



Community Legal Centres Queensland conference 2024

May 2024

The budget wasn't all bad news

We've been very critical of government, for good reason, however:

- There will be a new NLAP and it is currently being negotiated
- It will be informed by an excellent review, which will call for greater investment in CLCs by the Commonwealth and the states/territories
- We have an AG who understands and is committed to CLCs (who says he's confident)
- The budget recognition of poor indexation and pay parity is groundbreaking
- There is a chance that funding (and more of it) could be delivered via MYEFO



But we do have a timing problem

- What will it take for the state government to give you new contracts?
- Centres with big surpluses or reserves, or with multiple funding streams, will feel more secure

When it comes to the new NLAP, what needs fixing?

Money, money, money!

- We only get 14% of a pot that is way too small
- States and territories aren't compelled to contribute
- We want all legal assistance providers to have more and no legal assistance provider should get less. We should get a bigger share of the more, but not at the expense of NATSILS or FVPLSs.
- Governments love cost-shifting, so if the Commonwealth gives more, what's to stop the states/territories giving less?
- Funding security means different things to different states/territories

The architecture needs fixing

- We are potentially subservient to Legal Aid Commissions
- The Commonwealth gives most of the money but the states control distribution – this is likely to disadvantage centres working in Commonwealth areas of law (like immigration and social security) and lets the states off the hook
- The Commonwealth takes no interest in our work



There are some legacy issues about which centres don't agree

- Some centres get NLAP funding, some don't; this can't be fixed in a zero-growth environment
- Centres get funding from other departments and via AGD streams outside of NLAP; not everyone wants to share
- There is a prevailing view, but not entirely consensus, on tenders



We're putting ourselves on the hook for performance

- Money – more and fairer funding; up by 50%
- Data – centres can better access and use their data, and 50% more centres do impact measurement
- Advocacy – our advocacy is heard and funded by government, and more effective
- Networking – centres are better connected and collaborate more

