



8 August 2014

Mr Warren Mundy

Presiding Commissioner

Access.justice@pc.gov.au

Dear Mr Mundy,

Productivity Commission Review – Access to Justice Arrangements

We write on behalf of the NSW Society of Labor Lawyers – an organisation of lawyers committed to progressive law reform that benefits the community.

We were pleased to see that in its draft report on access to justice arrangements, the Commission made reference to the efficiency benefits of community legal centres' law reform and advocacy work. We would like to take the opportunity, as the Commission prepares its final report, to reinforce the importance of this point.

Our organisation regularly calls on lawyers working in community legal centres to provide advice on how the law is working in practice. In our view, CLC lawyers are the best-placed people to judge how the law is affecting vulnerable members of the community – sometimes in unintended ways – because their large caseload allows them to identify patterns. It follows from this, that CLC lawyers are also able to identify how the law could be changed to prevent recurrent issues from arising in the first place.

As the Commission has correctly identified, there are significant efficiency benefits – for the justice system, and the community - in encouraging CLC lawyers to advocate for changes to the law that will address the issues they are seeing at the 'coalface'.

Yours sincerely,

Hannah Quadrio
President

James Mack
Secretary