants and thank all community legal centres who are on the frontline in supporting victims and vulnerable people in our communities."

Mrs D'Ath said the new funding would complement the interim funding provided by the Queensland Government to 22 organisations impacted by the delay in funding from the Commonwealth Government earlier this year.

"We are pleased the Federal Government has finally followed through on this funding and has provided certainty to Queensland Community Legal Centres.

“There were concerns that some Queensland Community Legal Centres would experience funding cuts because the Federal Government was initially going to slash funding to Queensland.

“Thanks to strong campaigning by Palaszczuk Government and CLCs across Queensland, at the 11th hour the Federal Government announced it would reverse its planned cuts. The Palaszczuk Government then stepped in and provided interim funding to Community Legal Centres to ensure there were no funding shortfalls while the Commonwealth got their act together.

“I am pleased that more than \$2.3 million of this total funding allocated has gone directly to reverse the reduced funding for core services over 2017-20.

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“Altogether, this will mean the community legal organisations will receive close to \$60.4 million of combined State and Federal funding to deliver services until 2020.”

As part of this announcement Mrs D'Ath said a further funding of \$790,000 over 2017-20 had been allocated for the Women's Legal Service helpline over the same period.

“The Women's Legal Service is an important part of Queensland's response to domestic and family violence,” Mrs D'Ath said.

“Our Government provided the initial funding for the Women's Legal Service to trial the hotline, and we are pleased to provide this additional funding to meet demand.” *