

Attorney-General  
Minister for Justice  
Minister for Health, Mental Health and Wellbeing  
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

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Vica Bayley MP  
Member for Clark

10 JUL 2024

Dear Mr Bayley

Thank you for your Constituency Question on behalf of Mr Ben Bartl of the Tenants Union of Tasmania (TUT).

The National Legal Assistance Partnership (NLAP) is a five-year national partnership agreement with the Commonwealth Government to support the delivery of legal assistance services.

The NLAP provides important Commonwealth financial support Tasmanian Community Legal Centres, including TUT. The Commonwealth Government has committed to providing \$18.767 million to Tasmanian CLCs under the current NLAP.

In addition to its baseline commonwealth funding, TUT receives additional Commonwealth funding to contribute to the provision of legal services for vulnerable women. Total Commonwealth funding for TUT is currently approximately \$190,000 per annum.

In recognition of the critical role of the legal assistance sector in supporting the most vulnerable members of our community, our Government permanently committed additional funding of \$640,000 per year to the sector in the 2021-2022 State Budget to provide certainty in baseline funding for the life of the NLAP. This funding has been allocated to Tasmania Legal Aid and Community Legal Centres and is indexed each year.

The State Government provides TUT with top-up funding of approximately \$28,000 per annum.

Our Government also invested \$2.2 million per year over four years from 2021-22 until 2024-25, to ensure that Tasmanians who need extra help can access free or low-cost services. The 2023-24 Budget included an additional \$820,000 to extend the 2021-22 commitment for a further year until 30 June 2026. From this additional funding the TUT receives approximately \$75,000 per annum to fund legal practitioner services in Launceston and the North-West.

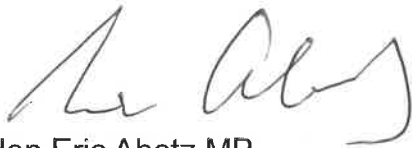
In May 2023 the former Attorney-General approved additional funding of \$50,000 for TUT to undertake specific research projects.

On 23 June 2023, the Commonwealth Attorney-General, the Hon Mark Dreyfus KC MP, announced the commencement of the Independent Review of the NLAP and indicated that the final review report will be completed by early 2024. On 28 May 2024 the Commonwealth Attorney-General released the review report.

The negotiation of the next legal assistance funding arrangement was discussed at the most recent meeting of the Standing Council of Attorneys-General (SCAG) on 5 July 2024. As indicated in the SCAG communiqué following the meeting, the participants agreed key timeframes and process for the negotiations of the next legal assistance funding arrangement. A standalone SCAG meeting will occur in September 2024 to consider future legal assistance arrangements.

Our 2030 Strong Plan for Tasmania's Future seeks to uplift Tasmanians and by fostering an effective, fit-for-purpose legal system we can begin to realise our vision. Our Government will now work closely with the Commonwealth and other state and territory governments to ensure that TUT, and the broader Tasmanian legal assistance sector, can continue to provide free or low-cost legal services for Tasmanians who need it most.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Eric Abetz', written in a cursive style.

Hon Eric Abetz MP  
**Acting Attorney-General and Minister for Justice**