

THE TURNBULL COALITION TEAM

CCHQ 2016



24 June 2016

Mr Michael Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Eastern Community Legal Centre Inc.
Suite 3, Town Hall Hub
27 Bank Street
Box Hill VIC 3128

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for the opportunity to provide the views of the Coalition on important issues facing your members. On behalf of the Coalition Members of Parliament and candidates I am pleased to respond to your survey.

Australia's future depends on how well we can continue to grow and shape our economy.

Only the Liberal and National Parties have an **economic plan** to do that and ensure Australia's future.

We have a clear plan to transition the economy from the mining and investment boom to a stronger and more diverse economy.

The key elements of our national economic plan for jobs and growth are:

- An Innovation and Science programme bringing Australian ideas to market. This means greater investment and more jobs and opportunities for our young people;
- A New Defence Industry plan that will secure an advanced defence manufacturing industry in Australia. This will create thousands of new hi-tech, higher paying jobs;
- Export Trade Deals that will generate more than 19,000 new export opportunities. These will create many more jobs for our urban and regional families;
- New Tax Incentives, which will include tax cuts for more small businesses. More than two million businesses can benefit, to deliver more growth and jobs; and
- A Strong New Economy with more than 200,000 jobs expected to be created.

Our national economic plan and management is already paying dividends. Last year our economy continued to grow creating almost 300,000 new jobs, many of them in small business.

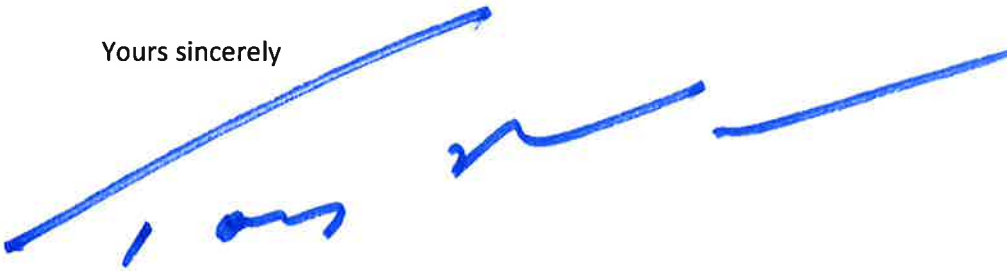
We cannot put economic growth and the jobs that come with it at risk with a return to Labor and their debt and deficits, high taxing, big spending ideas.

Only a Liberal and National Party Government can protect Australia's future.

Once announced, our policies will be available at www.liberal.org.au and www.nationals.org.au.

Thank you for communicating the Coalition's commitments to your members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several connected strokes, including a long diagonal line at the top left and a wavy line below it.

Tony Nutt
National Campaign Director

COALITION RESPONSE TO EASTERN COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRE INC

The Turnbull Coalition acknowledges the valuable contribution of community legal centres (CLCs) and we have made a substantial investment which recognises the vital work being done by the legal assistance sector.

The Coalition Government has committed \$1.6 billion over five years under a National Partnership Agreement on Legal Services Assistance with States and Territories and agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers. The agreement which commenced on 1 July 2015, allocated funding to States and Territories following an evidence-based model and provided much-needed certainty to the legal assistance sector.

Apart from ceasing to fund Environmental Defenders' Offices in 2013-14, there have been no cuts to community legal centre funding, or Indigenous legal assistance providers. Over the life of the National Partnership Agreement, legal aid funding will increase by \$12 million (or 6 per cent).

It is important to note that the Commonwealth Government is the primary funder of Indigenous legal assistance, despite most services being provided for State or Territory criminal matters.

As you would be aware, legal assistance funding is not a matter for the Commonwealth alone.

The Coalition is committed to improving the lives of all Australians and we will do what we can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in the tight fiscal environment. This has been clearly evidenced by the restoration of \$25.5 million in legal assistance funding in March 2015 and allocating \$45 million (including \$30 million in the 2016-17 Budget) to frontline legal assistance services for victims of domestic violence. We will consult closely with States and Territories and the sector regarding the allocation of the \$30 million for frontline legal services.

Through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy, the Commonwealth Government provides funding for a range of Indigenous specific activities to tackle the acknowledged drivers of crime and to reduce Indigenous people's contact with the criminal justice system. This includes support for prisoners to reintegrate into their communities, prevention and diversion for young people, restorative justice and mediation. State and Governments are critical partners to addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous Australians in the criminal justice system.

In contrast, Labor has made ad-hoc funding promises. Rather than enhance base funding to ensure long-term sustainability of the legal assistance sector, Labor created the funding cliff facing frontline legal services by committing \$6.8 million per year for 4 years to 30 June 2017.

Labor needs to provide greater transparency on how it plans to fund CLCs rather than revert to the chaotic and arbitrary funding approach they took when in Government.