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ATTORNEY-GENERAL
LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SENATE**

MEDIA RELEASE

**RESPONSE TO THE PRODUCTIVITY COMMISSION'S REPORT INTO
ACCESS TO JUSTICE ARRANGEMENTS**

Today, I am releasing the Australian Government's response to the Productivity Commission's Report into Access to Justice Arrangements.

The report considers a number of significant areas in the civil justice system at both the Commonwealth, and the state and territory level. I thank Commissioners Dr Warren Mundy and Angela MacRae for producing such important work.

Since the release of the report, the Australian Government has implemented numerous recommendations made by the Productivity Commission. One of the Government's most substantial achievements has been the negotiation of a new National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services, with states and territories, for the delivery of funding to legal aid commissions and community legal centres. This significant reform introduced collaborative service planning arrangements and a new funding allocation model based on relative legal need.

Over the next five years, the Australian Government will provide \$1.6 billion for legal aid commissions and community legal centres through the National Partnership Agreement and direct funding agreements with Indigenous legal assistance providers.

The Australian Government is committed to doing what it can to increase funding levels for legal assistance in a tight fiscal environment. This is demonstrated by the \$15 million legal assistance component of the \$100 million Women's Safety Package, and the restoration of \$25.5 million in funding to the legal assistance sector.

In addition, the government is:

- leading the development of a strategic framework, in collaboration with all states and territories and the legal assistance sector, to identify shared priorities for legal assistance services at all levels of government;
- funding the development of a legal health check tool to educate community workers to recognise legal problems early and assist disadvantaged people to receive appropriate legal assistance; and
- enabling the development of a National Legal Assistance Data Standards Manual, in consultation with the legal assistance sector, to gather consistent and comparable data across the sector and inform ongoing government policy.

The Australian Government's response addresses recommendations implemented to date.

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The Government will continue to work collaboratively with all stakeholders to enhance the accessibility of high quality legal assistance.

I look forward to working with my state and territory counterparts, through the Law Crime and Community Safety Council, to progress further work to address the Productivity Commission's recommendations.

The Government's response is available at [Response to the Productivity Commission's Report into Access to Justice Arrangements](#)

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