

Community Legal Centres NSW

2009–2012 Strategic Plan



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Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the strategic plan of Community Legal Centres NSW Inc. for the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2012.

This plan, with its seven objectives, contains a blueprint for CLCNSW's Board with a way forward for our organisation as it meets the challenges and responds to opportunities that will arise over the coming three years.

CLCNSW has a proud history of supporting its CLC members as we strive for access to justice for all people in the community. We must remain committed and passionate in the pursuit of human rights for all people. CLCNSW's work is centred on providing our CLC members with support and resources as they carry out legal advice and information, law reform and community legal education activities.

In recent years, CLCNSW has worked closely with the sector and its other stakeholders in the wider justice sector to seek stable long-term funding plans for CLCs that will better enable us to meet the needs of our clients and our communities. Further, CLCNSW has continued to advocate for the implementation of the recommendations of the 2006 Review of the NSW Community Legal Centres Funding Program. Some progress has been made on the development of the strategic service delivery model and the measurement of service outcomes, however much more remains to be done.

I thank our members, Board and staff of CLCNSW for their valuable contributions to this plan. I look forward to working with you all to implement this plan, as we strive to make our commitment to "Community, Compassion, Justice" a reality.

I commend this document to you.

Helen Campbell
Chairperson, CLCNSW

Community Legal Centres in NSW

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) are independent community organisations providing equitable and accessible legal services. NSW CLCs work for the public interest, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised people and communities. CLCs not only provide legal advice and assistance, but also encourage and enable people to develop skills to be their own advocates. We promote human rights, social justice and a better environment by advocating for access to justice and equitable laws and legal systems. Centres work towards achieving systemic change through community legal education, and through law and policy reform.

Community Legal Centres NSW Inc.

Community Legal Centres NSW Inc. (CLCNSW) is the peak body for CLCs in NSW. We are resourced by a small State Office which is funded by the NSW Government and Public Purpose Fund. CLCNSW has 39 member organisations including generalist and specialist CLCs.

The State Office plays a critical role in the law and justice sector in NSW. It supports and represents CLCs in a range of government and community forums. The State Office works closely with the NSW CLC sector to advance the work of CLCs.

Community Legal Centres NSW Inc.

Vision

Community Legal Centres NSW Inc. (CLCNSW) aims to be an innovative, dynamic and effective provider of support services to community legal centres (CLCs) in New South Wales, and to assist the community legal centre movement to achieve equitable access to justice for all citizens.

Purpose

CLCNSW, through its State Office, provides services to community legal centres as a group and to individual centres, in the areas of network maintenance and development, communications and information, legal policy development and advocacy, and sector maintenance and development. CLCNSW coordinates strategic direction and development for the sector as a whole, liaises and negotiates with Government on relevant legal and equity issues as well as funding and program issues.

Values

CLCNSW undertakes its work having regard to the following principles:

- We promote equitable access for people who are disadvantaged in legal services markets;
- We seek to empower centres' clients to assist themselves and develop their own capacities and independence;
- We promote respect for human rights and equality;
- We value diversity and difference in legal services;
- We work in an open, democratic, consultative and inclusive way;
- We encourage co-operative and collaborative action among community legal centres;
- We give primary focus to the collective needs and interests of community legal centres rather than the needs of individual centres;
- We use the limited resources we have wisely;
- We believe CLCNSW exists for the enhancement of its clients' interests;
- We are committed to work practices based on integrity;
- We are committed to the professional development of the organisation thus ensuring improved service delivery to NSW clients.

Clients and Stakeholders

CLCNSW's clients and stakeholders are:

- Community legal centres in New South Wales as a whole;
- Individual community legal centres.

CLCNSW also has special regard to the needs of:

- Localised communities;
- Our funders;
- The government funders/purchasers of services from CLCs;
- The clients and potential clients of CLCs, including members of the public seeking information about CLCs;
- Other non-government organisations concerned with equitable access to justice;
- The broader community.

Objectives

CLCNSW has the following seven objectives:

Objective 1:	Maintain a functional, collaborative and effective network of CLCs in NSW
Objective 2:	Develop, preserve and promote a clear identity for CLCs and our unique place in the justice sector
Objective 3:	Build the organisational capacity of CLCs to operate effectively and deliver quality services
Objective 4:	Advocate for appropriate law reform and effectively promote respect for Human Rights
Objective 5:	Improve funding for CLCs
Objective 6:	Increase access to justice and legal services
Objective 7:	Operate an efficient, effective and best-practice office

Objective 1: Maintain a functional, collaborative and effective network of CLCs in NSW

Strategies:

- 1.1 Support the governance activities of the CLCNSW membership and Board;
- 1.2 Facilitate communication and coordination between the State Office and the network, and within the network;
- 1.3 Promote strategic collaboration between member CLCs.

Objective 2: Develop, preserve and promote a clear identity for CLCs and our unique place in the justice sector

Strategies:

- 2.1 Promote and represent CLCs to government, justice sector and the wider public;
- 2.2 Build understanding within the sector and externally of Strategic Service Delivery.

Objective 3: Build the organisational capacity of CLCs to operate effectively and deliver quality services

Strategies:

- 3.1 Conduct a tailored program of learning and development activities for CLCs, being mindful of the needs of regional, rural and remote (RRR) centres;
- 3.2 Conduct a sector development program;
- 3.3 Support member centres in relation to governance and service delivery;
- 3.4 Act as a central point for funding advice and support to individual centres;
- 3.5 Develop and promote the work of CLCs through law reform and casework.

Objective 4: Advocate for appropriate law reform and effectively promote respect for Human Rights

Strategies:

- 4.1 Build capacity of network to engage in and undertake advocacy and human rights work;
- 4.2 Engage effectively in advocacy by drawing on the experiences of member CLCs.

Objective 5: Improve funding for CLCs

Strategies:

- 5.1 Advocate for improved funding for the CLC sector;
- 5.2 Undertake activities to develop CLC service delivery models.

Objective 6: Increase access to justice and legal services

Strategies:

- 6.1 Conduct a program of activities to support CLCs to improve Aboriginal access to their services;
- 6.2 Maintain a focus within CLCs on justice issues for Aboriginal people;
- 6.3 Maintain a focus on other gaps in legal services.

Objective 7: Operate an efficient, effective and best-practice office

Strategies:

- 7.1 Establish and maintain an effective organisational structure to carry out the work of the State Office;
- 7.2 Establish and maintain policies to foster a sound and supportive working environment.

Implementation and reporting of the strategic plan

This strategic plan covers the period 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2012. It aims not only to capitalise on CLCNSW's strengths, but also to take advantage of opportunities through the introduction of new initiatives in response to our members' needs, as well as those of the wider NSW justice sector. CLCNSW is committed to continuous improvement of all aspects of its operations, including its strategic planning process.

Implementation

Detailed and shorter-term strategies and actions, based on the seven Objectives within this plan, are developed on an annual basis for the State Office as a whole. Individual staff members have annual workplans based on the annual State Office workplan, with actions relating to their specific areas of responsibility.

Reporting

Quarterly reports against the plan are provided in written form to the Board through the State Office Director. Six-monthly reports are provided to the funding bodies, Legal Aid NSW (all Objectives) and the NSW Public Purpose Fund (Objectives 3, 6.1 and 6.2 only). CLCNSW Annual Reports also provide a report of key achievements under the plan.

The logo for Community Legal Centres NSW is a white speech bubble with a tail pointing towards the bottom right. Inside the bubble, the text "Community Legal Centres NSW" is written in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, stacked in three lines.

Community Legal Centres NSW

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