



Mark Speakman
Attorney General

MEDIA RELEASE

Friday, 1 July 2022

COLLECTIVE VISION FOR NSW LEGAL ASSISTANCE SECTOR

The NSW Government has unveiled a strategy to support the NSW legal assistance sector deliver more than 630,000 legal services each year to vulnerable individuals, families and communities.

Attorney General Mark Speakman said the NSW Legal Assistance Strategy has been developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders including Legal Aid NSW, the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT and Community Legal Centres.

“The NSW Government has made record investments in the NSW legal assistance sector with legal aid funding doubling between 2010-11 and 2020-21,” Mr Speakman said.

“However, recent events such as the 2019–20 bushfires, the 2022 floods and the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in unprecedented demand on our state’s legal assistance sector.

“In the past three years, more than \$40 million in state funding has been allocated to Community Legal Centres, an 85 per cent increase since 2015-16.

Combined with Commonwealth funding contributions under the National Legal Assistance Partnership, total government investment in the NSW legal assistance sector will exceed \$450m per annum from 2022-23.”

The [NSW Legal Assistance Strategy](#) sets out four key priorities:

- Addressing the needs of people who experience disadvantage
- Meeting the outcomes of the Closing the Gap agreement
- Preventing and responding to domestic and family violence
- Building the capacity of the sector to support equitable access to legal services.

The Strategy has been developed in accordance with the *National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020-2025* (NLAP). The NLAP is an agreement between the Australian Government and all states and territories for Commonwealth funded legal assistance.

In NSW, the key legal assistance providers covered by the NLAP are Community Legal Centres, Legal Aid NSW and the Aboriginal Legal Service NSW/ACT.

“The NSW legal assistance sector plays a critical role in ensuring access to justice for some of the most vulnerable people in our community,” Mr Speakman said.

“Together, the NSW Government and the legal assistance sector can make a significant contribution to breaking the cycle of disadvantage and ensuring that people can fully participate and prosper in their communities.”

Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus QC MP welcomed the announcement.

“Legal assistance services play a vital role in helping the most disadvantaged Australians have access to justice,” Attorney-General Dreyfus said.

“This strategy will help provide this assistance to the people who need it most, and the Commonwealth looks forward to working with the states and territories on these issues to assist those in greatest need.”