

Collaborative service planning

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

This schedule provides guidance on the elements of collaborative service planning.

OVERVIEW

- A1 Under this Agreement, the Parties will work together with the legal assistance sector to coordinate and maximise the reach of services and to ensure that services are directed where they are most needed.
- A2 The outcomes of collaborative service planning will inform the distribution of Commonwealth and State funding to community legal centres within each jurisdiction. This process will facilitate a holistic and objective approach to decision-making about the distribution of this funding.

ELEMENTS OF COLLABORATIVE SERVICE PLANNING

- A3 There are two key elements of the service planning process.

Evidence and analysis of legal need

- A4 The first element of service planning is that the States use an evidence base to identify priority clients and the geographic locations in which people have the highest levels of legal need. This will enable the States to identify and analyse evidence of disadvantage, as a proxy for legal need, and target legal assistance services within their jurisdiction accordingly.
- A5 The States could develop a new evidence base, or could use existing evidence bases. The evidence used should, at minimum, include:
 - (a) the Census and/or socio-economic data produced by the Australian Bureau of Statistics;
 - (b) information from the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales.
- A6 To identify and analyse data, the States could use reports or tools including, but not limited to:
 - (a) community profiles used by local councils that include demographic data;
 - (b) the Legal Needs Assessment Framework and Toolkit produced by the National Association of Community Legal Centres;
 - (c) reports that include demographic and socio-economic analysis using relevant indicators by geographic spread;

- (d) other local and relevant data from regional planning reports, crime statistics and information on debt recovery.

Collaborative service planning meetings

A7 The second element of service planning is that the States will conduct collaborative service planning meetings, twice a year at minimum, to promote discussion of strategies for the delivery of services within their jurisdiction.

A8 The States will invite representatives from:

- (a) the relevant State/Territory government;
- (b) the Commonwealth; and
- (c) legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal assistance providers.

Service planning meetings could also include representatives from other legal or non-legal service providers or organisations.

A9 Using evidence and analysis of legal need, service planning meetings should consider, at minimum:

- (a) the different locations of services delivered by legal aid commissions, community legal centres and Indigenous legal assistance providers within the jurisdiction;
- (b) the mix of legal assistance services available;
- (c) strategies to achieve proportionate service responses—for example that, where practicable, services are appropriate to clients' legal needs and levels of capability;
- (d) the coordination of community legal education at a State/Territory level; and
- (e) the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery models.

A10 Discussions should consider strategies to streamline services and reduce any unnecessary duplication, including but not limited to:

- (a) more efficient and effective ways of using available resources;
- (b) reallocating resources;
- (c) changing service delivery approaches;
- (d) adjusting triage practices;
- (e) collaborating or co-locating with other service providers;
- (f) consolidating outreach services and/or locations;
- (g) sharing telephone helplines and websites; and
- (h) merging administrative functions.