



Senator Glenn Lazarus
Senator for Queensland
Leader of the Glenn Lazarus Team

27 June 2016

James Farrell
Director
Community Legal Centres Queensland
PO Box 119
Stones Corner Qld 4120

By email: Director@communitylegalqld.org.au

Dear Mr Farrell

Re: Policy outline

Thank you for your invitation to outline the Glenn Lazarus Team's policy concerning community legal centres in Queensland.

The Glenn Lazarus Team understands the importance of community legal centres (CLCs), as one of the four key free legal assistance providers in Australia. CLCs play a central role in combatting the current Australian domestic violence crisis as a front line service; provide free legal advice in areas such as family violence, family law, credit and debt, employment and housing; provide crucial early intervention to stop legal problems escalating; provide community legal education; and assist 216,000 people nationally last year, nearly 50,000 of whom were in Queensland.

Commitments in response to urgent legal assistance needs

The Glenn Lazarus Team is particularly concerned that last year 160,000 people were turned away from CLCs around Australia, including 80,000 Queenslanders.

In such an environment it is unacceptable that the Turnbull government has planned funding cuts that will directly limit access to legal help for Australians in need.

It is the policy of the Glenn Lazarus Team that:

1. Funding cuts to CLCs due to take effect from 1 July 2017 be halted as a matter of urgency;
2. We commit to increasing funding in line with the recommendations made by the Productivity Commission, including a minimum of \$14.4 million per year to CLCs; and
3. We remove restrictions on CLCs using Federal Government funding to undertake vital law reform and policy advocacy work.

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Supporting community legal centres and providing family violence help

The Glenn Lazarus Team believes that it is essential that funding to CLCs include long-term investment, particularly regarding Family Violence Prevention Legal Services and other legal assistance services.

If we as Australians wish to seriously combat family violence, we must respond to demand and allow CLCs to plan into the future with secure and reliable funding.

Safety First in Family Law five-step plan

The Glenn Lazarus Team would like to particularly acknowledge the hard work of Women's Legal Services Australia over the years. We endorse their Safety First in Family Law five-step plan as a well-researched and holistic response to the complex problem that is family violence.

Preventing and responding to legal problems experienced by people with disability

The Glenn Lazarus Team believes that we should be investing in education campaigns to prevent legal problems for people with disabilities by empowering those with disabilities and making it clear to the community at large that rights that must be respected.

The Glenn Lazarus Team acknowledges that disability advocacy is needed in a range of services. The needs of those with disabilities cannot be overlooked and groups such as Disability Law Queensland and the Australian Centre for Disability Law provide valuable access to justice.

Change the Record

The Glenn Lazarus Team acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system and the seriousness and frequency of ATSI deaths in custody.

We are particularly concerned with high rates of family violence and note that the Change the Record campaign highlights that ATSI women are 34 times more likely to be hospitalised as a result of family violence.

The Glenn Lazarus Team supports investment in early intervention, prevention and diversion strategies and looks forward to seeing government strategies developed in partnership with ATSI communities.

Yours sincerely



Senator Glenn Lazarus

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