



Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**


**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2016

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

**Budget, Access to Justice**

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (2.28 pm): The Palaszczuk government is committed to providing accessible and effective justice—providing the support and courts system Queenslanders deserve. This budget will see the largest funding injection to the courts and justice system in more than a decade. This budget provides funding certainty for Queensland's legal assistance sector. Until now, funds from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund, LPITAF, and the Queensland government Consolidated Fund have been used for the delivery of these services. However, the revenue from LPITAF has been reducing over a number of years and can no longer meet these funding commitments.

In recognition of the vulnerability of that funding model, this government has moved to provide certainty and sustainability for these important services. As announced by the Treasurer yesterday, on 1 July 2016 we will commence implementing a long-term funding model. Funding of \$166.2 million over five years will be provided with ongoing funding of \$40.6 million per annum. In addition to providing that essential funding certainty, this government also recognised that Queensland legal aid funding was reducing in real terms.

We have delivered on our election commitment to review the available funding for LAQ with a view to increasing over time the funding provided for state funded legal assistance services to bring it in line with the national average. Legal Aid Queensland has been provided with increased funding of \$32.4 million over four years, with an ongoing funding increase of \$13 million per annum. This funding will enable Legal Aid to deliver vital domestic and family violence and child protection services and continue providing legal assistance for farmers experiencing significant financial hardship. It will also enable Legal Aid Queensland to respond to more of the general unmet legal need and facilitate crucial annual indexation on the fees Legal Aid Queensland pays to 300 preferred suppliers across the state.

This is the work of a government genuinely committed to improving access to justice for all Queenslanders and to an efficient and independent justice system and a government that is willing to work with the profession to deliver it. An amount of \$20 million over two years has been allocated to ensure that Queensland courts and tribunals have the resources they need to effectively deal with the workload issues. It is expected that these measures will assist with the pressure on our courts and accessibility to justice for Queenslanders and assist in effective and timely outcomes for practitioners and clients alike.

The justice system is also rolling out other crucial initiatives. As part of the government's \$200 million investment package to boost domestic and family violence services, the department has also received funding for the continuation of the Southport pilot specialist domestic and family violence court and independent evaluation til 30 June 2017 and \$13.6 million over four years commencing in 2017-18 to roll out specialist domestic and family violence courts to a number of other locations which

were based on the Southport DV court evaluation. There is \$11 million over the next four years to build capacity in community justice groups in 18 discrete Indigenous locations, \$300,000 over three years to fund the Women's Legal Service Helpline and \$700,000 over the next yours for the professional development of magistrates so they can better deal with domestic and family violence matters.

These initiatives have been warmly welcomed by the community legal sector, the domestic violence sector, the Queensland Law Society and Legal Aid Queensland. It is a sign of this government's leadership in this field and our commitment to provide a fair, accessible, effective justice system for the Queensland community.