



22 May 2020

Funding for Pine Rivers Community Legal Service

Pine Rivers Community Legal Service welcomed the Queensland Attorney General, Yvette D'Ath's announcement on Tuesday that \$3.6 million has been allocated to their community legal service for the 2020-2025 period.

The certainty of five-year funding will ensure that Pine Rivers Community Legal Service can continue to provide free legal services to the people of the greater North Brisbane and Moreton Bay region and surrounding areas.

The five-year funding is essential as the COVID-19 health crisis has meant that there has been an increase in the number of people needing to access legal help, particularly concerning family law and domestic and family violence issues.

Louise Skidmore, Principal Solicitor, Pine Rivers Community Legal Service said, 'We have been providing legal services in the region for over 30 years, and I've been at the service for over ten years. Never before have we had people contacting us with such high levels of stress and anxiety as they face their legal issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. The funding will go part way to meeting the needs of these people but will fall short of addressing the increased need we see for legal advice.'

'Unfortunately, our request for additional funding to increase the range and type of services provided was not successful. We are in the process of adjusting and restructuring how we provide our services to meet both the demand for service and the requirements of a safe work place - as we often need to work together with our clients face to face for better results.'

'We know that when someone doesn't receive the legal help they need in a prompt, professional and holistic manner, associated social and legal issues often worsen. Our staff and volunteers see the social impacts of the struggle to access legal advice.'

The service provides generalist community legal advice and support, responding to needs in the region. It also provides a comprehensive service for people who are self-representing in family law. The centre ensures that the most disadvantaged in the community can access support to finalise their court documents. The Community Family Mediation service works collaboratively with the legal service to encourage ease of access to mediation and family dispute resolution to try to end family disputes sooner.

Ends

NOTES:

Community Legal Centres Queensland is the state-wide peak body representing community legal centres in Queensland. www.communitylegalqld.org.au

MEDIA CONTACT:

Catherine Baker, Communications Manager, Community Legal Centres Queensland
Email: Communications@communitylegalqld.org.au / Phone: (07) 3392 0092 / 0432 105 415

Pine Rivers Community Legal Service is part of Encircle Ltd ABN 87944092271.
Email: legal@encircle.org.au Phone (07) 3881 3500