



Attorney-General and Minister for Justice  
Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of  
Domestic and Family Violence

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Our ref: 572305/6, 5719474

30 September 2021

Mr Neil Laurie  
The Clerk of the Parliament  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to e-Petition 3546-21, *Funding Moreton Bay Regional Community Legal Service*, tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 31 August 2021.

I acknowledge that the Moreton Bay Regional Community Legal Service (MBRCLS) has been delivering services to vulnerable and disadvantaged community members in the Moreton Bay region for many years. I sincerely thank the MBRCLS team including management, staff and volunteers for all their hard work and dedication to the people of the Moreton Bay region.

The Petition seeks an increase in funding for community legal services in the Moreton region and draws attention to the funding for MBRCLS not being renewed after 30 June 2021.

Under the Government's Legal Assistance Services Program (the LASP), a total of \$119.452 million of State and Commonwealth funding was available to allocate to community legal centres (CLCs) for the delivery of legal assistance services in Queensland over 2020-25. Funding under the LASP is allocated through open and robust procurement processes which involve:

- allocating Queensland and Commonwealth service delivery funding under the LASP through an open tender process with mandatory evaluation criteria;
- applicants demonstrating how they deliver legal assistance services in accordance with the *National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance* (the national best practice principles for legal assistance service delivery);
- applicants drawing on the latest evidence and analysis of legal need to support their applications; and
- an independent Evaluation Team comprised of senior executives, assessing applications in a three-stage evaluation process, which looks at the quality and value for money of services and considers the viability of the service system and which makes recommendations to the Attorney-General for final decision.

The outcomes of the 2020-2025 procurement process resulted in geographical service delivery gaps in five areas/regions where the generalist CLCs which applied for funding, including MBRCLS, were unsuccessful.

To mitigate service delivery gaps, the then Attorney-General approved the direct allocation of one year of funding (1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021) to the five unsuccessful CLCs (one per affected area/region). MBRCLS was allocated \$144,129 to continue delivering services in the Moreton Bay region in 2020-21.

In a subsequent procurement process for the delivery of legal assistance services over 2021-25, MBRCLS was unsuccessful in securing funding for the Moreton Bay region.

Encircle, the successful provider, demonstrated in its application the delivery of the most effective and efficient services and was therefore allocated \$605,944 for the delivery of services in the Moreton Bay region over 2021-25.

Following the procurement processes, all State and Commonwealth funding for legal assistance services over 2020-25 has been fully expended. However, I encourage MBRCLS to apply for future funding should it wish to.

I thank the petitioners for bringing their concerns to the attention of the House.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shannon Fentiman', written in a cursive style.

**Shannon Fentiman MP**

Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence

Member for Waterford