

4 December 2025

Our ref: LP:MC

The Hon Deborah Frecklington MP
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and
Minister for Integrity
1 William Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

By email: [REDACTED]

Dear Attorney-General

2026 - 27 Queensland Budget

The Queensland Law Society is pleased to provide our funding priorities for consideration in the 2026 - 2027 State Budget process.

Many of these calls relate to key areas of your portfolio and we would be pleased to engage further with you to provide further details.

If you have any queries regarding the contents of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact our Legal Policy team via policy@qls.com.au or by phone on [REDACTED]

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]
Genevieve Dee
President

QLS's key funding calls for 2026–2027 State Budget

1. Continued funding for projects to deliver safe courts with modern infrastructure and digitised document management systems

Queensland courts need:

- updated audio-visual equipment for all courthouses across Queensland, especially in the regions to allow local parties and witnesses to appear without the need to travel to an alternate courthouse hundreds of kilometres away.
- safe entry and exit points and meeting rooms for victims and families. It may also be necessary to provide for security personnel if the infrastructure is insufficient.
- modern, digitised court registries and systems where documents can be filed and accessed online, matters can be conducted as e-trials and parties can appear in court via phone and videolink. This is critical to:
 - those in rural, regional and remote areas who cannot easily access a courthouse to file documents or attend hearings in person.
 - ensure Queensland businesses have an efficient and effective court system to resolve disputes.

2. Increased rates for Legal Aid Queensland preferred suppliers

Increase the rates paid for grants of Legal Aid Queensland to private practitioners so they are set at the same level as provided in the relevant court scales.

Private practitioners who are [Legal Aid preferred suppliers](#) provide approximately 70% of Legal Aid assistance in Queensland.¹ These lawyers are withdrawing from the scheme due to the inadequacy of remuneration, as a result of both the hours allocated in each grant and the hourly rates paid.

The loss of Legal Aid preferred suppliers more acutely impacts regional and remote Queensland where it is difficult or impossible to find a local lawyer to, for example, assist in child protection, family law and domestic and family violence matters.

3. Supporting staffing for rural, regional and remote law firms

We call for funding for a graduate solicitor program providing financial support for legal practices to recruit and retain early career lawyers (up to 5 years post-admission experience) to practice in rural, regional and remote areas.

Regional lawyers are the backbone of their communities. When legal advice is not accessible, people are denied justice. This happens when the few local lawyers are overwhelmed, cannot take Legal Aid referrals because rates are too low, or are conflicted out—such as when the only firm in town represents the accused and cannot assist the victim.

¹ [november-2023-justice-on-the-brink-final-report-1.pdf](#) at page 18

4. Closing the Gap through targeted legal initiatives

- Dedicated and sustained funding is needed to create an Aboriginal Tenancy List in QCAT. The Aboriginal Tenancy List would function as a specialised pathway for resolving tenancy and social housing disputes involving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This initiative would align with the Government's commitment to improve housing accessibility and quality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The benefits of an Aboriginal Tenancy List are evidenced in the success of existing lists in the New South Wales civil jurisdiction.
- State-wide expansion of the Murri Court to enable more legal matters involving First Nations Peoples to be resolved in effective and culturally appropriate ways. This is a pragmatic "Closing the Gap" measure.
- The impacts on family and services (including the courts) arising from people dying in intestacy could be reduced if more awareness and legal support is provided.

5. Judicial commission for Queensland's courts and tribunals

Queensland's justice system needs an independent body to preserve and uphold the separation of powers. An independent judicial commission will enshrine public trust in our courts and tribunals by:

- preparing and implementing programs for the continuing education and training of judicial officers; and
- receiving complaints against, investigating and recommending action against judicial officers.

6. Independent statistical body

Queenslanders deserve accurate information about crime rates and other factors affecting community safety. Other jurisdictions such as New South Wales have an independent body who:

- develops and maintains statistical databases on crime and criminal justice;
- conducts research on crime and criminal justice issues and problems;
- monitors trends in crime and criminal justice;
- provides information and advice on crime and criminal justice.

We call for the establishment and resourcing of a similar body for Queensland.

7. Funding for rights based legal systems and community support initiatives

Our legal systems must promote access to justice for members of our society with increased and complex legal needs. This is best achieved by:

- Specific funding for legal assistance services including:
 - for separate representative appointments under the *Guardianship and Administration Act 2000* (Qld).
 - for independent legal representation for the QCAT hospital hearing program. The program allows hearings for guardianship or special health care matters to be held in hospital (or by phone) so hospital inpatients can attend their hearing.

- to assist victims of elder abuse through Seniors Legal and Support Services.
- Specific funding for independent disability advocacy to monitor reforms relevant to the Disability Royal Commission, and report to government, with a view to ensuring rights are protected and reform is co-designed and informed by Queenslanders with disability and lived experience.
- Funding to support completion of health professional reports necessary for people seeking access to the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Medicare benefits cannot be claimed for their completion. The inability to obtain medical reports and/or reports from allied health providers to undertake functional capacity assessments, acts as a significant barrier to people being accepted as NDIS participants and can deter those who would otherwise have an entitlement from lodging an appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

8. Actions to address family violence and support victims

- Funding for Legal Aid Queensland and community legal centres to ensure continued family law and domestic and family violence legal services are provided to vulnerable members of our community.
- Funding to expand the number and location of perpetrator intervention programs in the community and in prisons. This must include specific community co-designed programs for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. The lack of availability of these services continues to place people at risk and delays assistance for families.

9. Delivering safety to communities through effective intervention

- We call for the state-wide expansion of the 'fast-track sentencing' pilot which involves cross-agency collaboration and proactive case management in the Children's Courts. Initial results from the pilot indicate success in improving case finalisation times and reducing remand periods.

On average over 85% of young people in detention are on remand. Holding children on remand longer than necessary not only poses risks to the individual (when they are yet to be convicted of a crime), but creates inefficiencies and uncertainty in our justice system, including for victims.

- Funding to expand and enhance adult restorative justice conferencing services to include high-risk referrals, including for sexual and domestic violence offences. Restorative justice initiatives are a way of expanding justice options for victims and a vital means of empowering victims and meaningfully redressing the impact of crime.

10. Victims of privacy breaches and other tech-related crimes

Expand resources for the Office of the Information Commissioner so it can:

- continue to assess and make recommendations on all new laws and policies to ensure Queenslanders' information privacy rights are protected; and

Queensland Law Society submission - 2026–27 Queensland State budget

- assist Queenslanders to better respond to data breaches, particularly in a world where technology is changing and illegal actors are targeting sensitive personal information.