**COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES AUSTRALIA**

**UPDATE FROM CEO, NASSIM ARRAGE**

1. **NLAP Update**

The [CAG](https://www.ag.gov.au/About/CommitteesandCouncils/Council-of-Attorneys-General/Pages/default.aspx) meeting took place on Friday 29 November 2019 and a [communique](https://www.ag.gov.au/About/CommitteesandCouncils/Council-of-Attorneys-General/Documents/Council-of-Attorneys-General-communique-November-2019.pdf) was sent out later that afternoon.

There is only a brief paragraph in that communique:

*Legal Assistance Attorneys-General agreed to the updated National Strategic Framework for Legal Assistance, which will commence on 1 July 2020 and provides the overarching objective and principles for all government funded legal assistance services. Attorneys-General also made positive progress on narrowing the issues to be resolved in ongoing negotiations for the National Legal Assistance Partnership, and remain committed to its finalisation sufficiently in advance of the expiry of current arrangements on 30 June 2020*.

There was an ALAF meeting on Monday. We all – NATSILS, CLCs Australia, Law Council and National Legal Aid -  put in submissions to NLAP that were generally in alignment with each other.

The information from AGD is that they are confident that a new agreement will be signed around March 2020 and no later than June 2020. There is draft text for the agreement sitting with the Attorney-General but this was not released before CAG and has not yet been released. They don’t know when it will be released and whether we will be given a consultation copy of the text.

I’ll keep you as up to date as I can as things develop. It would be useful if anyone has any further information on what was discussed at CAG in relation to legal assistance.

1. **Federal Budget Submission (Close to Final Draft)**

We have an updated draft of a [national Federal Budget Submission](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/file/413FD99D-FC29-4A09-B79D-B0AD99AA69A8?tenantId=6788fb52-f0d8-4804-8f33-a553c2b9a873&fileType=docx&objectUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2F12.%20AC%20and%20SASS%20Update%204%20December%202019%2F191204%20NACLCFederalBudgetSubmission%202020-2021.docx&baseUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil&serviceName=teams&threadId=19:60ea3c994ee7410d927536bc9c59463a@thread.skype&groupId=8c5af7b8-b033-455f-accc-9e4510af3a2a) after seeking feedback from the State/ Territory peaks, National Networks and the broader sector. It’s draft in terms of the need to check some figures and confirm we translated different asks correctly. Otherwise it is substantially there from our perspective.

If you want to give have a final go at feedback, please make any edits using track changes and/ or call me for discussion by **12 December 2019**.

1. **Defunding of National FVPLS**

NFVPLS have recently found out that they are not going to be funded from 1 July 2020. The funding is $240k per annum. This funding was formerly administered by Prime Minister and Cabinet under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy and is now under the remit of the [National Indigenous Australians Agency](https://www.niaa.gov.au/) under Minister Wyatt.

This is rather alarming news, especially in the context of NLAP requiring national peaks to have a bigger role. They are launching a campaign this afternoon. Needless to say CLCs Australia will do what we can to support their campaign.

1. **Climate Crisis Position Paper**

After further consultation, we have revised and updated a [national position on Climate Crisis](https://naclc.info/sites/default/files/Climate_Crisis_Positions_Package_Dec_2019.pdf). We will be sending this draft out with the Sector Only News in a few days. Please email [policy@clcs.org.au](mailto:policy@clcs.org.au) with any feedback

1. **Family Court advocacy**

We have joined with NATSILS, WLSA and the Law Council to oppose the proposed merger of the Family Court and Federal Circuit Court. The proposed merger is being led by the Attorney-General. We have been part of:

1. An [Open Letter](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/file/D5FC0F8C-A72F-4D74-A232-5FD260B05F3F?tenantId=6788fb52-f0d8-4804-8f33-a553c2b9a873&fileType=pdf&objectUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2F12.%20AC%20and%20SASS%20Update%204%20December%202019%2FLetter%20to%20AG%20re%20concerns%20about%20family%20court%20merger%20(f%20021219).pdf&baseUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil&serviceName=teams&threadId=19:60ea3c994ee7410d927536bc9c59463a@thread.skype&groupId=8c5af7b8-b033-455f-accc-9e4510af3a2a), and
2. [A media release](https://teams.microsoft.com/l/file/3864265A-EE90-41E4-89B6-821CFB8D8D00?tenantId=6788fb52-f0d8-4804-8f33-a553c2b9a873&fileType=docx&objectUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil%2FShared%20Documents%2FGeneral%2F12.%20AC%20and%20SASS%20Update%204%20December%202019%2FMR%20-%20parliament%20should%20reject%20merger%20-%20031219.docx&baseUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fnationalaclc.sharepoint.com%2Fsites%2FNACLCAdvisoryCouncil&serviceName=teams&threadId=19:60ea3c994ee7410d927536bc9c59463a@thread.skype&groupId=8c5af7b8-b033-455f-accc-9e4510af3a2a)

We are still accepting signatories to the Open Letter if you would like to push it in your communications. Please ask them to send their willingness to sign on in an email to [policy@clcs.org.au](mailto:policy@clcs.org.au)