

## Collaborative Service Planning

Project plan: 2016

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### 1. BACKGROUND

Under the *National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services 2015-20* (the NPA), the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments will undertake collaborative service planning with the legal assistance sector (the sector) to coordinate and maximise the reach of services and to ensure that services are directed where they are most needed. By developing shared sector strategies and practical actions, collaborative service planning will deliver benefits for the sector and the vulnerable people who access legal assistance services.

Enhanced roles of state-wide, regional and specialist legal assistance forums in service system design will support an environment conducive to continuous improvement and client-focused services. Evidence and analysis of legal need will inform collaborative service planning discussions and facilitate sector feedback to the Queensland Government on priority service areas. This is timely in the context of the cuts to Commonwealth Community Legal Centre (CLC) funding in 2017-18 (\$2 million less per annum), which will reduce the number and types of services delivered to vulnerable Queenslanders.

### 2. MONITORING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Under the NPA, Queensland is required to conduct collaborative service planning meetings, twice per year at minimum, with representatives from: Legal Aid Queensland; CLCs; Indigenous legal assistance providers; and the Queensland and Commonwealth Governments. Service planning meetings may also include representatives from other legal or non-legal service providers or organisations.

Queensland is required to report annually to the Commonwealth on collaborative service planning. Progress against this project plan will be provided as part of this reporting.

### 3. LEGAL NEED

Legal problems are widespread in Australia and there is significant unmet legal need, which cannot be met within existing Commonwealth, state and territory funding levels. Many people experience multiple legal problems at the same time. If left unresolved, legal problems can escalate and trigger non-legal problems, such as health and social welfare issues. They can also impact adversely on a person's broader life circumstances and their ability to participate effectively in society.

Both the NPA and Queensland's legal assistance model (Queensland's model) acknowledge that there are finite resources available for legal assistance. They both include strategies designed to improve service delivery and better manage service demand. One of the key strategies is to ensure that available resources are directed in a way that addresses identified need and provides the most effective services for people who need legal help.

Commonwealth priority areas are defined in Schedule B the NPA (**Attachment 1**). The priority client groups (all vulnerable and disadvantaged groups) align with Queensland's model. Queensland's model identifies two of those groups as high priority vulnerable groups (i.e. groups that should be included in the focus of any projects or additional funding) in 2014-17: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; and people with mental health issues, intellectual disability, or cognitive impairment.

## 4. RESPONDING TO LEGAL NEED IN QUEENSLAND

### Queensland's legal assistance service system

The Queensland Government provides Queensland and Commonwealth funding to Legal Aid Queensland (LAQ) and community organisations (mostly CLCs) to deliver legal assistance services. The Commonwealth Government provides funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services (ATSILS) and Family Violence Prevention Legal Services (FVPLS) delivered in Queensland. The private sector contributes pro bono legal services and other in-kind services through partnerships with community organisations.

LAQ has a state-wide service delivery infrastructure, including: offices in Brisbane and 13 regional locations; a state-wide phone line; arrangements with 300 preferred suppliers (private law firms) across Queensland; and outreach services to rural, regional, and remote communities.

A network of 38 community organisations provide generalist and specialist legal assistance services across Queensland, including through a number of state-wide phone lines and outreach services to rural, regional, and remote communities. ATSILS and FVPLS provide complementary services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Queensland, including in rural, regional, and remote communities.

### Queensland's model

In 2013-14, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAG) implemented Queensland's model. The NPA aligns with Queensland's model. Both promote service delivery that is: targeted to identified areas of need for legal assistance services (based on evidence); maximised within available resources; efficient; effective; and complementary (not duplicating). They also have a strong focus on improving collaboration and coordination between legal services and with non-legal services to better identify legal problems and support holistic service delivery.

Community organisations have been working closely with DJAG over the past few years to implement strategies designed to improve service delivery. New collaborative arrangements, enhanced referral pathways, collocation with complementary services, and improved use of technology are being implemented where appropriate.

## 5. COLLABORATIVE SERVICE PLANNING

The *National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance 2015-20* (the Framework) guides legal assistance policy development, service delivery, and sector planning. It encourages a unified and coordinated approach by governments and the sector to enhance access to justice in Australia and help focus finite resources towards areas of greatest legal need.

The Framework aligns with the findings of the latest empirical research in Australia and overseas. The findings indicate that to most efficiently and effectively assist those with the most disproportionate amount of legal need, services should be increasingly client-focused, that is:

- **targeted** to reach those with the highest legal need and lowest capability;
- **joined up** with other services to address complex life problems;
- **timely** to minimise the impact of problems and maximise the utility of services; and
- **appropriate** to the needs and capabilities of users.

Collaborative service planning will be guided by these overarching principles. This project plan provides a **coordinated and collaborative framework** for undertaking collaborative service planning and includes:

- working together;
- planning for legal assistance services;
- building an evidence base;

- best practice in service design; and
- continuous improvement.

## **5.1 Working together**

The QLAF will play a central role in driving collaborative service planning under this framework (refer to **Attachment 2**). Practically, the QLAF will:

- implement and oversee collaborative service planning;
- endorse Queensland's evidence base;
- drive best practice in service design by:
  - establishing working groups and specialist legal assistance forums to inform best practice service delivery for priority client groups; and
  - ensuring that existing and new services are developed in a collaborative manner with other legal and non-legal services;
- drive continuous improvement by:
  - progressing current initiatives, including through assigning tasks to working groups and specialist legal assistance forums;
  - identifying new initiatives as current initiatives are implemented; and
  - supporting service providers to identify and adopt methodologies to better understand and measure the effectiveness of their services.
- oversee and enhance the roles of state-wide, regional and specialist legal assistance forums in service system design; and
- provide feedback to the Queensland Government on funding strategies based on evidence and best practice in service design.

The QLAF will work effectively by:

- meeting at least four times per year;
- considering and making decisions on matters out of session, as required;
- considering regular updates from working groups and specialist legal assistance forums on the progress of initiatives; and
- providing regular updates and making information available to all organisations that are represented on the QLAF.

The QLAF will review its terms of reference to reflect its enhanced role. It will also explore options to support its coordination.

## **5.2 Planning for legal assistance services**

Using evidence and analysis of legal need, collaborative service planning is required to consider, at minimum (Clause A9 in Schedule A of the NPA):

- the different locations of services delivered by LAQ, community organisations and Indigenous legal assistance providers in Queensland;
- the mix of legal assistance services available;
- strategies to achieve proportionate service responses – for example that, where practicable, services are proportionate to clients' legal needs and levels of capability;
- the coordination of community legal education at a State level; and
- the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery models.

It is widely recognised that providing holistic services for clients either directly or through effective referral will maximise resources. The Legal Australia-Wide Survey (LAW Survey) indicates that 10% of respondents accounted for 68% of the legal problems reported.

In this context and to progress collaborative service planning, the QLAF will focus on identified high priority vulnerable groups, while ensuring that all clients with multiple and clustered legal problems are assisted. Planning for legal assistance services will draw on the evidence base (refer to section 5.3) and best practice in service design (refer to section 5.4). This macro planning process will be guided by **Attachment 3**, noting that it is not always linear.

### **5.3 Building an evidence base**

Under the NPA, Queensland is required to use an evidence base to identify priority clients and the geographic locations in which people have the highest levels of legal need. This will enable Queensland to identify and analyse evidence of disadvantage, as a proxy for legal need, and target legal assistance services accordingly.

The Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales (LJF) *Collaborative Planning Resource – Jurisdictional Data* (CPR-JD) is intended to support the planning of legal assistance services by Australian jurisdictions. The CPR-JD brings together three sets of information relevant to making decisions about legal assistance provision:

- the geographic distribution of the Commonwealth's priority groups for services;
- the prevalence of experiencing legal problems for each priority group; and
- the geographic distribution of those most likely to be in need of legal assistance services for financial or other reasons.

Other information will also be relevant to service planning, which may include data on existing legal assistance services and their client base, private solicitors, other social services, crime, family violence, debt, accidents, natural disasters, business closures and other external factors that may increase demand for legal assistance. A summary of the LAW Survey findings are at **Attachment 4**.

In 2016, Queensland will build on the evidence and analysis of legal need provided by the LJF. This will include overlaying data on existing legal assistance services delivered by LAQ and community organisations. A working group will be established to guide this project. It will provide the updated evidence and analysis of legal need to the QLAF for endorsement by 30 June 2016 to inform: sector feedback on funding strategies for the allocation of community organisation funding for 2017-20; and local planning for legal assistance services.

### **5.4 Best practice in service design**

Understanding existing service provision, including service types, service accessibility, client profiles and integration with other non-legal services, informs best practice in service design.

The LJF *Collaborative Planning Resource – Service Planning* (CPR-SP) collates information that may assist collaborative service planning at jurisdictional, regional and local levels, as well as planning within individual legal assistance service organisations.

The CPR-SP provides useful information for designing appropriate legal services for specific priority demographic groups: 'who' priority clients are, 'what' types of services are appropriate to their legal needs and capabilities, and 'how' these services might be delivered.

Other information will also be relevant to developing best practice in service design, which may include other statistics and information relevant to the demand for legal assistance services and the best ways to address this demand.

During the term of the NPA, Queensland will build on the empirical research provided by the LJF, including to assist service providers to:

- understand the best practice principles that ensure service planning focuses on evidence and collaboration so that services are targeted, timely, appropriate, integrated and holistic; and
- adopt best practice approaches in delivering legal assistance services to client groups.

This will inform: planning for legal assistance services (refer to section 5.2); and continuous improvement (refer to section 5.5).

## **5.5 Continuous improvement**

Queensland will progressively identify and implement continuous improvement during the term of the NPA. The continuous improvement process will be driven by the QLAF and informed by Schedule A of the NPA (clause A10) and current Queensland priorities.

Continuous improvement includes:

- performance measurement;
- service coordination and accessibility;
- evaluation; and
- training and workforce development.

## **6. FUNDING FOR COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS**

For 2017-20, Queensland and Commonwealth funding will be allocated to community organisations through one tender (i.e. application) process. The funding will be allocated under Queensland's model, which involves the development of funding strategies that guide decision-making at a practical level to maximise the reach of services across Queensland.

Funding strategies are reviewed triennially to ensure that they remain responsive to community legal needs and continue to promote value for money. The 2014-17 funding strategies are:

1. LAQ and community organisations should continue to deliver complementary legal assistance services across Queensland;
2. the provision of general legal information and education to the broader community and 'self-help' type services for legally capable people need to be balanced with specialist services for specific vulnerable and disadvantaged groups;
3. generalist services should be, as much as practicable, accessible across Queensland; this should primarily be achieved by addressing geographical gaps based on evidence of need;
4. the need for development or enhancement of specialist services for vulnerable and disadvantaged groups will be identified through consideration of: empirical research on legal need (including high prevalence vulnerable groups and legal problems); current Queensland Government priorities (for example: new legislation); and increasing the reach of specialist services across Queensland; and
5. build on existing service delivery structure where possible and only fund the establishment of separate new services if necessary.

In the context of the cuts to Commonwealth CLC funding in 2017-18, the QLAF will:

- review the 2014-17 funding strategies;
- consider the updated evidence and analysis of legal need (refer to section 5.1);
- consider information about best practice service design as it comes to hand; and
- provide feedback to the Queensland Government on proposed 2017-20 funding strategies.

Indicative timeframes for the tender process are:

Activity	Timeframe
Delivery of the updated evidence and analysis of legal need	30 June 2016
QLAF endorsement of the updated evidence and analysis of legal need and provision of feedback to the Queensland Government on proposed 2017-20 funding strategies	Mid July 2016
LPITAF Committee consideration of 2017-20 funding strategies	31 July 2016
Attorney-General approval of 2017-20 funding strategies	31 August 2016
Provision of information to the sector about the tender process, including the evaluation criteria (2 weeks)	Early September 2016
Tender process (6 weeks)	September/October 2016
Notification of outcomes of the tender process (at the latest)	31 March 2017

## Schedule B

# Commonwealth priorities and eligibility principles

### NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

This schedule provides guidance on the prioritisation of legal assistance services delivered by legal aid commissions and community legal centres.

#### PRIORITY CLIENTS

- B1 The legal assistance priority client groups recognise people whose capability to resolve legal problems may be compromised by circumstances of vulnerability and/or disadvantage. People who fall within the priority client groups are more likely to experience legal problems, less likely to seek assistance and/or less able to access services for a range of reasons.
- B2 Legal assistance service providers should focus their services on people experiencing financial disadvantage.
- B3 Where appropriate, legal assistance service providers should also plan and target their services to people who fall within one or more of the priority client groups (in alphabetical order):
- (a) children and young people (up to 24 years);
  - (b) Indigenous Australians;
  - (c) older people (aged over 65 years);
  - (d) people experiencing, or at risk of, family violence;
  - (e) people experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness;
  - (f) people in custody and prisoners;
  - (g) people residing in rural or remote areas;
  - (h) people who are culturally and linguistically diverse;
  - (i) people with a disability or mental illness;
  - (j) people with low education levels; and
  - (k) single parents.
- B4 The list of priority client groups is for guidance only and is not exhaustive. Service providers are not excluded from assisting clients that fall outside these groups.

## COMMONWEALTH SERVICE PRIORITIES

B5 The use of Commonwealth funding provided under this Agreement by legal aid commissions and community legal centres should be broadly consistent with the principles and service priorities set out in this Schedule, where applicable.

### General principles

- B6 Commonwealth funding should be directed to the delivery of front-line services and focused on meeting the legal needs of priority clients.
- B7 Commonwealth funding should not be used to lobby governments or to engage in public campaigns. Lobbying does not include community legal education or where a legal assistance service provider makes a submission to a government or parliamentary body to provide factual information and/or advice with a focus on systemic issues affecting access to justice.
- B8 Legal assistance service providers should deliver timely intervention services to resolve clients' legal problems sooner, or prevent them from arising altogether.
- B9 Family or civil law disputes should be resolved through alternative dispute resolution processes rather than through litigation, where appropriate.
- B10 Legal assistance service providers should consider whether other services (legal as well as non-legal) may be relevant to a client's needs and make referrals to these services where appropriate. Suitable collaborative arrangements should be established for this purpose.

### Family law priorities

- B11 Family law services should focus on:
- (a) matters involving allegations of family violence;
  - (b) matters where the safety or welfare of children are at risk;
  - (c) matters involving complex issues about the living arrangements, relationships and financial support of children; and
  - (d) assisting people with property settlement matters if they are experiencing financial disadvantage or are at risk of homelessness.
- B12 For legal aid commissions, the representation of children in family law proceedings and family dispute resolution processes should also be a focus.

### Civil law priorities

- B13 Legal assistance service providers should focus on assisting people with civil law problems that are likely to have a significant adverse impact if not resolved. For example, where there are implications for a person's safety, health and wellbeing, access to government benefits and pensions, or homelessness status.
- B14 Key Commonwealth civil law areas are listed below (in alphabetical order):
- (a) bankruptcy matters;
  - (b) consumer law matters;
  - (c) employment matters;

- (d) extradition matters;
- (e) human rights and anti-discrimination matters;
- (f) insurance law matters;
- (g) migration matters; and
- (h) social security law matters (including matters relating to military entitlements and military compensation claims).

- B15 The list of Commonwealth civil law areas is for guidance only. Legal assistance service providers should consider how to best meet civil law need collectively (arising from Commonwealth or State laws), within available resources.
- B16 Legal assistance service providers should respond collectively to emerging civil law issues identified through service planning, such as providing legal help for victims of natural disasters.

### Commonwealth criminal law priorities

- B17 Commonwealth criminal law services should focus on:
- (a) matters where the defendant is a child;
  - (b) matters where the defendant is being charged with a criminal offence for which a sentence of imprisonment is likely to apply should the defendant be found guilty; and
  - (c) assisting persons being detained in custody.

## COMMONWEALTH ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES

- B18 This section sets out the Commonwealth's directions for assessing the financial eligibility of applicants for Commonwealth-funded representation services.
- B19 Legal assistance service providers should consider the financial status of prospective clients when providing representation services to ensure that intensive services are provided to financially disadvantaged clients.
- B20 Legal assistance service providers may seek client contributions to improve their financial sustainability and to fund additional front-line services.
- B21 Applicants should be exempt from legal aid commission means tests when seeking the merits review of decisions about eligibility for Commonwealth military entitlements or military compensation payments.
- B22 In assessing an applicant's eligibility, legal aid commissions should disregard any of a person's property that is subject to a restraining order or confiscation order under the *Proceeds of Crime Act 2002* (Cth) or is likely to be covered by such an order.

## **Legal aid commission means tests**

- B23 Legal aid commissions apply a means test to determine the financial eligibility of applicants. The key features of this means test are set out below.

### **Income test**

- B24 The income test will generally be satisfied where an applicant is in receipt of Centrelink benefits as their main source of income.
- B25 The test may also be satisfied if the applicant's income is below an eligibility threshold after deductions are made for income tax, housing costs and support provided to dependents. The Commonwealth's preference is for income thresholds to be referable to an established measure of disadvantage, such as the Henderson Poverty Line.
- B26 It is at the discretion of legal aid commissions to set thresholds for financial eligibility.

### **Assets test**

- B27 The assets test will generally be satisfied if the total value of an applicant's assets is below an eligibility threshold. Exemptions are made for allowable assets, which include an amount of equity in the applicant's principal place of residence, a motor vehicle, tools of the trade and household goods.
- B28 It is at the discretion of legal aid commissions to set the eligibility threshold and exemptions for allowable assets.

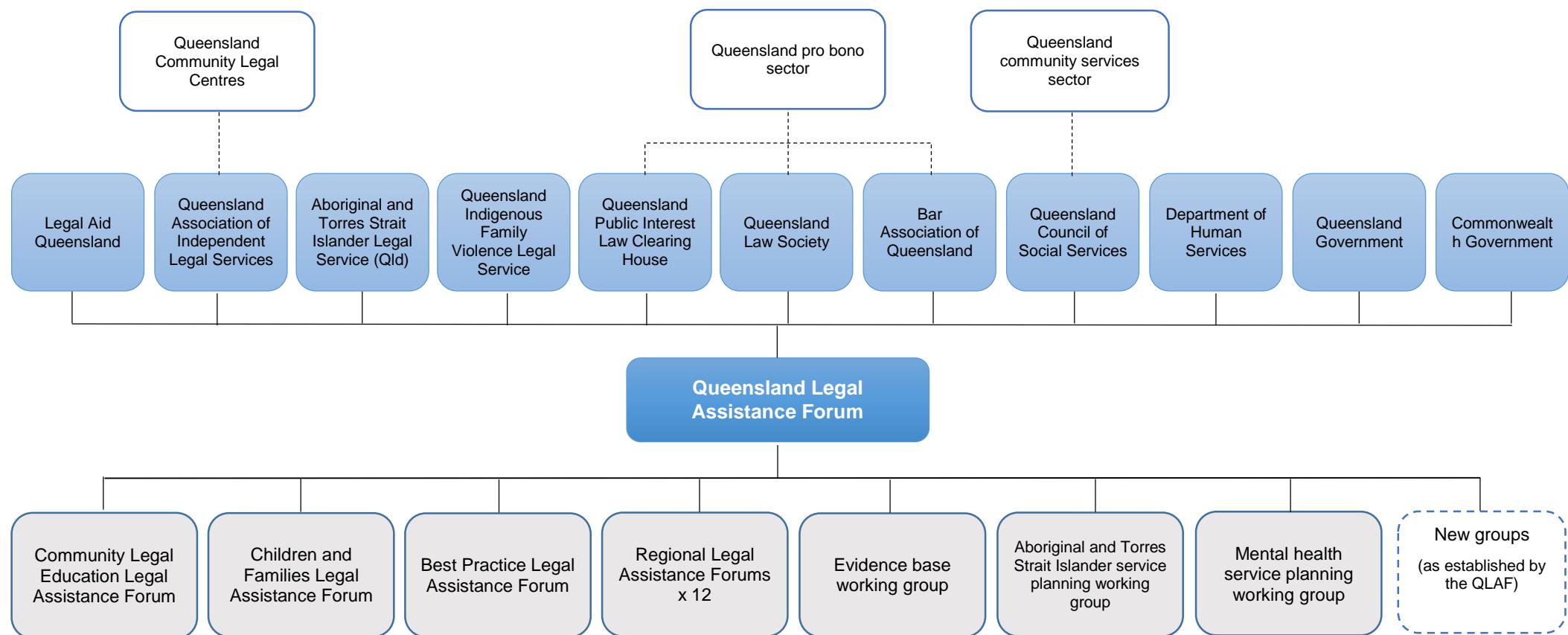
### **Client contributions**

- B29 Where an applicant's income or assets are above the eligibility threshold, legal aid may still be granted with contributions from the applicant based on their financial capacity and/or the estimated cost of the legal matter.

### **General discretion**

- B30 Legal aid commissions may exercise discretion in special circumstances to grant legal aid to a person who does not satisfy its means test.

## Attachment 2: Queensland's state-wide, regional and specialist legal assistance forums



## **Attachment 3: Collaborative planning for legal assistance services (macro and micro)**

Note: The process is not always linear.

### **Targeted services – People facing disadvantage**

Identified through the LAW Survey; SEIFA; demographic data; disadvantage measures; local environment such as service gaps and cultural factors; capability such as knowledge, competence and resources.



### **Timely services – Key transition points**

Where people go (e.g. hospitals, support services, shelters); and when (e.g. at life stages such as from care to independence or retirement).



### **Appropriate services – Mixture to match client needs**

Multifaceted service delivery models, including: information and referral; advice; task assistance; representation; community legal education; clinics; outreach; telecommunication; and multidisciplinary partnerships.



### **Collaborative services – Bridge workers and gatekeepers**

Working in collaboration with non-legal services, such as caseworkers and clinicians, to facilitate a holistic approach to addressing people's legal and other problems.



### **Best practice in service delivery**

Delivering targeted, timely, appropriate and collaborative services that are holistic, assertive and consistent.



### **Training**

Ensuring service providers are able to adopt best practice approaches in delivering specialist legal assistance services.



### **Evaluation**

Supporting continuous learning and improvement and understanding of client outcomes.



### **Client-focused and cost effective services**

## **Attachment 4:** Summary of the Legal Australia-Wide Survey findings

The following points represent some main findings of the Law Foundation NSW's Law Survey, Queensland.

### Findings on people experiencing a legal problem

- 23% of Queensland respondents experienced three or more legal problems within the 12-month reference period (pages xiv, 58-9).
- 10% of Queensland respondents accounted for 68% of the legal problems reported (pages xiv, 58-9).
- Average number of legal problems for Queensland respondents who experienced at least one legal problem was 2 (page 58).
- Half of respondents in each State and Territory (including Queensland) experienced a legal problem, which translates to an estimated 1,699,000 people aged 15 years or over in Queensland over a one-year period (page 153).
- LAW Survey may not have reached people living in households without landline telephone access, including many Indigenous households throughout Australia, particularly in remote areas and people experiencing homelessness (page 54).
- Potentially a large number of people that are failing to access justice as they are unaware that they have a legal problem. This problem could be resolved by:
  - a greater awareness of legal triage services and other useful first ports of call for legal information and advice; and
  - more systematic use of non-legal professionals as gateways to legal services (page 233).
- Non-legal workers are points of contact with professionals for people with legal problems and could encourage them to take initial steps towards legal resolutions (e.g. referral to legal service or provide basic legal information packages) (page 209).
- The report encouraged legal services to be sufficiently coordinated to deal with connected but disparate legal issues as holistic, client-focused approach to legal service provision were needed (page 211).
- The report also stated that better coordination of legal services with other human services avoids referrals fatigue (page 39 citing other research).
- One suggestion for a more intensive integration model is 'service hubs' that co-locate different legal services or both legal and non-legal services at a convenient entry point. In addition to facilitating referrals between agencies, service hubs can also involve more intensely integrated services by adopting a more client-focused or case management approach across services (page 213).

### Findings on those assisting people experiencing a legal problem

- Recognition rates for CLCs in Queensland were 33%, which was towards the lower end nationally (page 174).
- In Queensland, legal advisers were sourced via referrals through personal networks in 22% of cases and via referrals from professionals in 19% of cases (page 186).

### Rural, regional and remote issues

- 3.9% of Queensland respondents lived in remote areas, 42.5% lived in regional areas and 53.6% living in major cities (page 305).
- The findings did not reliable reflect greater legal need among people living in remote areas, including in regard to prevalence of legal problem and strategy chosen by respondents (pages 172, 183 and 232).
- Queensland respondents who consulted their main adviser in person reported travelling more than 20 Kilometres in 21% of cases, including more than 40 kilometres in 8% of cases (page 186).
- Whereas residents of remote and regional areas travelled more than 80 kilometres to consult their main adviser in 9.4% of cases, residents of major city areas travelled this distance in under 1% of cases (page 115).
  - Citing the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA; ABS 2006b), Queensland has some remote areas that are among the most disadvantaged areas in Australia (page 153).
  - Suggestions include outreach services in rural and regional areas to increase accessibility (page 206).
  - Where outreach services to disadvantaged people with complex needs were successful, they seemed to involve establishing:

- strong links with target communities and their support agencies;
  - location in places frequented by the target group;
  - marketing the service;
  - appropriate staffing and resourcing;
  - effective referral system with support agencies; and
  - appropriate monitoring and review. (page 208)
- The report was unable to draw definitive conclusions about the cost and effectiveness of video conferencing compared to in-person and telephone services as it may depend on:
  - whether other modes of legal service delivery already exist at a given location;
  - the relative timeliness, convenience and privacy offered by video conferencing compared to any existing legal services;
  - the quantity and reliability of the video conferencing technology adopted;
  - the extent to which video conferencing is supported by clients and workers.(page 207)
- Solutions cannot rely solely on expansion of telephone and internet services as many remote Indigenous households do not use a home landline. Disadvantaged people with complex legal problems, low literacy and poor communication skills may often require intensive, quality face-to-face advice and assistance services in order to achieve beneficial legal resolution. (page 208)

#### Other points and findings

- Housing type was one of the strongest predictors of the prevalence of multiple legal problems (page 167).
- Disadvantaged groups that are especially vulnerable to multiple legal problems also tend to have multiple non-legal needs, by virtue of their socioeconomic status (page xxiii).
- In Queensland, people living in disadvantaged housing had increased prevalence of legal problems overall and substantial legal problems, but not of multiple legal problems. They also had increased prevalence of problems from four problem groups: crime, employment, family and rights (page 167).
- Respondents who had lived in disadvantaged housing during the previous 12 months had:
  - odds of experiencing legal problems that were 1.5 times as high as those for other respondents (60.3% versus 49.6%) (page 68).
  - increased prevalence of substantial legal problems and multiple legal problems in most jurisdictions (page 226).
- People living in disadvantaged housing may require considerable support in order to achieve legal resolution (page 227).

#### General disability issues

- Disability is defined as “any long-term illness or disability that had already lasted, or was likely to last at least six months, and included a wide range of sensory, intellectual, learning, mental health, neurological and physical conditions.” (page 166).
- Respondents with a disability had odds of experiencing legal problems that were twice as high as those for other respondents (page 68).
- People with a disability in Queensland had increased prevalence of legal problems overall, substantial legal problems and multiple legal problems (including very high prevalence of legal problems from the health problem group) (page 166).
- Disability status was often one of the strongest significant predictors of prevalence (page 166).
- People with a disability were the disadvantaged group that most consistently had low odds of finalisation (page 193).

#### Mental health

- The report delves into mental health issues on only a few occasions as generally mental health issues are dealt with under the broad category of disability.
- Mental health problems tended to have considerable impacts on respondents (page 173).
- Legal problems related to mental health were experienced by only 0.6 per cent of respondents (page 59). However, anecdotally, mental health problems represented about 80% of people who had a disability, which the report identified as the largest area of legal need (Mulherin).

- Citing a report by Pleasance et al (2010) of respondents who had at least six problems, over 60 per cent had a mental illness (page 25).
- A report by Pleasance and Blamer (2009) found that people with a mental illness were especially likely to report stress-related ill health as a result of their legal problems and concluded that legal problems not only are associated with mental illness, but also can cause and exacerbate mental illness (page 28).
- Citing Balmer et al (2010), people with a mental illness were overrepresented among those who lacked legal knowledge, failed to obtain advice and suffered adverse consequences (page 28).