

Question on Notice

No. 156

Asked on 9 March 2021

MR J MADDEN ASKED THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR JUSTICE, MINISTER FOR WOMEN AND MINISTER FOR THE PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE (HON S FENTIMAN) –

QUESTION:

With reference to vital services of Queensland Community Legal Centres which are funded pursuant to the National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement between the State and Federal Governments, who share the funding equally— Will the Attorney-General outline the current funding arrangements and any conditions that may apply?

ANSWER:

As many members in the House would be aware Community Legal Centres (CLCs) provide access to legal services for some of Queensland's most vulnerable and disadvantaged, providing them to with free legal support, information and or a referral to an organisation that can assist them.

This Government recognises the enormous value of CLCs and the central role they play in the coordination and providing legal assistance services to ensure vulnerable community members can access justice.

CLCs work closely with Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) and the Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Legal Service (ATSILS) and many other non-government organisations to deliver these vital generalist and specialist services across Queensland.

On an almost daily basis I hear constituent's stories of their legal challenges and their thanks when they have received support from solicitors, volunteers and human services workers within CLCs across Queensland.

I am proud of the Queensland Government's commitment over the past decade to a steady increase in investment in legal assistance services delivered by CLCs and LAQ.

In 2019 the Palaszczuk Government was pleased to announce a move from 3-year to 5-year funding agreements to provide greater funding certainty for recipients. For 2020-25 Queensland CLCs have been allocated a total of \$151.831 million in State and Commonwealth funding.

The Palaszczuk Government has provided a record \$79.818 million or more than half of this funding.

The remaining \$72.013 million, has been allocated by the Commonwealth Government to the Queensland Government to administer for the CLCs. The majority of this Commonwealth funding, \$65.864 million, has been provided under the National Legal Assistance Partnership Agreement (the NLAP).

In addition, in 2020 the Commonwealth Government provided one-off funding of \$6.149 million under a separate Commonwealth Government COVID-19 Project Agreement, to help support CLC IT and service delivery short-term demands as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although the 2020-25 NLAP increased the Commonwealth's CLC funding from the former 2020-25 funding agreement, and the Commonwealth COVID-19 funding increased the overall Commonwealth funding in the short-term, the Commonwealth Government's funding for our CLCs unfortunately continues to lag behind the State's funding.