National Legal Aid

29 May 2024

National Legal Aid welcomes the National Legal Assistance Partnership Independent Review Report and calls for an implementation plan

National Legal Aid (**NLA**) welcomes the release of the final report of the Independent Review (**the Review**) of the National Legal Assistance Partnership (**NLAP**).

The Review report recommends $459 million in funding for legal assistance services in civil and family law in 2025-26, and funding for grants of legal aid to be set at court scales and reflected in baseline funding for Legal Aid Commissions.

Quotes attributable to Louise Glanville, Chair, NLA:

Many of the recommendations in the Review report were highlighted in the *Justice on the Brink* report commissioned by NLA in 2023. NLA has been calling for increased legal aid funding of $484 million per year. This would increase legal aid grants by 70 000 grants for civil and family law matters, raise our means test to enable legal aid to assist 9% of Australian households (currently only 8% are eligible), and address the crisis in supply of private practitioners due to low fees for providing grants of aid.

NLA welcomes identification of the importance of legal assistance work in domestic and family violence, through a quarantined women's funding stream. 86% of all Legal Aid Family Law matters have a risk of domestic and family violence.

We welcome the strong focus on meeting Closing the Gap targets and self-determination of ACCOs. The Review Report also identifies the importance of legal assistance in disability, administrative review and supporting government policy priorities.

This is a critical time and opportunity to increase access to justice and improve legal assistance for the most disadvantaged people in Australia. It is important to receive recognition from the NLAP Independent Reviewer Dr Warren Mundy of more than 10 years of under-resourcing.

We look forward to working with the Attorney-General to deliver an implementation plan in partnership with the legal assistance sector, including identification of additional resources so that we can better meet the legal assistance needs of people experiencing disadvantage.

For further comment please contact:
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