



Research partnerships roundtable

Evaluation and Action Plan

Wednesday 1 June 2016



**Community
Legal Centres
Queensland**



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Executive Summary

There are great opportunities to build on relationships between community legal centres and researchers, to ensure meaningful access to justice across Australia.

Event evaluation

A research partnerships roundtable, co-hosted by the National Association of Community Legal Centres (**NACLC**) and Community Legal Centres Queensland, was held on 1 June 2016 in Brisbane. An evaluation of the event is provided at pages 4-6 of this report.

The Research Partnerships Roundtable brought together community legal centres with researchers and academics, to identify opportunities for collaboration and partnership in research projects.

Key points for future events:

- **Could be full-day events, with more time for informal networking**
- **Provision of a meeting space and catering by a law firm partner was useful, and appreciated**
- **Programming was appropriate, with a need for more Q&A**
- **Pre-event surveys, to prime conversations and identify common areas of interest, were effective**
- **Clearer intended outcomes should be developed before the event**
- **Community legal centres and researchers are certainly keen to work more closely, and these relationships should be fostered**

Corrs Chambers Westgarth hosted the event, and we received great help from student volunteers Gabrielle Countache, Rebecca Bennett, Susan Je, William Zhang and Theresa Yu. Financial support was provided by UQ's TC Beirne School of Law. We thank them for their support.

Action plan

In addition to a number of specific project opportunities discussed between participants, six key opportunities were identified, including:

1. Have another partnership roundtable
2. Have smaller conversations/meetings about specific research projects
3. Have smaller conversations about specific areas or issues with each other and other advocates and organisations
4. Develop a mailing list to share ideas and opportunities including smaller mailing lists specific to certain areas and agendas
5. Develop an online forum to share ideas and opportunities
6. Develop a research strategy or research agenda to support community legal centres' work

Participants were asked to provide feedback on these options in an online survey after the event. Each of these actions are discussed in more detail in pages 6-14 of this report.

Given the finite resources available (discussed at length at the roundtable), NACLC and Community Legal Centres Queensland suggest prioritising the following actions:

- **NACLC partnering with state/territory peak associations to hold more research roundtables across Australia**
- **NACLC leading the development of a national research strategy or agenda, guided by community legal centres and researchers**
- **Community Legal Centres Queensland:**
 - **developing a mailing list for participants to share ideas and opportunities**
 - **convening a working group to develop an online forum to share ideas and opportunities**

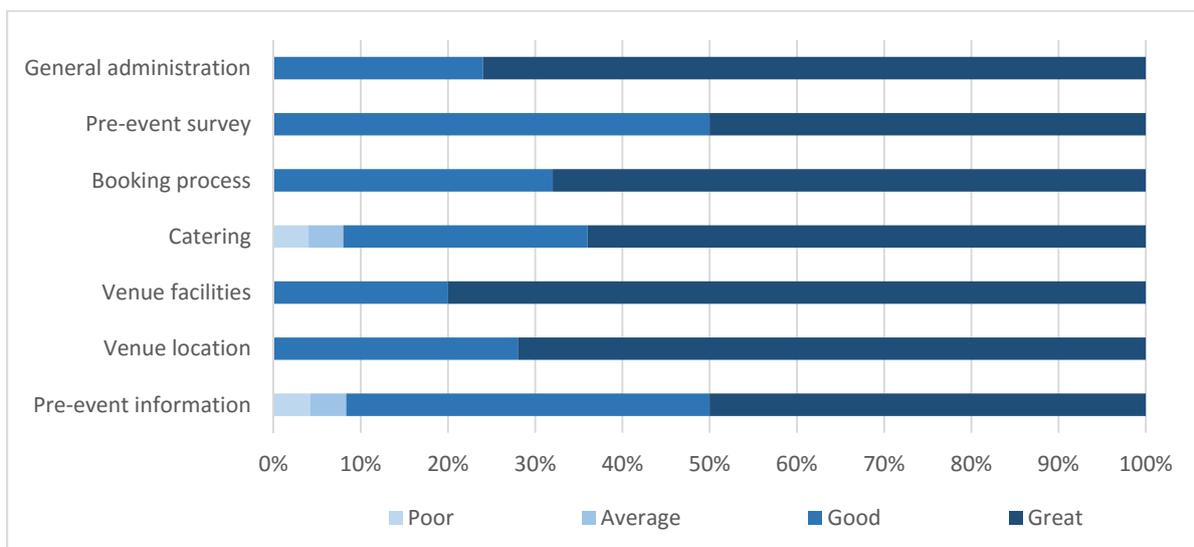


Event evaluation

There was overwhelmingly positive feedback about the event itself.

Almost all participants found out about the event after receiving an invitation, after NACLC/Community Legal Centres Queensland developed a targeted list of participants (see page 13-14), who in turn invited interested colleagues. A small number of attendees found out about the event from social media, or in conversation with organisers.

Respondents were asked to rate the following aspects of the Research Partnerships Roundtable:



100% of respondents thought the program (see page 12) included a good balance of information and networking, and all speakers received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Speakers included:

Prof. Rosalind Croucher
Sue Garlick
Assoc. Prof. Tamara Walsh
Prof. Jeff Giddings
Amanda Shipway
Harriett Carter
Dr. Sarah Flaim
James Farrell



Speakers' presentations are available at www.communitylegalqld.org.au/research.

Respondents also provided feedback including:

- A bit more time at the end for feeding back to the group about the individual discussions. Clearer 'takeaways' – but otherwise I think the event really hit the mark.
- Perhaps a full day event with plenary sessions in the afternoon. Otherwise, format is great.
- Focussed networking session was great.
- The pre-event survey was an effective way to link attendees.
- I liked the balance and variety of speakers and networking opportunities. Length was good, although some speakers appeared rushed.
- I thought it was well run. I benefitted more from the information gathered during the networking sessions, however, I felt that most of the information provided by the speakers was interesting and that it set the scene for the roundtable discussions.
- It would have been good to have more time for informal networking.
- I thought the balance was good. It was fast moving, but the time frame was manageable. I think you need to publicise a hashtag to make it easier to tweet ... I reckon having the law society there may have been valuable. I know that they haven't been funding, but they should be funding and this may have been a chance to survey the field. I tell you what, the grant strategy speaker was so good for community legal centres. Can't wait for my next management committee meeting. Good to see a law dean there too - that's really how you get buy in from academia. Maybe have the Alternative Law Journal on board also? That is a good outlet for briefs, commentary and articles - in the past I've had academics write about topics that community legal centre staff are constrained about because of funding conditions. ... Would be great to

consider how to engage regional unis/CLCs - more an issue for east coast. But thanks, it was really good.

- I think the panel discussion sections could have had shorter speeches and then an opportunity for all the panellists to sit down and discuss things. Opportunities for questions of speakers would have been good.
- Rosalind was an excellent person to have introducing the event. James was excellent in giving context purpose and meaning to the speed dating. I would def keep speed dating, Rosalind and James in the mix.
- The workshopping at the end would have been better if we had a clearer objective. At the end we were asked to report on a question many tables did not address. Also, put down paper for people to record thoughts on and collect those for a better record of what happened.



Kate Galloway's *Storify* summarises Twitter coverage of the event:

<https://storify.com/katgallow/community-legal-centres-qld-research-round-table>

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Key points for future events:

- **Could be full-day events, with more time for informal networking**
- **Provision of a meeting space and catering by a law firm partner was useful, and appreciated**
- **Programming was appropriate, with a need for more Q&A**
- **Pre-event surveys, to prime conversations and identify common areas of interest, were effective**
- **Clearer intended outcomes should be developed before the event**
- **Community legal centres and researchers are certainly keen to work more closely, and these relationships should be fostered**

Developing an action plan

Discussions at the Roundtable identified six possible 'next steps', which included:

1. Have another partnership roundtable
2. Have smaller conversations/meetings about specific research projects
3. Have smaller conversations about specific areas or issues with each other and other advocates or organisations
4. Develop a mailing list to share ideas and opportunities including smaller mailing lists specific to certain areas and agendas.
5. Develop an online forum to share ideas and opportunities
6. Develop a research strategy or research agenda to support community legal centres' work

Further information about these suggestions was sought from participants via an online survey, with 25 respondents.

In this section of the report, we discuss the ideas raised at the Roundtable, and propose 'next steps' for each of these actions.

1. Another roundtable

Given the positive response to the event, it was pleasing to see many participants supported holding a similar event in the future.

Generally, respondents suggested holding another event in about six months, while some suggested within 3-4 months and others suggested it be an annual event. It was noted that having the research roundtable right after the community legal centres' state conference worked well, and it was suggested that a similar event could:

piggyback on NACLCL conference and integrate it as an annual event that follows NACLCL as it would increase academic involvement at NACLCL (if that's what you want...) - maybe a special price/deal for Academics to attend NACLCL and then the Roundtable (or get a free day session at NACLCL or similar incentive?)

Given that most attendees were based near Brisbane, it's unsurprising that most respondents preferred a Brisbane CBD location. Other suggestions included holding the roundtable in other states or through an online forum.

An attendee from a national law firm offered to host future events, and several attendees were open to assisting with the organisation of the event, while others were willing to consult with other members of their staff and seek sponsorship. It was

suggested that gathering data and reporting on individual community legal centres' research priorities before the event would be useful, and the UQ Pro Bono Centre offered to support this work.

Suggested next steps:

- **NACLC to partner with other state peaks to hold similar events in other cities later in 2016**
- **Second Queensland event to be held around 2017 state conference**

2. Smaller conversations/meetings about specific projects

Many responses noted that discussion in smaller conversations/meetings should build on issues that were raised during the roundtable, such as cross systems issues or developing a national research agenda.

Many suggested that the initial meeting should be soon – within the next few months. They should involve key community legal centres, interested researchers and law firms and other supporters.

Many respondents suggested that they would be willing to organise these meetings, including engaging people who didn't attend the Roundtable but would be interested in these targeted activities. Respondents also suggested involving potential funders and 'people of influence', including law firm representatives, heads of academic units, judicial officers, law students and community services and civil society organisations.

Suggested next step:

Hold off organising smaller meetings until a mailing list is established (see section 4 below) and expressions of interest are sought using that communications channel.

3. Smaller conversations about specific areas/issues

When asked what topics or issues participants wanted to discuss, a wide variety of issues were raised, including:

- Multi-disciplinary collaborations
- Youth justice and child protection
- Access to legal advice and associated issues in regional areas

- Impact of state-based laws on people experiencing poverty and marginalisation
- Areas of specialty undertaken by community legal centres

However, participants acknowledged the breadth of issues that could be covered and the need to prioritise, with respondents commenting:

- I think a research agenda/strategy may be necessary before deciding priorities. Overarching issue is to seek input on who may be interested (academics/CLC staff) and their areas of concern.
- CLCQ to decide
- I felt that this would flow from a strategy

The format of the meeting (ie roundtables, casual meetings, using Skype or phone) would follow from properly understood and articulated themes and priorities, and once this is established, smaller meeting could be convened (and participants were willing to assist in this process). Depending on the area or issue, it may be important to engage with other advocates or organisations during these conversations. These would also be useful forum to introduce and partner with funders and policy-makers.

Suggested next step:

Hold off organising smaller meetings until a research agenda is developed and priority issues identified (see section 6 below)

4. A mailing list to share ideas and opportunities

60% of participants agreed that developing a mailing list would be an appropriate next step. There weren't other questions that the survey participants were asked regarding a mailing list.

Another suggested approach for mailing lists is compiling smaller, more targeted mailing lists based around specific areas or agendas so that these lists are more relevant to their recipients.

Suggested next step:

Community Legal Centres Queensland to lead development of a national mailing list for participants to share ideas and opportunities

5. An online forum to share ideas and opportunities

Participants generally supported developing an online forum to share ideas and opportunities. The most popular option was developing a blog, while Twitter or a Facebook Group were also offered as options. One person noted that a Facebook group much easier to set up, maintain and keep confidential as it can be a closed group.

One participant also noted that online forums are unwieldy when what is needed here is something more focused and disciplined. However, after a particular research question was scoped, the participant suggested that an online forum specific to that issue might be appropriate.

Participants provided examples of similar forums that could be instructive, including:

- Wellness for law; ADR blog
- CLC Law Reformers, community legal centre Communication Folk
- Convention Against Torture working group
- Auspublaw

A number of participants agreed to develop/curate/organise the forum, while many noted that it was not their area of expertise. One participant noted that it would require some dedicated resources for their organisation to participate. It was suggested that law firms with expertise in information management may be able to provide pro bono assistance in setting up and maintaining an online forum and database of information.

One suggestion was also to create an electronic platform consisting of a list of CLCs and key research they would like completed and a list of researchers and their areas of expertise. This would help facilitate the creation of researching arrangements.

Suggested next step:

Community Legal Centres Queensland to convene a working group (of participants who agreed to be involved) to scope up a national online forum to share ideas and opportunities

6. Develop a research strategy or agenda

This was the most popular proposed action, with 18 of the 25 respondents to the survey supporting the development of a research strategy or agenda.

Respondents suggested surveying community legal centres, academics, community organisations, funders and other stakeholders to gauge interest and possible funding opportunities such as law firms who could use the research and development tax incentive scheme or other benefactors within the legal profession.

Participants noted the importance of community legal centres driving this process, suggesting a process to identify priority research projects (current and proposed) and matching community legal centres with academics. Peaks (including Community Legal Centres Queensland and NACLC) should play an important brokering role in this process.

Once the agenda is settled, a plan for meetings (see sections 2 and 3, above) and communications (see sections 4 and 5, above) would follow.

Interestingly, one respondent was not in favour of the option as they felt that the diverse range of issues across the range of community legal centres would make it difficult. It was suggested that the priority should be finding the right people to connect with and then putting together research agenda.

It was also suggested that if research was tied to a certain geographical area that local stakeholders such as local councils should be involved.

Some suggested topics included elder abuse (law reform), proactive data capture around NDIS, law and technology, family violence, government funding and pro bono arrangements (for access to justice), community legal education.

Many participants would be keen to assist developing this agenda, and subsequent support has been strong, particularly from government and some university centres.

Suggested next steps:

- **NACLC partnering with state/territory peak associations to hold more research roundtables across Australia**
- **NACLC leading the development of a national research strategy or agenda, guided by community legal centres and researchers**
- **Second Queensland event to be held around 2017 state conference**

Appendix: Event information

Program

- 9.00am **Welcome and acknowledgement of country**
- Amanda Alford**
Director, Policy and Advocacy, NACLC
- 9.05am **Keynote presentation**
- Professor Rosalind Croucher AM**
President, Australian Law Reform Commission
- 9.30am **Showcasing good partnerships**
- Associate Professor Tamara Walsh**
TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland
- Professor Jeff Giddings**
Griffith University
- Sue Garlick**
Queensland Public Interest Law Clearing House
- 10.00am **Funding opportunities: panel discussion**
- Amanda Shipway**
Acting Director, Legal Assistance Strategy and Funding, DJAG
- Harriett Carter**
Grants Strategist & Queensland Manager, Strategic Grants
- Dr Sarah Flaim**
Research Partnerships Manager
Faculty of Business, Economics and Law, University of Queensland
- 10.30am **Morning tea**
- 11.00am **The paucity of serious Australian community legal centre scholarship**
- James Farrell**
Director, Community Legal Centres Queensland
- 11.15am **Supercharged Networking sessions**
- 12.30pm **Lunch**

Participants

Amanda Alford	NALCLC
Cathy Baker	Community Legal Centres Queensland
Narelle Bedford	Bond University
Suzanne Bevacqua	La Trobe University
Kerry Bichel	Legal Aid Queensland
Debbie Bullock	University of Queensland
Kylie Burns	Griffith University
Bridget Burton	Caxton Legal Centre
Penny Carr	Tenants Queensland
Harriett Carter	Strategic Grants
Lynda Cheshire	University of Queensland
Rosalind Croucher	Australian Law Reform Commission
Jennifer Donovan	University of Melbourne
Marissa Dooris	QPILCH
Heather Douglas	University of Queensland
Molly Dragiewicz	School of Justice QUT
Anne Edwards	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Catherine Espiritu	Corrs Chambers Westgarth
James Farrell	Community Legal Centres Queensland
Dorothy Fauls	University of Queensland
Aaron Finn	Townsville Community Legal Service
Sarah Flaim	University of Queensland
Kate Galloway	Bond University
Sue Garlick	QPILCH
Jeff Giddings	Griffith University
Susan Hamilton	Aboriginal Family Legal Service Southern Queensland
Paul Harpur	University of Queensland
Bridget Harris	University of New England
Nicola Howell	Queensland University of Technology
Wayne Jones	CQU / Central Queensland community legal centre
Mary Keyes	Griffith University
Angela Lynch	Women's Legal Service
Kirsty Mackie	SunCoast Community Legal Service
Elena Marchetti	University of Wollongong
Penelope Mathew	Griffith University
Kate McKenzie	DLA Piper
Katrina Middlin	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Giselle Negri	Cairns Community Legal Centre

Robyn Outen	Aboriginal Family Legal Service Southern Queensland
Andrea Perry Petersen	QPILCH
Emma Phillips	Queensland Advocacy Inc.
Jenny Porter	QPILCH
Janelle Rees	Queensland Network of Alcohol and other Drug Agencies
Alison Rice	Griffith Law School
Amanda Shipway	Department of Justice and Attorney-General
Laura Steele	University of Queensland
Lindsey Stevenson-Graf	Bond University
Monica Taylor	University of Queensland
Tamara Walsh	University of Queensland
Georgina Warrington	Basic Rights Queensland Inc
Janet Wight	Youth Advocacy Centre



Community Legal Centres Queensland Inc is the peak body for community legal centres in Queensland and its vision is for a fair and just Queensland.

To achieve this, we support and develop community legal centres to provide effective, high quality services to their communities, and lead to unite our members and be a leading voice for social justice.

www.communitylegalqld.org.au



NACLC is the peak national organisation representing community legal centres (CLCs) in Australia. Its members are the state and territory associations of community legal centres that represent over 200 centres in various metropolitan, regional, rural and remote locations across Australia. community legal centres are not-for-profit, community-based organisations that provide legal advice, casework, information and a range of community development services to their local or special interest communities. community legal centres' work is targeted at disadvantaged members of society and those with special needs, and in undertaking matters in the public interest.

www.nacalc.org.au

This event was generously hosted by:



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We affirm that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the Indigenous inhabitants of Australia and acknowledge their unique relationship with their ancestral country. In particular, we acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples, the traditional custodians of the land in and around Brisbane, and pay respect to their elders, past and present.