

# Call to Parties

## Community Legal Centres Queensland urges all political parties to commit to real action to support access to justice for all Queenslanders.

Community legal centres **need to be properly funded** to respond to people and communities experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage so that we can stop turning away more people than we help.

Community legal centres provide vital help for people dealing with domestic and family violence, those being affected by Queensland's housing crisis, or who are under severe financial strain due to the rising cost of living. These and many other **Queenslanders rely on our centres to give them free legal help** they can't find anywhere else.

Embedded in communities, community lawyers work with other social service professionals to identify and resolve complex and intersecting legal, social and financial issues. By investing in the community legal sector, the government alleviates pressure on other systems, such as the criminal legal, housing, and medical systems, and social services.

However, with our growing population and the increasing complexity and urgency of legal problems, that help is being put at risk by the failure of successive Governments to fund the true cost of the critical services we provide.

In the lead up to the Queensland State Election on 26 October, Community Legal Centres Queensland seeks commitments from both the Queensland Government and the State Opposition for our **key election priorities**:

1. **Increase funding for community legal centres across Queensland** so we can better meet the ever increasing demand for free legal services and support across the state.
2. Commit to rolling this year's **\$12.4 million** of additional Qld Government investment **to support the pay and conditions of community legal centre workers** into the next 5-year legal assistance partnership agreement, so we can keep our vital workforce into the future.
3. **Increase funding** for all Queensland community legal centres **to maintain dedicated domestic and family violence law capability and expertise** so that people can access the vital legal help they need wherever they live in Queensland. Frontline family law and family violence services make up the largest areas of work for many community legal centres in Queensland.
4. **Enhance access to justice for First Nations peoples** and support efforts to Close the Gap by investing in our First Nations community-controlled community legal centres in Queensland.
5. **Invest in youth services** that address the root causes of problematic behaviour in children, create a comprehensive support system for those under 14 in the youth justice system, and ensure robust support for children transitioning out of detention.

Prioritise investments that empower the community legal services sector, particularly First Nations community-based organisations, to effectively address the root causes of youth crime and ensure community safety across Queensland.

6. **Continue the establishment of a culture that upholds and respects human rights** throughout Queensland, including implementing all recommendations of the Independent Review of Qld's *Human Rights Act*.