

Justice Where We Live

POLICY BRIEFING PAPER

*All people deserve equitable access to justice
and due process, wherever we live.*

Every community. Every person. Everywhere.

October 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Community Legal Centres Australia recognises that the land we work, live, and learn on is unceded Aboriginal land. Our office stands on Gadigal Land. We acknowledge Elders, both past and present. We acknowledge the First Nations workers in our sector across a great many Aboriginal lands on this continent and its surrounding islands, and we thank them for their generosity and persistence in supporting our sector to always be on a journey of learning and growth.



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About us

The community legal centres movement

Community legal centres help hundreds of thousands of people each year to resolve the legal, social, health, financial and other related problems making their lives harder. People trust their local community legal centre to support them early, before legal problems snowball to crisis point. We learn from clients' experiences to understand how laws and legal systems need to be changed and then we advocate for those changes.

Community legal centres are deeply embedded in local communities across Australia and have adapted to best meet the unique needs of the communities we serve. Centres develop innovative

ways of delivering services, build strong collaborative relationships with other trusted local services, and foster reputations of reliability over many years.

Community legal centres are more than legal services. Legal systems in Australia are complex to navigate, and systemic barriers and unfairness are common. Many people don't immediately realise their problem is a legal one, and don't access legal help until one unaddressed problem has snowballed into a mess of complex, intersecting problems that can feel impossible to resolve and that seriously impact their lives.

For many people – especially people experiencing violence, poverty, or housing instability – their legal problems are connected to other social, health and economic problems. The best support addresses these challenges together and does so in a way that is trauma-informed and culturally safe.

Lawyers are vitally important, but they can't solve everything. Community legal centres employ a range of allied professional workers (like social workers, mental health workers and financial counsellors) alongside lawyers to support people holistically. Together, community legal centre workers help people to untangle the messy and interconnected problems making their lives harder.

Community Legal Centres Australia

Community Legal Centres Australia is the national representative voice for the community legal sector. Our members are the eight state and territory community legal sector peak bodies. Together, we represent over 150 community legal centres (including 13 Women's Legal Services), 11 Family Violence Prevention and Legal Services, and two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Legal Services.

Our Vision for Justice

Community Legal Centres Australia's **Vision for Justice** sets out the common systemic barriers our sector sees preventing the people and communities we work with from accessing justice. Against these barriers, we set out our vision for how things could look if governments and communities worked together to remove them. It will take many years of hard work to achieve our Vision for Justice: a society in which everyone is treated fairly, and can access justice regardless of income, race, gender, disability, or any other systemic barrier. As a first step, we have identified some **Actions for the 48th Parliament** that will bring communities closer to achieving this vision. **Justice Where We Live** builds on our Vision for Justice and Actions for the 48th Parliament.

Justice Where We Live

Justice Where We Live is one of Community Legal Centres Australia's priority Vision for Justice advocacy projects for 2026. The project tells the stories of regional and remote centres and the communities they serve, to illustrate some of the unique barriers to justice experienced by people in these communities, and the ways community legal centres best support people to overcome those barriers.

The centrepiece of the project is an **online interactive map tool** that contains stories, photos, videos, data and insights from community legal workers and clients. This policy briefing paper is an addendum, setting out three clear steps the Federal Government should take to alleviate some of the justice barriers identified in this project. It should be read alongside engagement with the content in the Justice Where We Live online interactive storytelling tool.

Acknowledgements

Justice Where We Live reference group

The Justice Where We Live project would not have been possible without the expert guidance of frontline regional and remote community legal workers from across the continent:

- Penney Ferguson, First Nations Women's Legal Service
- Jessica Brake, Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre
- Zoe Chinner, Central Australian Women's Legal Service
- Brianna Bell, Katherine Women's Information and Legal Service
- Akira Boardman, Kimberley Community Legal Service
- Mark Jeffreys, Pilbara Community Legal Service
- Lisa-Maree Stevens, Mallee Family Care / Far West NSW Community Legal Centre
- Donna Bain, Launceston Community Legal Centre
- Cheryll Rosales, Uniting Communities Community Legal Centre
- Lorraine Dawson, Northern Rivers Community Legal Centre
- Sarah Rogers and Felicity Hartridge, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service

Justice Where We Live online tool contributors

We are enormously grateful to all the clients who have shared their journeys with us to share with the public in the *Justice Where We Live* digital interactive storytelling tool. For their privacy and safety, we have de-identified them so cannot thank them by name, but their generosity in sharing their stories is deeply appreciated.

We also thank the following community legal workers who contributed their experiences, insights, time, photos and videos to the online storytelling tool:

- Penney Ferguson, First Nations Women's Legal Service
- Karisa Hampson, Mackay Regional Community Legal Centre
- Alicia Rowles, Western Women's Legal Support, Western NSW Community Legal Centre
- Justine Wu and Arlia Fleming, Central Tablelands and Blue Mountains Community Legal Centre
- Kristi Pemmelaar, and Debbie Ireland, Hume Riverina Community Legal Service
- Marjana Lima and Emma Smith, Launceston Community Legal Centre
- Murtaza Dostdar and Cheryll Rosales, Uniting Communities Community Legal Centre
- Radhe Kharel, Community Justice Services South Australia
- Ippei Okazaki, Community Legal Centres South Australia
- Felicity Bolles, Keda Ley, and Tully McIntyre, Central Australian Women's Legal Service
- Zanoon Butt, Pilbara Community Legal Service
- Charlie Beer, Hannah Lethlean, Lina Bleazby, and Breda Knightly, Kimberley Community Legal Service

Justice in regional and remote communities

All people deserve equitable access to justice and due process, wherever we live. Every community. Every person. Everywhere.

People who live in regional, rural, remote and very remote ('regional and remote') communities face unique and intersecting barriers to accessing justice.

People have lower average incomes and wealth but face much higher costs for basic goods (like food, energy, and transport), and an escalating housing crisis. These factors combine to drive higher rates of financial hardship across many regional and remote communities. Poverty rates in remote and very remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are extremely high (41% and 57% respectively).¹

At the same time, access to essential services, infrastructure, and government institutions, including courts, is often more limited.² Limited access to domestic and family violence services, means women and children can face a much higher risk of harm and more barriers to safety.³ The rate of hospitalisation due to domestic and family violence for people who live in very remote communities is 41 times as high as it is for people living in cities.⁴

Barriers to accessing digital technologies, telecommunications and identity documents (ID) – especially in remote areas – can make navigating complex legal, financial, and housing systems extremely difficult. All these factors, and more, drive high and escalating legal and related need.

Governments' 'solutions' to justice barriers in regional and remote areas are often one-size-fits-all and can be ineffective. The trend towards solving the 'problems' created by distance by moving services online is just one good example.⁵

Government funding models for frontline legal assistance services rely too heavily on population data, and don't aim to provide full geographic service coverage. They don't accurately reflect the true cost of delivering effective services in regional and remote areas. This means people in regional and remote communities have less access to services, both in number and diversity of services. Frontline services in those areas are left trying to meet a great number of different needs for people who rely on them, with limited resources.

Justice Where We Live calls on the governments to do the work required to map legal need and the true cost of delivering services in regional and remote communities. This paper sets out three targeted solutions that will help to fill some of the critical gaps until this work is completed.

¹ Australian National University (2024), *The Poor Pay More: Why the Remote Area Allowance Needs Urgent Reform*, ANU Policy Brief, 12 February 2024: <https://policybrief.anu.edu.au/the-poor-pay-more-why-the-remote-area-allowance-needs-urgent-reform/>

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025) *Regional and Remote Health*, 20 November 2025: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/rural-and-remote-health>

³ Jeremy Story Carter (2026) *Experts plead for more domestic and family violence support in regional and rural Australia*, ABC News, 16 September 2026: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2026-09-16/domestic-and-family-violence-in-regional-rural-australia/107125302>

⁴ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2025) *Regional and Remote Health*, 20 November 2025

⁵ Anglicare Australia (2022) *In Every Community*: <https://www.anglicare.asn.au/publications/in-every-community/>

Community legal centres supporting access to justice in regional and remote communities

There are over 50 organisations in the community legal centres movement that are based in regional and remote communities. Most are placed-based, ‘generalist’ centres that assist many people in the community with broad range of civil, family, and criminal law problems. Many Aboriginal community-controlled Family Violence Prevention Legal Services are also based in and serve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in regional and remote areas. Most regionally based centres deliver services across vast geographic catchment areas, with some making regular road trips of hundreds of kilometres to provide outreach to the most remote communities, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Many statewide and national centres based in metropolitan areas also support people in regional and remote communities, including through regular outreach travel.

Based on the most recent Community Legal Centres Australia sector survey, community legal centres travel a combined 1.26 million kilometres a year to provide services to people in regional and remote communities. That’s far enough to travel between Earth and the moon 3.3 times.⁶

Community legal centres in regional and remote areas do a broad scope of work to support access to justice, including (but not limited to):

- Providing legal information, advice and court representation
- Offering wraparound supports, like casework, counselling and community development
- Delivering community education, holding events, and developing educational resources to empower communities with knowledge of the law
- Conducting policy and law reform advocacy to improve systems
- Engaging with stakeholders.

The largest area of work for the community legal sector is frontline support for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, making up 40-50% of our work nationally.⁷ This rises to 75% for community legal centres in rural and remote areas.⁸

A different kind of community legal work in the regions

In regional and remote areas, the work done by community legal workers – lawyers and non-lawyers alike – is often very diverse. The extra structural barriers to accessing justice in regional and remote communities can mean that service delivery in these places can look very different to what people would traditionally think of as “legal work”.

A lot of time on the road

Many clients of regional and remote community legal centres don’t have access to cars or phones. This means the only way they can get the help they need is by community legal centre workers driving to them. Workers can spend six or more hours driving to, carrying out, and

⁶ Community Legal Centres Australia’s 2023-2024 State of the Sector survey found that the 130 centres that participated travelled a combined total of 993,181km to provide outreach services to regional and remote communities in 2023-24. We used this figure to estimate the total kilometres travelled by all 164 centres in our national membership in that year. For more information see: Community Legal Centres Australia (2024) *State of the Sector 2023-24 Survey Report - More Than Legal Services: Preventing Crises Strengthening Communities*.

⁷ Community Legal Centres Australia (2024), *State of the Sector 2023-24 Survey Report - More Than Legal Services: Preventing Crises Strengthening Communities*, pg. 13: <https://clcs.org.au/sots/>

⁸ Ibid.

travelling home from, a single client meeting. For outreach to communities more than a few hours away, community legal workers must stay overnight, or for several nights, away from home.

Long journeys to remote communities can be made harder by poor road maintenance, and winding, unsealed, or otherwise difficult roads. Many regional and remote community legal centres need to have and maintain four-wheel-drive cars. At some centres, all lawyers, social workers, community education workers and others that go on outreach must do special off-road driving training because the communities they serve are only accessible via unfinished roads. Some community legal workers also need to travel by air and boat to get to remote communities they work with.

Complexity of clients' cases

Delivering appropriate and effective help to people in regional and remote communities can be far more time-intensive for reasons beyond travel alone.

People supported by regional and remote centres often experience a greater number of different legal and related problems, and problems that are more complex to untangle, than people living closer to cities.

Factors like a lack of access to ID, language barriers (such as for clients from remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities) and government decisions that have resulted in entrenched poverty and disadvantage in some regional and remote communities can mean that people need more intensive support to resolve the legal problems making their lives harder, than people who don't face those same barriers.

The shortage of other services in regional and remote areas compounds these difficulties. Many community legal centre clients would benefit from complementary services – for example, mental health supports – but in many areas there are no referral pathways. This leaves community legal centres stretched trying to meet a wide range of needs.

This can impact the types of tasks that community legal centre workers do day-to-day, as they adapt to meet the various specific needs of their clients.

Time to build trust

Working with people in remote communities requires time to build trust. It's unfortunately all too common for organisations, including government agencies, to visit a remote community once or twice, make promises to help, but never return. Community legal centres serving these communities know they might need to spend months demonstrating regular on-the-ground presence, showing up when and where they say they will, before people will start trusting them with their problems.

When a centre first starts providing outreach to a community they haven't been to before, workers might do several outreach trips in a row with very few people coming to speak with them. These repeated, reliable outreaches are crucially important to building the trust that will make people feel safe seeking help in future.

Difficulty staying in contact with clients

Clients in regional and remote communities can be hard to get in contact with. Many don't have personal mobile phones. There can be cultural differences in how items like phones are treated in remote communities – it's more common to share a phone among a family or community network. Regional and remote centres with high rates of clients experiencing domestic and family

violence also report that it is quite common for people using violence to break a victim-survivor's phone as part of the violence.

Acting as a lawyer for a client who doesn't have a personal mobile phone can be a much more time-intensive process. Lawyers can spend huge amounts of time playing 'phone tag' trying to obtain instructions or can end up having to drive out to the client's home or community to find them in person.

Regional and remote communities have poorer digital connectivity, and lower rates of digital literacy, than metropolitan areas.⁹ These impact digital inclusion. For many clients of regional and remote community legal centres, face-to-face service delivery is the only effective way to support access to justice.

Working around climate and disaster impacts

Regional and remote community legal centres can also be uniquely impacted by weather patterns, and climate disasters like fires and floods.

Centres proactively plan around climate and weather patterns, for example planning outreaches around wet and dry seasons. However, climate change is increasing the unpredictability of weather patterns and the severity of extreme events. Centres sometimes have to cancel planned outreaches if extreme weather makes it too dangerous to travel or threatens to strand workers in remote communities. This limits access to justice for people in remote communities who lose access to their community lawyer.

Climate disasters cause and worsen legal problems, so in the aftermath of an event like a fire, flood or cyclone, legal need skyrockets. The 'long tail' of every disaster means that legal need can be heightened in a disaster-impacted community for many years after such an event.

Pressures on regional and remote community legal centres

High costs of delivering effective services

As outlined above, isolation, distance, cultural factors, and more, increase the cost and complexity of service delivery to regional and remote communities.

Centres often need to budget for four-wheel-drive cars, petrol, off-road driving and bush first aid training, accommodation, and sometimes flights for workers to travel to remote and very remote communities in their catchment area. Communications infrastructure can be patchy in regional and remote areas, so some centres must invest in satellite phones. Utilities, food, fuel, maintenance and basic supplies are more expensive in regional and remote towns.

Centres need to budget for the staff time lost in transit, as well as the flow-on impacts of overnight stays, allowances, and fatigue management. The additional time it takes to build trust and provide effective and appropriate services in regional and remote areas can also significantly increase the time-cost associated with serving these communities. It's often unsafe to send one worker alone on long drives in the bush, so centres will generally send at least two workers on every outreach. This increases the time-cost to the centre.

Community legal centres that work in and for regional and remote communities bear considerable extra costs and require sufficient funding that reflects the true cost of delivering

⁹ Anglicare Australia (2022), Op. Cit., pg. 14.

access to justice in the regions.¹⁰ The National Access to Justice Partnership (NAJP), the main funding source for the community legal sector, does not reflect the significantly higher costs of delivering services, or heightened legal and related need, in regional and remote communities.

Workforce crisis in regional and remote communities

Regional and remote community legal centres are finding it increasingly difficult to hire and keep qualified staff. It is common for regional and remote community legal centres to see roles standing vacant for many months at a time.

The cost-of-living and housing crises are key factors: rental housing is very limited and expensive in regional and remote areas, and centres are under-resourced to pay competitive wages, so community legal centre workers struggle to find homes to live in. Early childhood education and care options are also often limited and expensive in regional and remote areas, which is a significant barrier for the highly feminised community legal workforce. Community legal centres don't have the money to offer relocation costs or other benefits that might help attract staff.

A centre may find great talent but have the prospective worker decline at the last minute because they can't secure housing. Sometimes, a worker will accept a job, relocate, and begin working at the centre while living in a motel or caravan park and looking for longer-term accommodation, only to eventually resign and leave town months down the track because they can't find a home. Some centres have no choice but to provide housing for staff, such as for workers staffing small offices in very remote communities but aren't funded to do so.

Many community legal centres in regional and remote areas can't benefit from service clustering in the same way as organisations in metropolitan areas where multiple services operate nearby. Regional and remote centres often need to operate in isolation, without the cost-sharing benefits of proximity. This impacts workers who may experience professional isolation. Limited access to peer support and fewer opportunities for training and development contribute to higher turnover and burnout.

The community legal sector has the highest proportion of its legal workforce based in regional and remote areas of any legal practice sector.¹¹ If it cannot recruit and retain workers, people in regional and remote communities will lose their most consistent access to legal help.

Solutions to improve access to justice in regional and remote communities

HECS-HELP forgiveness scheme for community legal workers

Our sector is very highly educated. Over half (55%) of the workers in our sector hold a graduate degree, master's degree, or higher.¹² However, university is expensive. People are graduating carrying large and growing debts. One way to incentivise people to choose to work at a regional or remote community legal centre is through a university debt forgiveness scheme.

¹⁰ WA Council of Social Service (2025) *True Cost of Service Delivery*: https://wacoss.org.au/policy_publications/true-cost-of-service-delivery/

¹¹ Law Society of NSW (2025) *2024 National Profile of Solicitors*, pg. 38: <https://www.lawsociety.com.au/advocacy-and-resources/gender-statistics/profiles-surveys-and-statistics>

¹² Community Legal Centres Australia (2026) *Community Legal Centres Workforce: the national picture*, July 2026. Unpublished.

The independent review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) recommended a HECS-HELP Forgiveness Scheme for remote and regional lawyers who work in the community legal sector:¹³

Existing literature suggests financial incentives, such as loan forgiveness schemes, can be effective tools for attracting new entrants to the workforce in regional and remote areas (Yong, J, et al. 2018). This is not a new proposition for bolstering key workforces in regional and remote Australia. The Commonwealth currently supports two similar initiatives: HELP for Rural Doctors and Nurse Practitioners, and Reduction of HELP debts for teachers in very remote areas.

These two initiatives provide assistance for eligible recipients through two mechanisms. The first is a waiver of indexation on accumulated HELP debt, and the second is a reduction of accumulated HELP debt. The aim of the schemes is to increase the number of people in these roles living and working in rural, regional and remote Australia.

The recommended scheme has not been implemented. This is a straightforward step the Federal Government should take to improve access to justice in regional and remote communities.

Our recommendations for what such a scheme should look like for community legal workers include:

- The scheme should require five years of regional or remote community legal assistance work over a seven-year period, to allow time out for caring and parenting responsibilities, and personal development.
- The scheme should provide for pro rata loan forgiveness, to begin after two years of regional or remote community legal work. That is, after two years, 40% of the worker's debt is forgiven, and a further 20% is forgiven each year until the entire debt is forgiven after five years of work.
- Part-time and casual workers should not be penalised under the scheme. This is necessary in our sector where many people work part-time due to funding constraints. As a highly feminised sector, many people work part-time due to caring responsibilities.
- The scheme should allow for workers to shift between different regional and remote community legal assistance providers rather than requiring continuous service at one organisation.
- The number of scheme participants should not be capped. Participation rates should be monitored periodically by government to ensure the scheme's objectives are being met.
- The scheme should be available for all relevant degrees, not just lawyers. Regional and remote community legal centres also experience challenges recruiting social workers, mental health workers, and other kinds of professionals with degrees other than law degrees relevant to community legal centre work.

To further strengthen this initiative, the Federal Government should seek to support universities to formally partner with regional and remote community legal centres to provide paid placement opportunities for students to support future recruitment.

Students on placement can provide valuable contributions to regional and remote community legal centres. Beyond this, the experience of doing a placement at a regional or remote

¹³ Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership (2024), *Final Report*, p. 174:

<https://www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/independent-review-national-legal-assistance-partnership-2020-25>

community legal centre can be life-changing for young people, opening their eyes to the kinds of work these centres do and in many cases causing them to seriously consider long-term careers working at regional or remote community legal centres.

Addressing the true cost of regional and remote community legal work

Service delivery regional loading

Funding models for community legal centres don't reflect the significantly higher costs of delivering services, or heightened legal and related need, in regional and remote communities.

Governments should do the work required to map legal needs and develop a funding model that reflects the true cost of delivering high quality, trauma-informed and culturally safe services to regional and remote communities. In the meantime, the Federal Government should provide regional loading of at least 20% to every regional and remote community legal centre.

In the meantime, the Federal Government should provide a regional loading of at least 20% for all regional and remote community legal centres to address some of the higher costs of effective service delivery in regional and remote communities.

The service delivery regional loading payment amount that each centre receives should be set as a percentage of the centre's current total funding. The percentage each centre receives should be based on the remoteness of the centre's work: the more remote the work, the greater percentage loading the centre should receive. Remoteness should be assessed based on ABS remoteness categories¹⁴ connected to the remoteness of the clients assisted by that centre. For example, one centre's main office may be in a 'regional' area, but if that centre does significant outreach across a very large geographic catchment area, a large proportion of their clients may be from 'very remote' areas. The loading should account for this.¹⁵

Centres should be entitled to make their own decisions about how to use the service delivery regional loading payment, based on the unique needs of their communities and their expert knowledge of what is required to deliver justice in their area.

Some examples of the kinds of things centres may spend the payment on include petrol and staff time for outreach trips, development of a new program or service, establishing a new collaboration or partnership, or making insecurely funded programs or services permanent.

Workforce regional loading

Community legal centres in regional and remote areas are experiencing a workforce crisis made worse by the cost-of-living and housing crises, sector under-resourcing, growing volume and complexity of legal need, a shortage of services in regional and remote areas, and more.

In 2024, the Queensland Government provided a \$12.4 million funding uplift to improve wages and conditions for community legal centre workers. Community Legal Centres Queensland data

¹⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2026) *Australian Statistical Geography Standard*, Edition 4:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/standards/australian-statistical-geography-standard-asgs/latest-release>

¹⁵ *Justice Where We Live* calls on governments to do the work required to map legal need and the true cost of delivering services in regional and remote communities. Until this work is completed, governments should use this measure, which uses centres' current total funding as the baseline for determining the dollar amount of service delivery regional loading each centre should receive.

demonstrates that in the wake of the payment, worker retention, worker wellbeing, and sector capacity have all improved.¹⁶

The Federal Government should provide a targeted investment of \$17 million per year¹⁷ in the regional and remote community legal centres workforce, to address the acute workforce crisis and its impact on the people who rely on regional and remote community legal centres to access safety and justice.

The workforce regional loading payment amount that each centre receives should be based on the number of roles at the centre, and on the remoteness of the centre's office(s) as per ABS remoteness categories.

Centres should be required to provide some evidence to the Federal Government to demonstrate what they have spent the workforce regional loading payment on, and that it has gone towards addressing recruitment and retention challenges experienced by regional and remote community legal centres. Beyond this, centres should be entitled to make their own decisions about how to use the workforce regional loading payment, based on the unique needs of each centre's workforce and community, and their unique knowledge of the approaches that will enhance recruitment and retention for their centre.

Some examples of the kinds of things centres may spend the payment on include a wages uplift for all staff, relocation payments, additional professional development opportunities for staff, providing or contributing to housing or childcare for staff, and increasing the leave available to staff, like study leave, parental leave or cultural leave.

Access to justice in the Family Court for victim-survivors in regional and remote communities

The Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia consistently reports that about 80% of family law matters it deals with involve family violence.¹⁸ Rates in the Family Court of Western Australia are similarly high. However, too many victims-survivors, especially in regional and remote areas, face the family law system without the community legal centre help they need.

The family law system itself is chronically under-resourced. Courts don't sit in regional and remote communities as often as is in cities. In far too many areas, courts don't sit physically *at all*. Courts have significant delays and backlogs, which can leave victims-survivors of violence trapped in legal proceedings for years. Victim-survivors who once had means to hire a private lawyer can quickly run out of money and be left destitute and facing ongoing legal proceedings without help. People who use violence can too easily weaponise the overstretched family law system to drag out proceedings further until a victim-survivor runs out of resources for legal help, and to aggressively pursue property and parenting outcomes that put victim-survivors at risk of poverty, homelessness and further violence.

¹⁶ Community Legal Centres Queensland (2025) *Working in Community Legal Centres in Queensland Summary Report: Workforce Project*

¹⁷ We calculated this figure by applying the average amount each community legal centre in Queensland received in 2024 from the state government's investment in community legal centre workers to 44 community legal centres based in regional and remote communities nationally. The Federal Government do additional work to appropriately cost this measure based on the size of each regional community legal centre, and the cost of basic goods and essential services in the relevant community.

¹⁸ Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia (2022) *Media Release: Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia launches major family law reform to improve safety and support for children and families*, 5 December 2022:

<https://www.fcfa.gov.au/news-and-media-centre/media-releases/mr051222>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people face additional barriers in accessing the family law system. Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people distrust the family law system because of experiences of systemic racism or genuine fears about child removal.

The Federal Government should increase resourcing for the Federal Circuit and Family Court of Australia, and the Family Court of Western Australia, to address backlogs, implement trauma-informed processes, and improve cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Community legal centres that provide free, specialised family law advice and representation services in regional and remote areas remain significantly under-funded to meet need. In some jurisdictions, place-based community legal centres receive no dedicated funding to do family law work, despite the great need for place-based centres to do this work, particularly in regional and remote areas.

Community legal centres are independent organisations that together make up the community legal centres movement. The connectedness of the centres in our movement ensures a network of services on which communities can rely. Place-based and specialist centres often work together to provide holistic support to people, cross-refer clients, and run programs together. If one part of the sector is in crisis, it impacts service capacity and increases strain on our sector across the board.

The Federal Government should invest at least an additional \$15.8m a year for regional and remote community legal centres to deliver family law assistance. The Federal Government should undertake a comprehensive analysis of legal need across regional and remote communities, and allocate this investment based on the expressed legal needs of each community.¹⁹ Community legal centres should be able to decide how to spend any additional funding received to best meet the needs of their local communities. This may look different in different communities across the continent.

Improving access to safety and justice for victims-survivors of family violence in the Family Court requires increasing investment in the family law system itself, and in regional and remote centres' family law and family violence service capacity.

¹⁹ We have calculated this figure based on what it would cost to employ one additional family lawyer and one additional social worker (including on costs) and providing a 20% regional and remote loading to 44 community legal centres based in regional and remote locations across the continent (360,000 per centre, or \$15.8m per year). We do not propose that governments require centres to spend additional funding to hire specific roles. However, in the absence of a comprehensive legal needs analysis, this provides a reasonable estimate of what a substantive uplift to regional and remote community legal centres' capacity to deliver family law assistance would cost.